

ESTABROOK UPDATE

Joseph Estabrook Elementary School, 117 Grove Street, Lexington, MA

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Principal: Martha Batten

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Friday, November 16, 2007

A Principal Notes... I have a few topics to update. The banter on the Google group has made me realize how important it is to communicate in one central place. The weekly updates will go out on our List Serve. We are hoping to limit the number of hard copies we make and send home so please let the office know if you do need a hard copy.

Rotary and traffic update: Our favorite topic! The PTA and I met with the traffic engineers last week. They brought a detailed topographical map of the Estabrook property and access roads. The engineers have been hired out of the \$50,000 set aside by the Town to study and present plans to improve the traffic flow at Estabrook. The current budget process will include additional funds for the project.

We do not yet have a best scenario but we are getting closer to safer, more efficient, and kinder options. Some people think that the bus company is refusing to bring buses up in the winter unless there are no vehicles waiting in the driveway! Of course, no one is refusing to drive up; the bus company and many parents are concerned about the difficulty of driving up the hill if traffic is stopped on it. As a result, all of our options involve stretching out the drop off and pick up areas and eventually separating buses and cars. The separation might be with wider lanes and barriers; it might be with using different drop off areas. No matter what, we are likely to lose more parking spaces.

Meanwhile, what we have now is working remarkably well. It is important to remember that cars should NOT line up in front of the school before 12:10 or 3:10, waiting for children to be dismissed and blocking traffic out to Grove Street. We will come out and ask you to leave if you are early; it would be most helpful, however, if you do not arrive before those times. Remember that Lexington has an anti-idling law, regardless of the outside temperature. We have been surprised that some cars continue to pass the line of cars waiting where the roadway is two-way, before the rotary. This is not legal and it is dangerous.

Tardiness: Although a student is not tardy until 8:45, learning and teaching begin at 8:30. Students arriving late miss out on this instruction and practice time. If you walk your child down, you will notice that the teacher is usually working with a child, greeting children, or collecting papers. For most children, these 15 minutes help them get started on morning routines and to feel socially comfortable. For disorganized children, arriving before 8:45 can be critical.

Gifts to Staff: With holiday time approaching, parents often ask how to show gratitude to teachers for all

their work. Simple words of thanks and notes of appreciation are cherished by staff at all times of the year.

Staff members are public employees, and as such are subject to the State's Conflict of Interest Law (General Law Chapter 268A) and State Ethics Committee rules. These state that we may not accept any gift that is "substantial," that is, **no more than \$50**. This includes meals, tickets to events, services, or holiday gifts, among other things. This \$50 limit applies to groups of people with a common interest (for example, members of the same class). Therefore, families in the same class **may not combine their resources** to purchase a gift valued at \$50 or more. This law is in place to ensure that everyone served is treated equally and that no one has or might be perceived to have special advantages or influence. This applies even if the purpose of the gift is merely a "token of gratitude for a well-done job or is given out of desire to maintain the public employee's good will."

Teaching and learning: As part of our work as a professional learning community, and with the support of an LEA grant, teachers are piloting a wonderful approach to teaching writing, Units of Study by Lucy Calkins. I am enjoying the quality of student work, which you can see on bulletin boards and writing folders throughout the school. Here is a short piece from Eleanor, Grade 4:

Walking My Dog

My mom and I are walking my dog. My little dog Angus with his little cute legs trots along beside us. The air is sweet and fresh. It is a beautiful day for a walk in the neighborhood. I love walking my dog with my mom. As I walk I hear the jingle of his collar tags clanking together like a band.

Lunches: Some people have expressed concern about the pretzel lunch option. You may not realize that Chartwells offers macaroni salad, cheese, fresh salad, raw vegetables, and fresh or canned fruit with every lunch. Many children do take and eat these healthy parts of the menu. Students are given at least 20 minutes to eat from the time lunch period begins, and they are not allowed to go to recess before that time is up.

Literacy Month: In honor of Massachusetts Family Literacy Month, Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving will be devoted to literacy! Students may bring slippers to wear. There will be many literacy activities in every class. At 9:00 A.M. will have school-wide silent reading. Every adult and child will read!

I hope your family enjoys a delightful Harvest or Thanksgiving break.

November Half Day Reminders!

Please note that November 21 is a half-day. On this day, Kindergarten students will be dropped off at their Thursday bus stops. Also note that there is no school on Wednesday, November 28.

Picture Retakes on 11/27/07!

If your child was absent or unavailable for the original School Picture Day, we encourage you to send your child for a retake at school on 11/27/07. Anyone unhappy with his or her pictures may also have a retake. Even though you missed the initial ordering deadline, you can still order photos on Retake Day. If you lost your order form, you can pick one up at the office. Please note, that if children are retaking pictures, they must return the original photos. Parents should contact Coffee Pond directly with any issues at their telephone number is (617) 965-2323 ext. 0.

Lost and Found Cleanout

We are preparing to send items in the Estabrook Lost & Found to *Goodwill*. For your convenience, these items will be displayed on tables in the Dining Lobby for your perusal as follows:

Monday Nov 19th 3:00-3:30 P.M.
Tuesday Nov 20th 8:00 - 8:45 A.M.
Wednesday Nov 21st 8:00 - 8:45 A.M.

Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF raised \$900!

Thank you to all the families who participated in Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF this year. 138 children collected an amazing \$903.12 (including 68 pounds of coins!). These donations will be used to provide children throughout the world with health care, clean water, nutrition, and education.

Barnes and Noble Fundraiser raised \$617!

Thanks to all who went and bought books during Estabrook's fundraiser.

Pies

Thanks to all who bought pies – you are welcome to pick them up on Monday, November 19th from 3P.M.-6P.M.

Calendar

November

19 Antibias Meeting, 6 P.M.
21 NO LEXTENDED DAY TODAY!
1/2 Day for students & staff
22-23 NO SCHOOL-THANKSGIVING
BREAK
27 Picture retake
28 NO SCHOOL- Professional
Development.
NO LEXTENDED DAY TODAY!
29 5th Grade Science Fair, 7-8 P.M.
30 Elementary Term Closes

December

3 Antibias Meeting, 7 P.M.
4th Grade Wingmasters Presentation
5 Site Council Meeting, 4-5 P.M.
14 Report Cards Go Home
5th Gr. Math Olympiads every Tues. at 8 A.M.
4th Gr. Math Olympiads every Thurs. at 8 A.M.

MCAS TESTING SCHEDULE 2007-2008

MARCH 24 – APRIL 4

March 25	Tuesday	Gr.4 Long Composition
March 26	Wednesday	Gr. 3 Reading Gr. 4 ELA
March 27	Thursday	Gr. 3 Reading Gr. 4 ELA
March 28	Friday	Gr. 3 Reading Gr. 4 ELA
March 3	Monday	Gr. 5 ELA
April 1	Tuesday	Gr. 5 ELA
April 2	Wednesday	Gr. 5 ELA Gr. 4 Long Comp Make-up

MAY 12 - MAY 29

May 13	Tuesday	Gr. 5 Math
May 14	Wednesday	Gr.5 Math
May 15	Thursday	Gr. 3 Math Gr. 5 Science
May 16	Friday	Gr. 3 Math Gr. 5 Science
May 20	Tuesday	Gr. 4 Math
May 21	Wednesday	Gr. 4 Math
May 23	Friday	Gr.5 History
May 27	Tuesday	Gr. 5 History