

January, 2010

From the Principal

Dear Families and Friends of Lyseth School,

The New Year is off to a very busy start! Since coming back from vacation on January 4th, staff have been busy embarking on professional learning opportunities during our Early Release Wednesdays (see our article highlighting these activities in this publication) and students have settled into what is typically “prime” instructional time within their classrooms, that is, as long as Mother Nature cooperates and we don’t experience many snow days! Recently, our PTA, in conjunction with the Lyseth Enrichment Committee, welcomed Mary Cerullo, author and Associate Director of Friends of Casco Bay. Students learned about ocean life and how to be “critical consumers of scientific research”. Mary also spent the evening of January 14th with students and their parents and provided copies of her book [Shipwrecks: Exploring Cities Beneath the Sea](#) for purchase.

School Lunch:

In my last e-mail I spoke about our new Point of Sale lunch payment process. As with any new system, it is not without “hiccups” (pardon the pun!), but we really are moving along with the new system and overall, it is a success. Money is accepted at any time for deposit to your child’s school lunch account and envelopes are always available from your child’s teacher or at the main office or any sealed envelope is acceptable, however be sure your child’s name and ID # appear on the envelope. Thank you for your patience with this effort.

New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP’s):

We administered the new state mandated assessment in grades 3-5 in October and anticipate results will be available to parents the week of February 1-5. Our students worked very hard and we have every confidence that they performed well. Stay tuned for this information in coming weeks.

Student Achievement:

We continue to address individual student needs in our Child Study Teams, and in small group intervention sessions (Literacy Lab) as described in the fall newsletter. In addition, we will be offering before school student support in homework completion and math small group skill work. Parents of students recommended for this additional support by their classroom teachers will receive a permission slip in coming weeks. Our staff is anxious to work with our students and to make every moment of each day an opportunity for learning!

Important Student Safety Issues

I want to thank you for all your support with keeping the traffic loops in the front clear during dismissal. It will make a great difference in safety and in moving the dismissal process along efficiently. As a reminder, all students are to be picked up in the grassy area near the flag pole. Please do not come across the circular driveway to meet your child. It causes confusion, congestion, and a potential safety hazard for all walkers and bus students.

In light of the recent events at Lyman Moore and East End Community School, we as a staff have had several discussions regarding safety issues. Student safety is always our primary concern and a matter we take extremely seriously. As a result of these conversations, we ask that all parents be mindful of the following:

- Check in at the main office upon entering the building
- Drop off and pick up your child at the entrance of the building each day
- Access to the playground is restricted to students and school personnel only between the hours of 8:30 AM and 3:00 PM
- Phone or e-mail the main office when your child will be late or absent from school.
- Please know that when a staff member approaches you or asks you to leave a particular area, it is to ensure every child’s safety. We welcome you to the school and encourage you to be here and actively engaged in your child’s learning but we need your help and cooperation in maintaining a secure learning environment.

As always, I want to express my gratitude to our wonderful parent community. The outstanding work our staff is able to do is a direct result of your support.

Lenore Williams, Principal

HARRISON LYSETH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lyseth Newsletter



Never Give Up!

By Portland Superintendent James C. Morse, Sr.

Notes from our Superintendent

Courtney was a dropout. Recently, she received notification of her college acceptance – and she will graduate from Portland High School in June. Quite a turnaround for a young woman who did not look like she was going to make it through high school, much less be accepted to college.

NEVER GIVE UP! Courtney was not successful in her freshman year. She skipped a lot of school and, as a result, she was struggling. One of Portland’s social workers, Sophie Payson-Rand, made several home visits and began building a relationship with Courtney.

Beth Arsenault, Portland High School’s Alternative Education teacher, reached out to Courtney to try to convince her how important high school would be to her. But Courtney was struggling with the circumstances of her life. Both adults worked hard to reach Courtney and kept the connection alive. They eventually succeeded in persuading her to participate in a cognitive-behavioral group.

NEVER GIVE UP! Courtney’s sophomore year started no better than her freshman year. Often, young teens direct their frustration and anger outward. Courtney was angry because she was held back due to lack of credits. In the first half of her sophomore year, she continued to struggle.

