

# East Longmeadow Public Schools

Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote Achievement and Accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow.



## SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR SCHOOLS

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### The ELPS Budget: Building A Long Range District Strategic Financial Plan

Designing, formulating and building a school budget is a long-term project. Unlike the traditional one-year budget plan, working a strategic financial plan lets you look into the future of our schools.

What's the difference between a budget and a financial plan? Think about maneuvering a rowboat. The energy you use to make the boat move is like the money you have to spend. You can row all day, but if you don't spend any time steering, you'll never arrive at your destination. Budgeting, like rowing, provides the resources needed to keep our school district moving forward on a daily basis. Financial planning, like steering, focuses our effort on our destination. Rowing without steering, or budgeting without a long-range strategic financial plan, will keep you moving - but not necessarily in the right direction.

Most school districts' finance efforts are directed at budget development, financial compliance and reporting, and control of expenditures - important tasks, but are ineffective ways to chart a strategic course. Most districts spend far too little time evaluating how effectively their funds are being used, identifying future financial needs, and gauging the impact today's decisions will have on future needs or goals.

School Committee members, superintendents, and business managers have two levels of fiscal responsibility. The first level is compliance with state and federal law. Compliance ensures that the budget meets state standards and that state funds are directed to legislated accounts and programs. The second, higher order of responsibility is that of fiscal stewardship, which goes

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### A Message From The School Committee Chair

Public education has reached a crisis! Or so some will have you believe. Professional organizations, businesses, members of the community, and even other public officials speak out on all that is wrong with today's students and education in general. Consequently school committees are the first to hear of the disparagement.

In a recent article written by Philip Boyle he addresses why public education is so vital to democracy. Mr. Boyle quotes de Tocqueville, a French aristocrat who traveled the United States just prior to the Civil War. He writes, "To be a Frenchman is a fact; but to be an American is an ideal." Boyle suggests that this 'good life' is actually a set of beliefs that is shared as Americans. Freedom, individuality, safety, fairness, justice, and a good standard of living are the virtues that set Americans apart.

So how do public values mesh into the culture of public education? Surely no one wants to be less free, less of an individual, less safe, have less justice availed to them, or live less prosperously.

Laws and Supreme Court decisions from the federal government monitor the 'global' ideology of education and promote refinements- good and bad. State legislators are concerned with balancing the ebb and flow of education and funding dollars from community to community. Both levels of government are resources that are needed to allow schools to accomplish their primary mission - to educate our children.

Why is it at this time, in this democracy, so important to have a locally elected school committee? The role as a school committee in a democratic society is to assist in creating the 'good life' that Boyle describes. State constitutions across the country proclaim that the purpose public education is to prepare students for the job market and prepare a better citizenry for democracy. Today, school committees must add the word accountability to all they do.

Student achievement must be the primary standard that each school committee member should be thinking of. There is a time

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We're on the Web!  
[www.eastlongmeadow.org](http://www.eastlongmeadow.org)

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well beyond compliance and ensures that funds are spent on programs that make a difference and move the district toward its vision. Fiscal stewardship avoids deficit spending and the need for drastic cuts that undermine education. It requires that policy and process are in place to ensure that funds are used effectively and wisely and that deficits (over spending) are avoided. Financial planning differs from budgeting in a number of key ways:

1. The purpose of strategic financial planning is to project the long-term sources and uses of funds, evaluate the effectiveness of programs and departments, and focus financial resources on programs that help attain the district's vision for students. Enrollment histories, enrollment projections, patterns, and strategic goals are all imperative to the planning and purpose.
2. With financial planning, programs are renewed if they produce material results for students. Site-based or School-based improvement plans and their evaluations are the impetus to continuous improvement.
3. Financial planning focuses on allocating resources efficiently, making long-range plans for new funds, and ensuring that funds are directed toward goals and priorities of a strategic plan that is well thought out in advance, implemented, and followed. East Longmeadow Public Schools publishes and evaluates its district strategic plan for education and its site-based school improvement plans from each of our five schools. These are also located on our town's website at [www.eastlongmeadow.org](http://www.eastlongmeadow.org).
4. People are involved. The School Committee, superintendent, business manager, building principals, teachers, and parents who serve on school committees are all involved in financial planning, which plays a more strategic role than traditional budgeting. Additionally, the School Committee reviews and monitors the district's finances monthly throughout the year, including budget documents at regular School Committee meet-



ings. The public can view our budget and strategic planning documents on our website.

5. ELPS budgets are not only designed for one year, but also provide two or more years of history and a projection of the future based upon strategic documents. Such documents can include enrollment histories and projections, facility ages, and capital needs for maintaining each building's infrastructure, staffing patterns, and the ability to adequately serve the number of students in each school based upon new housing construction and the migration of new citizens moving into East Longmeadow.
6. Strategic financial plans address critical issues, such as when new funding will be needed, the cost of alternatives for improving academic performance, the long-range impact of reducing class size or adding a new school, and the total annual capital and operating costs to fully implement and support technology. Most important in East Longmeadow, financial planning addresses whether the district is investing funds in programs that support district goals, vision and ultimately- results in student learning. Financial planning and analysis ensures that students of East Longmeadow are put first.
7. Finally, strategic financial planning tells the taxpayers in East Longmeadow that we are open about our district's financial condition and that we are responsible and care how taxpayers' money is being used.

