

Lowell Lowdown

January/February, 2010

James Russell Lowell School is a
community of learners.

As a caring and responsible community:

We **care** about ourselves, others, and our learning environment,

We **share** our thoughts and feelings in kind and respectful ways,

We **dare** to try our best, be creative and explore new ideas.

We care, share, and dare.



LOWELL SCHOOL WEBSITE:

<http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/lowell/index.html>



Upcoming Events

- ◆ Week of Jan 11th - Box Tops Collection Contest begins
- ◆ Jan 24th - Lowell School Night at the Providence Bruins
- ◆ Jan 26th - 7pm Site Council Meeting
- ◆ Jan 28th - Pre-K/K Info night
- ◆ Jan 29th - Help Haiti Spirit Day
- ◆ Jan 29th - ELL Parent Meeting (8:20-9:00am)
- ◆ Feb 1st - Pizzeria Uno fundraiser
- ◆ Feb 10th - Executive Function Skills (6:30pm)
- ◆ Feb 12th - Have-a-Heart Spirit Day
- ◆ Feb 13th-21st - School vacation
- ◆ February 26th - Family Bingo Night
- ◆ March 9th - PTO Meeting (2:45pm & 7:00-pm)
- ◆ March 12th - 3rd Annual Saint Patrick's Day Fundraiser at Donahue's Bar & Grill,

From the Principal's desk

Please see page 4 "Parents as Partners" for information on a Parent Workshop by Sarah Ward.

- *Sarah Ward*, a well-known speaker, presented at Watertown High School for the January 19th Professional Development Day. Sarah regularly presents on the topic of *executive functions* to a variety of professional and parent organizations throughout Massachusetts and the United States.
- *What are the Executive Function Skills?*
The term Executive Function is used to describe a learned set of skills associated with goal setting, organization, time management, task completion, and visualizing a plan to complete future tasks successfully.
- These skills are developed at *home and at school*, and are important for learning from past experiences and applying this knowledge to new experiences. Young children rely on these skills to follow a sequence of instructions and routines for daily tasks, while older children need these skills to "break a task down" into a sequence of steps and organize a time line as the demands for independent learning increase.
- Sarah emphasized the importance of directly teaching children how to problem solve and then "make notes to self" to remember what helped and what didn't help. Responsibility is

then shifted to the child so they learn how to be more independent at home and at school.

- *Pass it along!* A simple but invaluable message relevant to parents in her presentation was the importance of regulating bed times. Find a consistent time to help regulate your child's internal bio-rhythm and sense of well-being. Science validates that there is a loss of cognitive maturation with sleep loss. Regulating bedtime can actually increase IQ points!
- Another invaluable message was the importance of hydration to both mental alertness and mood. She recommends that children in school drink water all day!

If you want to learn more about Executive Function, Sarah recommends: No Mind Left Behind: Understanding and Fostering Executive Control- The Eight Essential Brain Skills Every Child Needs to Thrive, by Adam J. Cox.

Dressing for the winter and snow that is now upon us!

This is a reminder to send children to school wearing appropriate clothing for going to outdoor recess in winter. Children cannot go in the snow without boots, and snowpants are suggested to keep our students warm and dry. Recess is a very short time, so anything parents can do to make this process efficient is greatly appreciated.

Cyberbullying - In light of the recent cyberbullying tragedy at South Hadley High School we would like to provide you with a link that addresses the issue and provides several tips on how to avoid this becoming a problem with your children. This should be of particular interest to those families whose children spend time online in social networking sites like FaceBook and who use text messaging on their cell phone.

I encourage you to have a conversation about cyberbullying with your kids to let them know that the topic is open for discussion.

<http://www.common sense media.org/cyberbullying-tips>



Message from the Watertown Youth Coalition

PARENTING MATTERS!

Stay Involved.

Help Kids Find Positive Things To Do.

Studies show positive activities help kids stay away from risky behaviors. But parents often ask: How can I stay involved in my teens' life?

Start a conversation; then listen!

1. Show genuine interest in their activities and concerns.
2. Listen with respect.
3. Ask about songs, music groups, fashion, TV shows or movies.
4. Ask your child to show you their favorite game or Web site. Ask them to teach you something new.
5. Share your interests.

