

Dear Parents,

Thank you to the CSA! Three electronic whiteboards have finally arrived and our teachers are thrilled! The boards have been placed in middle school classrooms so all students have access to this educational experience. Mike Miller, David Zuckerman, and Donna Clapp will use the new boards while Wendy Stack will continue with the one board that we currently own. Promethean, the company providing the boards, has been asked to come and do a parent presentation so the community can view the many facets of this educational tool used to enhance instruction and learning for all students. Our goal is to eventually provide an electronic whiteboard for each classroom; Concord has almost reached this goal.

The budget process is currently underway. The Selectman discussed again whether to have one or two warrant articles at the Town meeting, agreeing to keep one warrant article. The schools are asking for an additional \$150,000 above the guideline budget given to us, and this request will be voted upon at Town Meeting. If approved at Town Meeting, then the warrant article will be placed on the ballot for approval on election day.

Originally the school asked for a budget of \$450,000 above guideline to support our escalating costs. The School Committee worked carefully with us to reduce this request to \$241,000. In order to reach \$241,000 we lost four teachers, several curriculum coordinators, intramural and JV coaches, and a permanent substitute. Next, we were asked to reduce the budget to \$150,000. To reach the \$150,000 level, we cut another teacher and eliminated two aides for middle school support and further reduced coordinator stipends. We deem these to be significant losses to our program. Should we not get the \$150,000, which does not even bring us to level service, we will be forced to further reduce our staff by cutting another two teachers and five aides. Should we have new additions to our English Language Learner population, this will result in further staff reductions. Remaining staff will be reassigned to meet class size demands and student needs. I ask you to attend Town Meeting and voice your opinion.

Much of my time over the past couple of months has been devoted to these budget issues and to working with the School Committee to develop the best possible budget for our school, while recognizing the financial pressures faced by the town. This week, however, I want to use most of this space to highlight a number of exciting and wonderful events that have been occurring at the Carlisle Public Schools during the past weeks.

We are extremely grateful to the CSA and to all the parents who support the CSA for the outstanding cultural enrichment programs they provide throughout the year. A sampling of recent programs includes Mitali Perkins discussing life between cultures to our spellbound 5th graders, Alex Maclean showing his aerial photographs and discussing the environment at a middle school assembly, and the Techsploration program enjoyed by elementary students. In upcoming programs, kindergartners will learn about the rainforest, 8th graders about the Holocaust, and 2nd graders about mammals. These programs greatly enrich our curriculum and give our students new ways to look at the

world around them. Special thanks to our CSA for researching, funding and supporting our curriculum through rich programs every year!

In the world of fine arts, we have much to celebrate. Our senior band and choir members are preparing for this weekend's MICCA festival; we ask only that they do their best, and we wish them luck. Last week, Courtney Hadley and Rachel Dayson hosted a visiting artist for the visual arts program. Potter, Bruce Barry, taught Peruvian pottery techniques to middle school classes and shared his experience as a potter with the students. This program is also possible because of the generous support of our parents. In an extraordinary event, our 7th graders presented 3 excellent performances of Seussical, which left audiences tapping their feet, standing for ovations and humming the catchy tunes for days afterwards. Sell-out crowds cheered the efforts of our creative 7th grade students. Last but not least, the following students performed in the recent Northeast District Junior Music Festival: Sonie Boor, Lucy King, Hannah Parra, Valerie Caddell, John Knobel, Tommy Veitch, Bolton Graham, Julie Margolies, Curran Wilmot, Margaret Hoffman, Madeline Monroe, Kelly Xing, Francie Hofmann, and Stephanie Mundel. Congratulations to all!

Two curriculum-related events of note were Pi Day and a visit by three sled dogs and their handlers to the third grade. Pi Day, celebrated on March 14th, involved student projects about Pi (3.141592653589...) One third grade boy memorized over one hundred digits of Pi! After sharing their projects, students enjoyed pie – chocolate, pecan, apple, peach – provided by the math department. On March 20th, second graders gathered in the exercise room to meet sled dogs and learn all about them as part of their study of Alaska and the Iditarod. The students have been following the “last great race” in this wonderful interdisciplinary unit.

In sports, a highly successful intramural floor hockey program just concluded. Forty-three students participated in high-spirited games of floor hockey under the watchful eye of Margaret Heigl. Intramural gymnastics is now in full swing. A favorite event of the school year is the annual student-faculty basketball game. The game will be held at the CCHS gym on April 12th at 7:30, with all proceeds to benefit the Carlisle Teachers' Association scholarship fund, so be sure and mark your calendars! I hope to see many of you there.

Our parents and staff have also been busy. The CSA sponsored programs to keep parents apprised of our work; in February, we discussed student leadership and anti-bullying and in March, a group presented on the school's wellness program. On April 12th at 9:00 am, the CSA will sponsor an informational meeting on the school budget. The technology committee has been meeting each month and working on a technology plan for the school and planning network improvements. The math review team is working on surveys for parents, teachers, and students, and the School Advisory Council is developing a plan based on results of the school-wide survey conducted in the fall.

It seems that March has been a frenzy of activities both in the classroom and outside, culminating in the past two weeks of MCAS testing. Reading and Language Arts have

been tested in grades 3 through 8 with more testing to follow in May. (Please refer to the calendar to know exactly when your child in grade 3-8 may be tested.) Staff has been extraordinarily busy with writing report cards and discussing student progress with parents during conferences.

I hope families and friends have found time to participate in some of the myriad of activities occurring at the school. It's a very busy and productive place, and students and faculty alike are looking forward to a breather during April vacation. I wish you a wonderful vacation time with your children and hope you and they return rested and ready to learn for the final two months of school.

Sincerely,
Marie Doyle