



# The LES News

## Principal's Message

Dear Parents & Guardians of LES Students:

My sincere hope is that you all had a fabulous winter break! I know I got some much needed rest and worthwhile thinking time myself. In that thinking time, I made lots of resolutions for school and home alike.

With that in mind, it seems that many families, mine included, tend to revisit fitness and eating habits at this time of year. We in the Lee Public Schools family have the help of some new guidelines from the State, the Heartbeat Newsletter, which is issued here regularly, the nurse's reporting of Body Mass Index information for selected grades, and our very energetic Student Wellness Strategic Planning group's plans that are being set into motion as we speak.

The new Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages are actually "hot off the presses" and I have just received a copy. It was quite timely, in fact, because it has recently come to our attention that our families may not be aware that our cafeteria does have a cart, separate from the purchased lunch items available, where students can buy "extras". The selection when I went down to check recently was items such as pretzels, Teddy Grahams, Gushers, Goldfish Crackers, Scooby Doo Graham Snacks, Baked Doritos, Smartfood Popcorn, Original-Flavored Sun Chips, NutraGrain Bars, Oreos, and Ritz Bitz Crackers. The cafeteria ladies do offer homemade chocolate chip cookies once or twice a week as well. They do change the items periodically, but those are the items generally available. The cost for these items is about 50 cents each. In speaking with our cafeteria director, John Haughey, he reports

that it is possible for families to put full blocks or caps on "a la carte" items for their students. All you need do is contact John and set that up. Please keep in mind that the above-mentioned State regulations will force the closing of the cart at the conclusion of this school year. These will help make our students even healthier in 2012.

Additionally, this time of year could be a time for commitment to ideals and positive changes to improve our students' literacy. Perhaps you can join our Literacy Team in making or renewing a commitment to reading with your child! We are "Reading In The New Year with a Good Book" at our upcoming Literacy Night on January 30. Flyers with more details about the night are coming in backpacks this week as well. We hope many families can make it to this second annual Literacy Night.

As you can see, we at LES can be your partners in making many of your New Year's resolutions come true.

Kate Retzel, LES Principal

## PD (Professional Development) News

Teachers and administrators are required to set learning goals (based on maximizing student learning) for reporting to the state as well as their supervisors. We collaborate to provide the knowledge needed during the full and half days in our school calendar and numerous other meeting times for the achievement of those goals. This section of the newsletter gives parents a window into how our time is being spent. We are aware that the days can be a hassle for families, but think it may help you cope a bit better if you are aware of how the days are being used.

On November 3, several staff members traveled to Boston to a training about Read Naturally, a fluency-building program. A student's fluency rate is the rate at which they read. This program also can help with students' comprehension of what they read. We will be using our recent Big Y donations to purchase the supplies for a "lab" that can travel to classrooms for use during RTI time. This lab will be showcased at our Literacy Night in January.

I (Mrs. Retzel) have been attending NISL trainings for the past year and a half. NISL stands for the National Institute of School Leadership. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recommends the program for preparing the administration in the schools. We meet about 2 days every other month to discuss leadership, in general, but also specific topics within that. November 30 and December 1 the unit focused on effectively using teams in your school. In fact, the project for the training that I am working on is how to best use our Department Heads at LES. I will "graduate" in March from this training!

Lee Elementary

Issue 2

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## Upcoming Events:

(In an effort to let families know when \$ is a factor, I have included that information if necessary)

- ☺ Jan. 13 Movie Night for Kitale Project - Showing "Dolphin Tales" - Donations Welcome
- ☺ Jan. 16 - Martin Luther King Day - NO School
- ☺ Jan. 20 and 21st - Lee Youth Drama performances of "Snow White" and "The Frog Prince" Fri. 7pm and Sat. at 2pm. Donations Welcome
- ☺ Jan. 30 - Literacy Night No cost unless you want to purchase a book from the guest author or a bookmark from the PTO.

**THANK YOU to LOCAL BUSINESSES: (Please support them as they support us.)**

Big Y generously donated \$500 to LES which we will be using to partially fund the Read Naturally Traveling Lab!

Arizona Pizza supports us in encouraging students to read by donating free pizza to each student who reads.

Price Chopper who donated a fruit platter that helped us honor our veterans.

## Lee Elementary School

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## Community Gathering Agenda

\*Each month the entire school gathers to acknowledge our great work, share curriculum, talk about schoolwide initiatives and showcase our musicians and vocalists. Following are the highlights from our October gathering.

- ◆ The 5/6 Chorus sang “African Noel” and the Concert Band played “Jingle Bells”.
- ◆ A guest author, Ms. Michelle Cuevas, taught us about being an artist and author. We saw real, live painting elephants!
- ◆ Mr. Kevin Bartini was a guest to learn about how the memory of his son, Andy, is helping grade 5 stop bullying.
- ◆ We thanked Big Y for their donation and awarded several kids their Presidential Fitness Awards.

\*\* Be on the lookout for an airing of our Community Gathering from November on CTSB!!!!

## LES by the Numbers

- ◇ FYI - Lunch costs \$2 at LES and milk is 40 cents. That will be added to future menus for your immediate access.
- ◇ Student Council donated \$100 of the profits from the first Holiday Bazaar to Pet Partners. It is an agency that provides food, supplies, and low cost spay and neutering for pets in these tough economic times. Next year, the Student Council is considering expanding the sale to all grade levels.
- ◇ Knowing that, in the U.S., more than 12,000 children under the age of 21 are diagnosed with cancer every year, the Student Council is collecting Pennies for Patients. Collection ends on Friday, January 27th. Although the program asks for pennies, other coins and bills are welcome. Our goal for this endeavor is \$1,600. Previous years have raised \$1,504 and \$1,678.

### MCAS Dates

**\*Please avoid absences during the following weeks. These are the dates for MCAS testing this year..**

Week of March 20- 23

Week of March 26- 30

Week of May 7 - 11

Week of May 14 - 18

### For Safety's Sake

Every once in a while I hear a safety concern raised by a staff or community member. This is the place I will share them with all concerned. Please help us keep everyone safe.

- ⇒ You may have noticed that the lights on the front of the building are now in working order. There are still too tall parking lot lights which are on hold until the bucket truck can get here to repair them.
- ⇒ Now that cold weather has sort of set in, please send kids with proper dress to be warm at recess. That warm dress **should not** include scarves. They are a hazard in that they can get caught on playground equipment.
- ⇒ Please **do not** get out of cars to unload or load children in the morning or the afternoon. In the morning, there are always adults at the far entrance (not the main office door) that children can walk right up to - even Kindergarten children. In the afternoon, there are many adults who walk kids right to the cars. They can assist in buckling kids if needed.

### PTO Corner

The PTO has a couple of questions for parents: **What would the school experience be for our kids without field trip buses, arts & science programs, Family Fun Night, the Family Dance, Craft Night, or Bingo Night? Did you know that all parents and guardians are already members of the PTO? Please consider attending regular meetings. PTO meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6pm in the cafeteria. This month the meeting was changed until the second Wednesday, January 11! Free childcare and a Spanish language interpreter are provided. And, as always, thank you for your support of the PTO through our various fundraisers. All the funds from these fundraisers go directly to enriching the educational experience for our kids. Have ideas or comments? Join us. Everyone is welcome.**