Public Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century require strong fiscal leadership. You can't have leadership without fiscal stewardship. In East Longmeadow, your elected School Committee is committed to making sure the students of our community receive a quality, first-rate education. *High stakes* education now requires *high commitment* from all involved. Your School Committee has overseen the district's internal restructuring, financial re-alignments, contract negotiations and formed a strategic plan over the past five years that will ensure success for all of our children.

## ELPS Maps The Way to Student Success

State curriculum standards and district curriculum guides are essential, but the key to a *really* effective curriculum is to get teachers together to exchange information about their lessons and coordinate everything they do so that day-to-day lessons reflect the overall goals of the school. Teachers also need detailed information about what their colleagues do in the grades above and below them. That's where Curriculum Mapping comes in. For the past two years, our district's teachers have been working together to formulate curriculum maps for Science and Mathematics at the elementary level and for subject matter courses in grades six through twelve.

Curriculum Mapping is a better way to plan and deliver curriculum. Teachers create curriculum maps and use them to track what students studied last year, what they're



working on this year, and what they are likely to encounter next year. They are a true picture of what students experience from grade to grade. Schools use curriculum maps to see what occurs in each content area throughout an entire year and, most importantly, use them to get a clear picture of each child's educational journey from kindergarten through graduation.

Calendar-based curriculum mapping, as described by national curriculum expert and consultant to the East Longmeadow Public Schools, Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs in *Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment*, begins the process of curriculum revision and development by finding out what is actually taught in the classroom. Our district began the mapping process in September of 2002 with each teacher recording what he or she does in terms of content, skills and

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assessments. In this first step, content, skills and assessments were listed for each grade and subject in a grid organized by calendar months. The process continued as each teacher read other teacher's maps. While reading they noted any gaps, repetitions or questions they thought should be addressed. For instance, teachers might observe that human body

systems are taught in two successive grades or that the same novel is used in two different classes.

The third step brought teachers together in small groups to share their observations and questions. In the fourth step grade level or curriculum area teams came together as a whole for the purpose of sharing and compiling their observations and concerns and finally producing consensus curriculum maps that will guide what is taught and learned in our schools.

Curriculum maps work just like road maps to show teachers where they are in a particular scope and sequence, what their students have been learning, and where their students need to be by the end of the unit or the end of the school year. Maps will help our teachers to:

- Discover and eliminate gaps and repetitions in curriculum

*“Curriculum maps work just like road maps to show teachers where they are”*

- Clarify areas where the content can be integrated to provide more meaningful learning
- Define which skills and processes are taught and when
- See relationships among skills and content throughout the course of the school year and over a student's entire K-12 experience.

Curriculum maps thus outline what will be taught and when it will be taught. They place student learning at the center of all district activities by acting as the vehicle for communication and for on going curriculum review and revision. The completed maps, while always a work in progress, will improve instruction by ensuring that every child has the opportunity to master the skills published in our district's curriculum guides. For that to happen, the planning and delivery of our curriculum to all our students must be one of the district's highest priorities. Curriculum maps are our district's commitment to effective student learning.

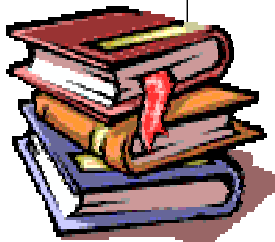
During the 2004-5 school year, teachers will use their skills as curriculum mappers to review and revise the maps they created this year. They will also begin the process of mapping subjects and courses that were not mapped this year. By producing maps of our entire curriculum that communicate what students will learn, and when they will learn it, the East Longmeadow Public Schools will have a curriculum that is articulated, aligned, guaranteed and in the best interests of every student.

## Birchland Park Middle School Wins \$5000 First Prize In National Book Fair Contest

Birchland Park Middle School was notified on May 18 that they have been chosen the Grand Prize winner in the Scholastic extreme Book Fair contest. The nationwide event sponsored by Scholastic, Inc. required contestants to hold a Scholastic Book Fair and conduct an extreme contest to promote the fair. Contestants were also required to submit an advertisement video highlighting the contest events. Together with the faculty, students, and the help of TV Studio teacher Jim O'Hearn, the contest chairs, Kalen Schloyer, librarian, Paul Trinqué, guidance counselor, and Meg Weir, parent developed a week-long agenda of extreme contests for students and staff and the video advertising the big event.

The greater East Longmeadow business community supported the event with prizes for daily contest winners. The extreme week was held March 27-April 2 and the Library Media Center was transformed into a world of reading materials, resources, and extreme sports gear. The Book Fair, the most successful in BP history, boasted sales of \$6882.37. that earned the Library Media Center \$1720.59 in titles and \$820. in resources from the Scholastic catalog.

