

WHAT IS THE LINK Mission?

The LINK or "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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*This issue covers School Committee Meetings:
Sept. 12, Sept. 26, Oct. 11, and Oct. 24, 2005*

THE LINK LETTER

The Longmeadow Information Network for Kids

HIGHLIGHTS

Longmeadow Public Schools Finalize Strategic Plan for 2007-2010: The District Learning Team includes 40 members comprised of parents, community members, students, teachers, staff, and school committee members. This talented group of people worked together for the past year and a half to create this plan.

At the core of the plan are four **Priority Focus Areas/PFAs:** I) Excellence in Teaching and Learning, II) Key Resources to Support Teaching and Learning, III) Community Support for L.P.S., and IV) LHS Accreditation. The *Goals, Action Items, and Implementation Teams* which are documented in this plan will drive the schools' actions for the next three years.

At the October 25th town meeting, the town voted to support the plan when it was brought forth as an article. **Visit the School dept. website, <http://www.longmeadow.k12.ma.us/dist/>, to view the complete 19 page plan.**

New England Assoc. of Schools & Colleges/NEASC: LHS, a member of the NEASC, has been on accreditation warning as a result of the 2001 site visit (members are visited every ten years). In July 2005, LHS submitted a progress update to the NEASC.

This progress report documents improvements with respect to academic programs, class size, the number and adequacy of "added" teaching positions, and the status of the number of students enrolled in six courses. The 2005-2006 budget cuts (staff, supplies, and professional development) and fee increases, as reported in the last LINK, were necessary to balance the budget but they also provided a *revenue source* to hire teachers. In past years, about 30% of high school students did not have a complete schedule. As a result of hiring 4.4 teachers, only 1.2% of students do not have a full schedule this year.

The NEASC warning related to the state of the current facility are addressed in the *Strategic Plan-PFA IV*. The goal is stated as: "LHS will move from "warning" status to full accreditation with NEASC." Action Item (A4) under this goal states: "LHS Faculty and the School Committee will collaborate with the Select Board to commission and participate in the town-wide Facilities Improvement Committee." The timeframe for this action item to be completed is FY07. **The NEASC has voted to defer action until 12/1/05.**

Energy Costs: The School Committee authorized the Superintendent to lock-in heating oil prices. Having anticipated a need for 220,000 gallons of heating oil, the delivered lock-in price averaged \$2.01. The School Committee also discussed locking electricity rates and requested the Finance Sub-Committee and the Superintendent to investigate and lock-in based upon their findings.

Capital Projects List: The School Committee approved the FY07 Capital Projects List which has about 20 items, totaling almost \$500,000. The list was compiled when LPS principals submitted their top requests. These projects were then ranked according to facilities priority. The final list will be submitted to the town's Capital Planning Committee. Bobby Barkett was nominated to represent the School Committee at the Capital Planning meetings. Go to the district website, **<http://www.longmeadow.k12.ma.us/dist/>**, to see this list.

What is the Metco program? According to the Massachusetts Department of Education website: "The Metco/Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity program is a state-funded grant program that promotes racial integration and educational opportunity for approximately 3,300 Boston and Springfield school students, as well as thousands of students in the Metco receiving school districts. The Metco program was

started in the 1960s to provide enhanced educational opportunities for urban minority students, to help integrate suburban school districts, and to reduce segregation in city schools.” For more information go to:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/metco/faq.asp>

LPS currently enrolls 51 METCO students (at least one per grade). Each year four new students, from a limited geographical area in Springfield, are accepted into kindergarten. For FY06, LPS will receive \$246,300 from the state for participating in this program (\$4,829.41 per student). Seven Metco students require special education services for less than 21 % of the instructional day. One requires services between 22%-60% of the instructional day and one student is in a substantially separate classroom. Thank you Dr AndersEn for providing data on this “hot topic”. *The cost effectiveness of the Metco program will be evaluated in the Strategic Plan (PFA III A4)*

The Longmeadow School Committee appointed representatives to numerous committees.

A few of those appointments are as follows:

School Reps: Special Education: Jessica Hutchins; Blueberry Hill School: Jerold Duquette; Center School: Mary Vogel; Wolf Swamp Road School: Bobby Barkett; Glenbrook Middle School: Geoffrey Weigand; Williams Middle School: Jim Nittoli; L.H.S.: Paul Santaniello

Finance Subcommittee: Geoffrey Weigand, Paul Santaniello, Jim Nittoli

Negotiations Team: Geoffrey Weigand, Bobby Barkett, Jim Nittoli (Alternates: 1/Jerold Duquette; 2/Paul Santaniello)

Charter Transition Update: The School Committee has designated Jim Nittoli and Mary Vogel to serve as School Committee Representatives on the *Charter Transition Team*. Currently, the Town has assumed all Human Resource duties. The target date for the Town DPW to assume Building and Grounds responsibility is 7/1/06. The financial consolidation is also being planned but a target date has not been confirmed.

Official Enrollment as of October 1, 2005: The district total enrollment, including pre-school, is 3,322. The breakdown is as follows: Blueberry Hill-522 (does not include 59 students in the pre-school program); Center-463; Wolf Swamp-442; Glenbrook-394; Williams-392; High School-1050.

Acceptance of Gifts: The Youth Football Association has donated (including installation costs) lower field lights at LHS. This group also provides donation each year for field improvements. LEEF approved a special request for two new computer servers for the high school. WMECO waived the installation cost, of approximately \$45,000, for high efficiency lighting at LHS, Glenbrook, and Williams. As an added bonus, this lighting will produce savings of approximately \$6,000/year. A resident, who provided temporary help to the main office over the summer, generously waived the payment associated with that work.

Special Town Meeting is scheduled for December 6th - 7:30 p.m. at LHS. As a result of heavy rainfall during October, there was some flood damage at the high school that requires repair. The Select Board has called this special town meeting to vote on appropriation of funds in order for the repairs to begin.

The information contained in this newsletter represents information gathered by LINK. Thank you to the following individuals who contributed to this issue: School Representative: Charlene Metcalf; LINK Editors: Maryellen Baker 567-1971, Mary Brown, Laurie Cirillo, and Laura Katz; LINK Advisor: Jeanne Lachiusa.

Official minutes of the School Committee and Finance Sub-Committee meetings are found on the town website www.longmeadow.org. If you would like to receive emails (minutes, reports, etc.) *directly from* our Superintendent, go to <http://www.longmeadow.k12.ma.us/dist/> and sign up for the **Listserve**.