For more information call 617-926-3600 or visit www.watertownyouthcoalition.org

Funded by the MA Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

FROM THE GUIDANCE OFFICE



(To enter kindergarten, your child must turn five on or before September 7, 2010.)

Class of 2023 Kindergarten Registration

On Thursday, January 28, 2010 we held our Kindergarten Information Night and got to meet many families who will be joining us at the Lowell next year. Here are a few important reminders:

1. Please return completed kindergarten packets; thanks to our PTO volunteers, registration times are:
 - March 2nd – 7:30-10:00am
 - March 3rd – 2:00-4:00pm
 - March 4th – 7:30-10:00am & 6:00-7:30pm
2. April Tours: (RSVP 617.923.6266 or vknight@watertown.k12.ma.us in case of cancelation)
 - Tuesday, April 13th, 2010 6:30 PM
 - Thursday, April 15th, 2010 9:00 AM
3. June Screening: You will receive a letter with the date & time ONLY if a student is registered
 - Thursday, June 10th, 2010
 - Friday, June 11th, 2010
4. Welcoming the class of 2023 – Tuesday, May 25th, 6:00 – 7:00 PM, Lowell Library

5. Teddy Bear Social – Wednesday June 2nd from 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Lowell Gym/Cafeteria
6. Meeting the Kindergarten Team – Wednesday, June 23rd, 2010 (Tentative last day of school)

Co-Teaching Grade 4 with Ms. Phipps and



Ms. Sudbay

Under the tutelage of our Specials Teachers, the 4th & 5th Graders are learning many exciting things about South Africa. Building on that knowledge base, our Guidance lessons this year will begin with understanding the impact of prejudice; and making connections between respecting diversity and bullying prevention.

The PTO Parents Event Committee is hosting a series of discussion groups.

Today we began with revisiting the book “Five Love Languages for Children” by Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell.

More topics to come:

- Friday 3/12 - Response to Intervention
 - Friday 4/16 - Friendships/Popularity/Bullying
 - Friday 6/14 - Media Impact
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PARENTS AS PARTNERS

This is a new addition to the Lowell Lowdown. The goal of this segment is to support parents with current information on a variety of topics that apply to the personal, social and academic growth of all children.

We are beginning the New Year 2010 with an exciting workshop presented by Sarah Ward, M.S. CCC/SLP (Speech/Language Pathologist) on Executive Function Skills. As quoted by Sarah Ward, "Parents feel they do so much compensating for their kids' executive function deficits that they struggle with knowing how/when to disengage themselves in the interests of helping their child become more independent. In other words, where is the line between helping your child and enabling your child? "

Do you have difficulty keeping your child organized at home? Is your morning routine difficult because of this disorganization? Is your homework routine difficult? If you have answered yes to one or all of these questions, then this is the workshop for you. I attended this workshop and have to say it was the most powerful presentation I have attended in years. I walked away with an amazing new insight into children's executive function skills, as well as strategies that make sense and are easy to implement.

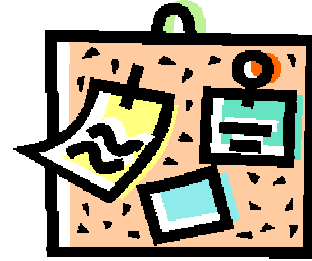
Parents are an essential partner in the academic success of their children. Common language and strategies between home and school can be a powerful tool. Please join your children's educators in this partnership. I promise you will not be disappointed.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS LOWELL LIBRARY

**February 10, 2010
6:30 p.m.**

Jean Qualters
Speech/Language Pathologist

THE LOWELL LOWDOWN BULLETIN BOARD



Calling all Volunteers!

There are many areas of the school that needs volunteers: the library and help getting materials photo copied for classrooms are just two of many ways you can help at the school. Contact the PTO if you are interested in volunteering!

Specifically, we are currently looking for help for two events: Family Bingo Night and 3rd Annual Donahue's Fundraiser. Any help will be much appreciated!