The two professionals kept reaching out and magic happened. Courtney realized that she was in charge of her life and she could make better decisions. She did take charge and she did make better decisions. In the second half of tenth grade, Courtney decided to go to school everyday, work incredibly hard and even do the work she had missed in her freshman year. The Alternative Ed program at Portland High became her sanctuary. She attended summer school and continued to work on missed freshman year studies.

NEVER GIVE UP! Courtney’s junior year was far different than her lost freshman year and the mixed performance of her sophomore year. She spent far less time in alternative ed and far more time taking courses with the rest of her classmates. Ms. Arsenault invited her to be in Portland’s Reconnecting Youth Class, designed to assist students who are failing out or at risk of dropping out. Courtney became a fellow student advocate, a leader and a respected resource on students’ issues for Ms. Arsenault and Ms. Payson-Rand.

Courtney was instrumental in organizing the youth voice portion of the statewide Dropout Prevention Summit held last summer in Orono. She has learned to share herself with others in greater need, in her high school and outside of Maine. She went to the Dominican Republic and worked on construction projects to help poor kids gain access to health clinics.

NEVER GIVE UP! Courtney has co-authored a book and helped to create a video addressing the negative issues associated with the term “dropout.” The video is posted on Portland High School’s Web page.

Courtney will not be happy with me as she reads this article because I’ve used the word “dropout” throughout. She strongly opposes the term as a misrepresentation with negative connotations.

Sorry, Courtney. I hope you understand that I needed to use the word because most people use it. Over time we may change the terminology to something that better describes students who struggle in school, leave and re-enter.

Dropout, struggling student, advocate, leader, author, videographer, workshop presenter and future college student all describe Courtney. What a turnaround.

Ms. Beth Arsenault and Ms. Sophie Payson-Rand NEVER gave up. More importantly, Courtney NEVER gave up. Their example shows us that we must NEVER give up on any of our young people in Portland.

Summer Champs

United Way Summer Champs is happy that the Libra Foundation continues to support summer camp opportunities for Portland Public Schools’ fourth, fifth and sixth grade students.

Each student in these grades is eligible to a \$500 Summer Champs campership this coming summer if they meet the scholastic, school behavior requirements and community service piece established by their school.

Applications will be sent out mid to late February.

There will be **NO** Summer Champs Camp Fair this year.

These are extraordinary times, the worst recession since the 1930s, and we are being forced to do more with less. We are facing a major loss of state aid as a result of shortfalls in state revenue collections.

We have made great strides in the past two years to get our own financial house in order. As of July 1, 2009, the Portland Public Schools has completely repaid the fund balance owed to the city of Portland due to shortfalls in the FY2007 and 2008 budgets.

The district also has implemented multi-year budgeting, a process that will make us better able to plan programming, staffing, etc.

This fall, we developed a plan for dealing with an unprecedented curtailment in state education aid of up to \$3 million. We did so proactively – before the cut has been approved by the Maine Legislature – in order to ensure that we can save the necessary funds. Our plan will not **lay off a single employee.** Every effort has been made to minimize the impact on students.

We are continuing our focus on meeting student needs as we plan the FY2011 budget.

Our district has been through tough times before and we will weather this one. Although funding is a big challenge, we also have some incredible strengths to draw on: a community that demonstrates over and over again its strong support for the school system, thousands of volunteer hours contributed to our schools, major donations from business partners, foundations and other sources.

UPCOMING EVENTS	
1/20	Early Dismissal (2:00 PM)
1/27	Vision & Hearing Screening
1/27	Early Dismissal (2:00 PM)
1/28	Vision & Hearing Screening
2/10	PTA Meeting (7:00 PM)
February Recess—Week of 2/15/10	

Communication Corner

by Janice Boyko and Lori Coffin

Introducing Communication Corner, an addition to the Lyseth School newsletter and your source for news, tips and information about speech and language. This edition features information about **conversation**. (It's not just for grown-ups!) Also, a note to **parents of kindergarten students**: The hearing screening for K students will take place on Thursday, January 28 during regular school hours, in conjunction with the scheduled vision screening.

