

WHAT IS THE LINK Mission? The LINK or The Longmeadow Information Network for Kids mission is to work toward improving and strengthening communication about school issues among the Town of Longmeadow elected and appointed representatives, School Committee, the PTO/PAC leadership and the entire Longmeadow community.

Volume IV, Issue No.4 March/April 2004

THE LINK LETTER

(The Longmeadow Information Network for Kids)

This issue covers four School Committee Meetings (March 8, March 22, April 12, and April 26, 2004)

HIGHLIGHTS

Superintendent Search update: The School Committee signed a three year contract with Dr. Scott AndersEn to fill the position of superintendent of schools effective July 1st. He comes to Longmeadow from Meredith, NH. Dr. AndersEn will be paid \$120,000 dollars annually and \$16,000 to pay for moving expenses.

Transition Planning: As part of the superintendent transition, Requests For Proposals have been sent out for auditing services of the Longmeadow Public Schools. The audit will be for FY 2001-2004 inclusive. The last audit was done in 2003 for FY 2002. When complete, the auditor will make a presentation to the School Committee and a written report for the public record.

Budget FY '05: The School Committee has set the FY 05 budget figure at \$ 25,096,155. The sum of \$22,574,725 is to be provided by appropriated funds, and will be submitted to the town at the May 11th town meeting. The difference between the two figures will be made up through school choice, grants and fees. This figure is supported by the Appropriations Committee and will need the proposed override to pass both at the Town Meeting and by ballot in order for it to be implemented. Without the passage of an override, \$931,011.00 worth of cuts must be made. The budget is available on the town website, www.longmeadow.org.

"Pot Hole" Money: Steve Nembirkow, business manager, wrote a grant and received \$200,000 from the state which is to be spent by June 30, 2004. The money was divided among the schools with the Principals determining the best use of the funds. The money will be used primarily for books and supplies. WMS will make renovations to the science rooms, and obtain additional hardware and software for the school's computers.

Financial Sub Committee: The Committee has tabled the idea of a Financial Sub Committee until September. It was decided to await the arrival of the new superintendent to discuss this.

2004-2005 School Calendar: The School Committee approved the '04-'05 School Calendar. Teachers will report to school on August 30, 2004, and students in grades 1-12 will report on September 2, 2004. Kindergarten students will report on September 8, 2004.

Gifts and Awards: Longmeadow Public Schools has been selected by SchoolMatch for the 2004 Thirteenth Annual School System WHAT PARENTS WANT AWARD. Only 16 % of the nation's schools are designated for this honor.

The high school accepted a gift of \$2500 from the Class of 1983. The gift will be directed to purchase a mobile podium, easels, and an Outdoor Track and Field honor board and trophy case.

Increase School Revenues: The School Committee will determine the increases necessary in a number of activity/user fees after the budget has been established by the town. Fees that maybe affected include: Athletic fees, High School parking fees, tuition for the preschool, and the cost of school lunches. The School Committee is looking into allowing a cell phone tower to be placed near the HS snack shack. The town Attorney is reviewing the issue. Estimated monthly revenue is \$ 2-3000.

The School Committee is always looking for innovative ideas to increase revenues. Please submit your ideas.

School Choice: The School Committee has advertised for School Choice placement. There are 25 School Choice openings for next year. The district received 201 applications for the 25 available openings. The process of selection is by lottery; however siblings of current students get preference. Each school choice student's school district pays Longmeadow \$4,550 per student. School Choice program pays for all Special Education services needed by the choice student.

METCO: The METCO program promotes desegregation in the cities of Springfield and Boston. The grant from the state for the program has decreased from \$200,000 last year to \$188,000 this year. The program allows students from Springfield to enroll at Longmeadow schools starting in Kindergarten. The students are selected each May through a screening process. The METCO grant pays for the transportation, a support staff person and gives the town \$28,756.00. Currently, 52 METCO students in grades K-12 are enrolled in Longmeadow Public schools.

School Committee Policies: With the state mandate of passing MCAS tests as graduation requirement, the School Committee approved a Certificate of Achievement to be given to those students who do not meet the MCAS graduation requirement but have fulfilled other requirements.

The format of the meeting agendas was changed to conform to Baldrige standards.

LHS Accreditation Update: The High School Accreditation is improving and is off warning for standards on curriculum. LHS remains on warning for facility issues. Currently, no funds have been budgeted to address the needs in the high school. A new report will be submitted by June 1, 2004.

CHANGES ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE: Member Mike McCabe officially resigned his position on the School Committee in mid April. The School Committee along with the Selectman will appoint someone to complete Mr. McCabe's unfinished elected term. His term will be completed in June 2005.

Jennifer Shapiro is stepping down from the School Committee this June after 12 years of service. She has decided not to seek re-election.

Meet The Candidates: This year's election will have three candidates vying for two available seats on the School Committee. The candidates are: **Bobby Barkett, Mary Ryan-Kusiak, and Mary Vogel.** Each candidate was asked to submit a message to be included in this [LINK LETTER](#). The messages are as follows:

MARY RYAN-KUSIAK (Incumbent): "I believe strong schools are an essential part of our community. As an incumbent, I would like to complete the transition from one superintendent to the next, including assisting in the transition audit and facilitating its recommendations. I would also like to help the school committee continue to move forward, collaboratively, with other town boards. Also, we will lose Jen Shapiro after 12 years on our committee. In addition to her service to the school committee, Jen was our Collaborative Representative and I would like to try to fill the gap with the Collaborative when Jen leaves office. Overall, this is an exciting and productive time for Longmeadow-and I would like the opportunity to continue to serve this community."

BOBBY BARKETT: "Longmeadow schools face unprecedented budget challenges. Bobby can help the town through the difficult times. He has proven leadership abilities, business experience and communication skills. Bobby will work to foster better relation between the school committee and other town boards and committees and to confront and help resolve budgetary challenges in a way that will allow for the continuance of educational excellence. He will also work for a new town consensus for the schools and assist in the transition of the new school superintendent." www.bobbybarkett.com

MARY VOGEL: "Mary Vogel, a parent of a second grader at Center School, was moved to run for School Committee because of her deep concern for the future of quality public education in Longmeadow. She currently serves on the Center School council, is an active volunteer for the Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation and is a founding member of the Committee for Responsible Education (CORE), a civic organization and nonpartisan advocacy group for Longmeadow Public Schools. Mary combines a parent's local perspective on what it takes to provide quality education with a broad perspective drawn from her experience in nonprofit administration, law, and adult education. She is committed to broad public engagement—reaching out to all Longmeadow citizens to engage them in helping to define the future of our schools."

**TOWN MEETING: MAY 11 AT 7:30pm @ LHS.
ELECTIONS: MAY 18TH AT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE.**