Of the 1000 entrants in the Scholastic contest, Steve



Weiss, Scholastic CEO indicated that Birchland Park bested the competition by 15-20 points in all categories. The Grand Prize winner receives a \$5000.00 shopping spree at a Scholastic Book Fair warehouse location and a daylong appearance by U. S. skateboarding champion and author, Andy McDonald. Mr. McDonald will be in East Longmeadow on June 7 to conduct motivation assemblies, skateboarding demonstrations, and classroom visits with students.

The Following East Longmeadow business sponsors will be invited to join in the festivities: Bardelli Florist, Big Y, BPMS PTO, A.W. Brown, Competitive Edge & Fat Trax, The Countryside Store, CVS, Dynamite Video, Family Bike & Sports, Friendly Ice Cream, Gus & Paul's Healthtrax, Hollywood Video, Jim Rahilly, Johnson Packaging, Lego, Lenox, McDonnell Motors, The Pampered Chef, PepsiCola Corporation, PIP Printing, Redstone Consulting, LLC, The Reminder Publications, Rocky's Ace Hardware, Romito & Son's, Shear Integrity Hair Design, Sister's Kids, Staples, Ski Haus, and Ski-In.

Log on to Scholastic, Inc. at [http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/chair/ms\\_contest.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/chair/ms_contest.htm) to read more about this event.

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for debate and discussion, but when a decision needs to be made, it needs to be reflective of the committee as a whole, garnered through the opinions and values of the community. The role of a school committee is to ensure each student's overall achievement thus allowing the student "to assume the various roles of citizen, producer, and consumer in our society." The purpose of the school committee is to integrate the values of the local community into the comprehensive curriculum and to ensure equity for all students by establishing district-wide policies. This is the essence of the existence of local school committees. Our mission in East Longmeadow: Achievement & Accountability.

Mr. Thomas McGowan, School Committee Chair



## Meadow Brook School Addition An Exciting Educational Experience

When was the last time you had an opportunity to watch steam shovels and 200 ton cranes on a construction site? During the first semester of this school year, Meadow Brook became an actual, living example of the Curriculum Frameworks in action as eight modular classrooms that comprise our new Kindergarten wing were built. This was an incredible opportunity for teachers to integrate curriculum. Students wrote in journals for language arts as they observed the steam shovel digging that amazingly huge hole. Science conversations were heard school-wide as the crane placed the units into place from pulleys, and of course, mathematics was a hot topic as we marveled at the precision with which the units were placed. The actual work began in October and the units were delivered in November. Construction was completed at the end of January with a move-in assisted by over 50 parent volunteers on February 14, 2004.

The addition is an exciting new chapter in Meadow Brook history. This project coincided with the first year of full-day, tuition-based kindergarten. All tuition money collected each year will pay for the new classrooms. Many thanks to our parents, Superintendent, School Committee, town officials, and architects, Alderman and MacNeish for making this project a dream come true!

## Mountain View School Nutrition Program Attracts International Attention

Mountain View School has been taking part in the national *5 A DAY for Better Health* initiative for the past two years. The purpose of this national initiative is to increase every individual's consumption of fruits and vegetables to 5-9 a day to achieve a healthier population and prevent chronic disease. At Mountain View School we are working toward the same goals by educating children about the health value of fruit and vegetables and more importantly by getting them to eat more fruits and vegetables. Our efforts include a bulletin board about healthy living; weekly announcements about food and health; articles in the Newsletter about nutrition and a snack program that encourages eating fruits and veggies and provides a monthly reward to the classroom that does so.

This year our efforts were rewarded in a very special way. On April 8<sup>th</sup> we had a visit from the *Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company*. It was such a wonderful experience. Two professionals from the broadcasting company were in Massachusetts filming an educational television series on nutrition, health and obesity in the United States. They interviewed professors and researchers at Harvard University about nutrition and health and came to Mountain View for the day to see our *5 A Day* program, to talk about nutrition in U.S. schools and to see what a day in an American School is like. Our visitors were greeted with a sign made by students that said *Welcome in Swedish*. The day was then spent filming interviews with teachers, staff and students; talking about our *5 a day* program and filming our fruit and veggie snack time as well as the special snack served to our monthly 5 a day winners. Our guests found the children at Mountain View very well behaved and polite. They had a good time talking with them and were quite thrilled to be asked for autographs. They admired the work displayed on our wonderful bulletin boards and found our promotion of fruits and vegetables and good nutrition impressive.

We at Mountain View are proud of our *5 a Day* program. We believe in it as a way to promote good health and academic success. Having someone else acknowledge that it is a worthy project was a bonus! All of our students will remember our Swedish visit for a long to come.

## East Longmeadow Public Schools

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### School Committee Members:

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**Mr. Daniel Manley**  
**Mr. Thomas Mazza**  
**Ms. Gina Szykaruk**

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