

March 20, 2008

Dear Parents,

With all the attention focused recently on the budget for next year, we might take a moment to highlight the continuing excellence at Carlisle Public Schools through some of the leading programs we offer.

First, we continue to lead in STEM education through our after school science program. Our STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering Program) clubs are going strong. We are offering 7 programs that include 93 students from pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. Offerings include early inventions, simple machines, flight simulation, lego robotics, structures, and Kinderscience. The clubs have been extremely popular and our success is due to the hard work of parents Peg Gladstone and Wendy Powell, the talented teachers, and the enthusiastic students.

In another science based endeavor, two of our middle school science teachers have been attending training classes at UMass Lowell to learn about the UML Design Lab programs and to participate in a study regarding the extension of the highly successful summer Design Camps to after-school programs. The Design Lab is collaboration between UMass and local businesses to provide engineering programs for elementary and high school students. Following their training, Wendy Stack and Brad Cranston are currently offering Design Lab after-school classes in electrical engineering for ten weeks to 24 sixth and seventh graders; next year, they will offer two more after school sessions as well. All funding and materials for the classes come through a STEM grant. Wendy Stack will also be participating as an instructor in this summer's Design Camp at UMass. All this comes as we continue to read that American students are falling behind their counterparts across the globe in mathematics and science; we also are aware of the potential shortage of STEM workers in the United States within the next ten years due to retirements and fewer students entering these career tracks. Programs like the Design Labs and the STEP clubs are essential if we are to close this pressing gap.

Third, on March 12th, Chiao Bin Huang and I were invited to present at the New England World Language Department Chairs Seminar at UMass Boston, sponsored by Primary Source. The topic of the seminar was "Building a Model Chinese Program." The Carlisle presentation received positive recognition for having a successful Mandarin Chinese program, and we answered many questions from representatives of schools still working to bring Chinese to their districts. The slide show presented details on how to set up a Chinese program as well as photos of students learning Chinese and teachers visiting China. Video clips of the award winning town-wide Chinese New Year celebration were also included. If you would like to view the presentation, it's posted on the school website.

Carlisle is at the forefront of global education, as more systems explore offering Mandarin, elementary Spanish, and expanded global perspectives to the curriculum. Primary Source, graciously funded by the Carlisle Education Foundation, has provided rich experiences for our teachers leading to an expanded focus on global education. When the teachers return from classes, they state that the offerings are of the highest caliber and often say that it is the best staff development program that they have experienced. Currently Primary Source is expanding their courses to include India courses on Latin America. Primary Source, highly regarded in metro-

west school districts, has asked Carlisle teachers and administrators to present at various workshops and conferences due to the outstanding nature of our programs, curriculum and staff.

As we struggle daily to produce a budget in difficult economic times, we do well to remember that we have an excellent school, staffed by outstanding teachers, and supported by generous parents. The efforts of all allows us to continue to lead the way with programs like STEP, Design Labs, world languages and global education.

Sincerely,  
*Marie Doyle*