Keep the Conversation Going!

Do you ever notice how some people seem to be comfortable talking to just about anyone? Actually, being able to hold your own in a conversation involves specific skills. Some of us know intuitively how to engage others in conversation and some of us need to be taught. Knowing what to do and say in different social situations helps children learn how to connect with one another. Help your child learn how important these non-verbal behaviors are: eye contact, tone of voice, facial expression and posture/proximity. Explain "body language" to your child. Do you know that our non-verbal communication often says more than our words? Teach your child how to start and maintain a conversation. Practice "keeping the conversation going" by asking follow-up questions; questions that usually start with **who, what, where, when, why** or **what else**. Many of our students have been practicing follow-up questions in their classrooms. For example, "What else happened at soccer practice?" Practice comments that will help keep the conversation going; comments such as, "I also _____", "I like _____", "I went _____", "I'm going (to) _____". Have fun and keep talking! See you in the next newsletter.

Nurse Notes

Juanita McLeod R.N. School Nurse

The Seasonal/ H1N1 Booster Clinic was held on Tuesday, January 12th. A HUGE thank you goes out to all volunteers, staff, and students for a well organized event. If your child missed the clinic and needed a booster for either seasonal, H1N1, or both, please feel free to call Mary-Jo Brink or myself and we will try to help resolve the issue. Mary-Jo and I are so thankful for such wonderful parent and grandparent volunteers. You are AWESOME!

PSO Spring Youth Concert

Sounds like Art: Painting, Poetry and Performance Contest

All Lyseth School third, fourth and fifth students will be attending Portland Symphony Orchestra's 2009-2010 Sounds Like Art Youth Concert on March 9, 2010. This trip is sponsored by the Lyseth PTA Enrichment Committee.

As part of the Portland Symphony Orchestra's 2009-2010 Sounds Like Art Youth Concert, the PSO is pleased to announce their Paint, Poetry, and Movement Contest.

Students in grades K-8 are invited to submit artwork which has been created to music. For more information and details on submitting artwork please visit the PSO website www.portlandsymphony.com or contact Heather Klenow, Education and Community Engagement Manager at (207)773-6128 ext. 308. The deadline for submitting work is February 5, 2010.

Postcard Project in Mrs. Dyer's Room



Mrs. Dyer's second grade class is participating in a postcard project. There are 44 classrooms from 44 states participating. We have sent a postcard to each of the other 43 states. Our postcards explain interesting facts about Maine such as our state bird and tree and the weather here at this time of year. In return, we will receive a postcard from each of the other 43 classrooms telling interesting facts about those states! As the postcards arrive, we find the state on our class map of the U.S. and the students find and color the state on their own individual maps. We have received 19 postcards so far. It is fun to learn about other states!

A child can always teach an adult three things: to be happy for no reason, to always be busy with something, and to know how to demand with all his might that which he desires.

Paulo Coelho

"Stuff the School Bus" Food Drive

Lyseth School had a very successful food drive in November 2009. We participated in the "stuff the school bus" food drive organized by one of the local radio stations. We collected 25 boxes of food! The food went to the Preble Street Resource Center and the Wayside Soup Kitchen. The students did a fabulous job bringing in food items. Thank you also to Mr. MacDow-

ell's class for collecting the food and helping to box it up. I also want to thank all the parents who were able to send food in with their children. You too made this a huge success! Best wishes for a healthy and happy 2010!

Betsy Van Betuw
School Social Worker

Parent Donations

On behalf of the staff and students at Lyseth School, we take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the many donations of school supplies and copy paper. The support of parents and community members helps us to continue our commitment to excellence in education. We are grateful for your generosity and commitment to Lyseth School. Thank you for your support!

Lyseth Staff Take on the Role of Learners by Deb Fenton

During our Wednesday Professional Development, teachers at Lyseth have embarked on a learning expedition. In September, all staff members completed a survey which gave them an opportunity to list and prioritize areas they would like to work on this year. This information was compiled by the School Improvement Team and helped set our plan in motion. The plan was created to allow teachers to attend their first choice topic during the months of January and February.

