

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.

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THE LINK LETTER

(The Longmeadow Information Network for Kids)

This issue covers four School Committee Meetings (11/10,11/24,12/8, and 12/22/2003)

HIGHLIGHTS

Proposed Reductions in FY05 Budget

The Appropriations Committee has asked the School Committee for a level-funded budget for the next fiscal year. Due to salary and operating increases, it will be necessary to **cut close to one million dollars from next year's budget.** The Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager and school principals have worked together to compile a preliminary list of cuts. These recommendations are only intended as a beginning for public dialogue. **All the schools propose that the budget for supplies will need to be further reduced. In addition, all three elementary schools propose to cut the instrumental music program. Additional suggested staff cuts to each school are as follows:**

Blueberry Hill School: 1.5 classroom teachers, and 1.0 kindergarten assistant.

Center School: 1.0 general ed. resource teacher, 1.0 reading assistant, 1.0 kindergarten assistant, .5 tech assistant, .5 library assistant, .5 school secretary, and 1.0 FTE (full time equivalent) from a combination of .2 art .2 music .2 tech/library and .4 physical education.

Wolf Swamp School: 2.0 classroom teachers, and 1.0 kindergarten assistant.

Williams Middle School: .5 guidance counselor, .5 P.E/health teacher, .5 music teacher, .5 social studies teacher, 1.0 library assistant, and .5 office secretary.

Glenbrook Middle School: 1 general ed. teacher, .5 secretary, .5 health teacher and .5 music teacher.

LHS: 1.4 FTE teachers and 2.0 secretaries. In addition, both the high school and Williams Middle School propose instituting a student fee in order to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Superintendent Search: A Focus Group was held on the evening of January 6 in order to get input from citizens on qualities they would like to see in the new superintendent. An article was placed in the newspaper to publicize this event.

Center School Principal Search: The School Committee is currently interviewing finalists for this position.

Sharing of Town Services: The Board of Selectman, Parks and Recreation Department, and School Committee have agreed to combine municipal buildings and school grounds maintenance. It is projected that this will save the town approximately \$20,000 annually.

MCAS Follow-up on Language Arts and Mathematics: Maureen Wilson, Coordinator of Reading/Language Arts, and Karen Shea, Coordinator of Mathematics, discussed improvements planned for the next MCAS cycle. In Language Arts the Collins Writing Program has been implemented in K-5

to improve writing skills. A new reading series has been piloted in the kindergarten. In mathematics, fractions will be worked on in grade 4. A new textbook series is needed to teach concepts more effectively. Two new math textbooks are being looked at and a recommendation should be forthcoming in May 2004. The high school staff will continue to provide remedial support for students in danger of failing MCAS.

New Textbook Series Bulk Purchase: A new Scott-Foresman reading series has been obtained for K-5 by a bulk purchase through the Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative. This will replace the 12-year-old reading series the system is using currently. The purchase is financed through a low interest, seven-year loan from the collaborative that will be paid back through individual elementary school budgets.

Wolf Swamp PTO Donation: The Wolf Swamp PTO has donated accelerated math software, scanner, and extended library for Grade 5. This is valued at \$1797.

Longmeadow High School Computer Purchase: Mr. Berte, high school principal, received approval from the School Committee to transfer funds within his current budget to purchase computers for the high school. This purchase will help meet the technological needs of staff and students and also address some accreditation issues.

LHS Student Advisory Council: Three student representatives from this group reported to the School Committee about happenings at the high school. The student-parking program is working well. This year the students purchase parking passes and park on a first-come first serve basis. Also, National Honor Society members are now available to provide tutoring during school hours in the Student Learning Center.

ORGANIZATION: Our organization is made up of four co-chairpersons and a team of individual school representatives. This year's co-chairpersons are: Jeanne Lachiusa(567-3826), Kate Pappas(567-1714), Karolyn Ryan(567-2325) and Marcie Kearing(567-9843).

This year's individual school reps. are:
Center School: Maura Devlin, Faith Wint and Stephany Morehardt, Blueberry Hill School: Susan Oxx and Lynn Gervais-Jones, Wolf Swamp School: Mary Ellen Brown and Charlene Metcalf, Glenbrook Middle School: Janine McVay and Chris Nault, Williams Middle School: Maria O'Reilly and Maura Thor.

The information contained in this newsletter represents the view of The Link. Official minutes of the School Committee meetings are found on the town website www.longmeadow.org