PTO Announcements

PTO Website! The web address is:
www.watertownlowellpto.com.

You can also contact the PTO using this email address: watertownlowellpto@gmail.com

T-Shirts and Sweatshirts! The PTO still has a few Watertown t-shirts and sweatshirts available for sale – order forms are available outside the main office – get them while supplies last!

Family Dues! It's never too late to turn in family dues. We'll take them all year, any year! Just drop your dues in the PTO mailbox or give to any board member.

Providence Bruins event on Jan 24th @ 4:05pm:
To purchase your tickets, fill out the order form below and return it to the Lowell PTO with cash or a check payable to the Lowell PTO by January 12. For more information, please contact Lars Fossel at lfossel@comcast.net. You can find details on the PTO web site.

A SPECIAL GUEST IN MS. SIMONS' CLASS



On Thursday, January 7th, the second grade students enjoyed an informative and exciting visit with Jeremy Reiner, meteorologist (weather man) at channel 7. The children were excited to learn about not only types of weather but how and where they start and how it is tracked and reported. Students from Ms. Simons' class discussed what they learned.

Grace - "I learned how hail was formed."

Max - "I found out where tornadoes start."

Mia - "I thought it was interesting to learn how tornadoes form."

Cormac - "I didn't know that tornadoes only last a few minutes."

Liam - "I like thunderstorms, they are fun to watch."

Kristen - "It was fun to watch how they use a green screen to report the weather."

Maddie - "I didn't know tornadoes form in the spring not summer."

Kevin - "Tornadoes can destroy a house."

Dario - "Hurricanes look like whirlpools."

Karim - "Did you know that water is sticky?"

Chris - "Hail circles in the air many times before it falls."

Sean - "Tornadoes last only 20 minutes."

Andres - "I liked learning about tornado facts."

Jack - "Tornadoes are interesting."

Eamon - "I liked learning about Jeremy Reiner from his blog."



Morning meetings in Ms. Simons class have always included a check on the weather and now the students can discuss in detail Boston weather and beyond, thanks to a wonderful presentation by Mr. Reiner. (He may have some future competition!)

GREETINGS FROM THE LIBRARY!

By Ms. Phipps

As many of you know, the fourth- and fifth-graders have begun to work on our South Africa project during specials. The library was lucky enough to receive some funds to buy books about South Africa. I am happy to say, by going through, "South Africa Partners," for each book purchased for the Lowell, a book was donated to a library in South Africa! Eight books in total were purchased, thus eight books were donated. Check out the books today!



PTO-sponsored Box Tops 4 Education Collection Event Winter 2010



Start/Kickoff Date: January 21, 2010
Collection/End Date: February 12, 2010

Parents and Guardians,

To help the Lowell School raise additional monies for funding requests, the PTO is running a Box Tops 4 Education coupon collection contest among the classrooms to coincide with the next Box Tops submission date on February 28, 2010. The winning classroom will receive the following honors:

- Accolades and presentation of a framed certificate at the next PTO meeting
- A photo of the winning classroom posted on the PTO bulletin board at the main entrance
- Their names and classroom photo included in the next *Lowell Lowdown*.

Guidelines for Collecting the Box Tops Coupons:

Each classroom teacher will be given a cardboard box that will be used to collect Box Tops for that classroom.

Children are expected to “prepare” their Box Tops coupons – by trimming them on the dotted lines – at home and not during classroom time.

Collected and prepared Box Tops coupons should either be gathered in a plastic snack or sandwich size bag or stapled (*not glued, pasted, or taped*) to Box Tops Collection Worksheets, available on the Internet at: <http://www.boxtops4education.com/earn/clip/Projects.aspx>.

We ask that the children deposit their collected Box T oupon bags and Worksheets into the collection box designated for their classroom. This keeps the Box Tops for each classroom separate, to facilitate the counting and validation process later.

Each classroom teacher will decide whether to integrate the collection event into their classroom curriculum and instruction.

At the end of the collection period, the classroom collection boxes (containing the Box Tops coupons) will be collected by the Grade Level Coordinators. The PTO will total the coupons, and announce the results at the March 2009 PTO meeting.