The three areas that teachers are working on are technology, writing, and literacy. In the technology workshop teachers will be learning how to create a classroom website, explore appropriate websites to use with classroom instruction, and learning the basics of programs such as Excel, Power Point, and GroupWise. In the writing workshop, teachers will be using actual student work as they explore stages of writing that are developmentally appropriate, different methods of writing instruction, using writing conferences in their classroom and the importance of publishing student work. The literacy group will be looking at how to assess student comprehension to inform instruction and how to use non-fiction and interactive read alouds to improve comprehension.

During the months of April and May, the staff will move to the second session which will incorporate their second choice topic. Everyone has been very excited about the idea of choice. The staff agrees that when the learning fits their personal needs and goals, this helps to guide our professional growth as individuals and benefits students, the ultimate goal of professional development.

News from the Computer Lab by Kathy Jewett

Are you looking for a way to help ensure your child is as safe as possible while using the Internet? Don't want to pay the fees often associated with services like Netnanny and Cyberbuddy? Here's an option from our Computer Tech Services – it's free and a great alternative to the other services. To check it out, go to <http://www.light-speedguide.com>.

If your child needs to access the Grolier online encyclopedia to do research at home, you may be asked for a user name and password. If that happens, enter the following:

User Name: **ppsme**

Password: **maine**

Once you enter this information once, you shouldn't be asked for it again on that computer; if you have more than one computer, you will probably have to enter it the first time Grolier is accessed on each computer.

Lyseth Math Team by Ellianna Boothe

As you might have heard, Lyseth's math team is having a great year. In September we started out not knowing what to expect. In October we had a Southern Maine Meet which means that every school in southern Maine has 1 or 2 teams, so it is really hard to place. In December our streak started. Lyseth's team, "The Divisors," placed second and Ellianna Boothe placed first individually with a perfect score. The members on the Divisors team are Ellianna Boothe, Kyle Cholod, Nolan Cyr, Jacob Goldberg, Kate Johnson, and Lucas Profenno. The team "Phantom Loads" members are Elianna Budri, Nicole Dixon, Erin Ritter, Roman Anderson, Abby Elowitch, and Taylor Sargent.

We all hope that the Lyseth math teams keep up the good work for the rest of the year. Thanks to our coaches, Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Cholod!

Southern Maine Math Meet by Jacob Goldberg

On Friday, January 15, the Lyseth math team went to the Holiday Inn to attend a math meet. Overall they came in third for the entire Southern Maine Math Meet! The winning team was the Lyseth Divisors. The kids on that team are Jacob Goldberg, Ellianna Boothe, Kyle Cholod, Kate Johnson, Lucas Profenno, and Nolan Cyr. Members on the other team, the Lyseth Denominators, did very well too. Some of the kids scored in the top five for individual awards. Kyle Cholod placed third for individual in the entire Southern Maine Math Meet! The other was Jacob Goldberg with a perfect score, first in Southern Maine! That means they were third and first out of over 1,000 kids! They did great! Everybody did great!

Alcohol Awareness Day

Maine schools often take advantage of information coming from the Department of Education on a variety of topics. Students in grades 4 and 5 may mention to their families learning about the growing concern about teenage alcohol use. Parents can access information that students have been exploring here at school by going to the Maine Department of Education website (maine.gov). Several Lyseth alumni appear on the link, "the Cool Spot." The purpose of visiting this website was twofold: 1) to develop an awareness surrounding the issue of underage alcohol use and 2) to develop skills and proficiency in internet research. This request was developed by our technology instructor, Mrs. Jewett.

Humanity for Haiti

The students in Room 21 and 22 are organizing school-wide fundraising events that will include a shades (sunglasses) day, a hat day, and a pro sports day. Students will be asked to donate 50 cents to participate in each event. All classrooms will be collecting spare change during the week of February 8. All money collected will be donated to the American Red Cross for the relief efforts in Haiti. More detailed information will be coming home with your child.

