



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

January

- Jan 3: SCHOOL RESUMES
- Jan 11 at 7pm: PTO Meeting
- Jan 13 at 7pm: LILA Board Meeting
- Jan 15 at 6 pm: KINDERGARTEN LOTTERY for the 2011-2012 kinder class
- Jan 21: Talent Show (time TBD)
- Jan 17: **No School** MINNESOTA TWINS CARAVAN VISITS LILA, 8 – 9:30 am!
- Jan 24 at 7pm: LILA Foundation Meeting
- Jan 24: **No School**

Friday, January 14th
Twins Day at LILA
Wear Your Twins
Gear!!



From the Director's Desk:

Happy New Year to all of you in 2011! We're glad to be back in school, as we're sure many of you are.

During a time of state financial recovery, and in an era of decreasing certainty regarding support for charter schools in Minnesota, we have been exploring all possibilities to ensure a strong future for LILA. We have worked hard to establish a sound financial footing for LILA, as evidenced by receiving the state financial award for four years in a row. We continue to look to the future and plan for continued academic success and financial stability.

To that end, we've engaged in talks with Forest Lake Area Schools District 831, discussing the possibilities and the pros and cons of our becoming a site-governed school within that district. Site-governed schools can be formed under a new law that allows districts to create schools with the autonomy of charters. We're not at the point of making any decisions, simply gathering information. We need to have alternative plans should new legislation and state budget solutions significantly change charter education in Minnesota.

As a site-governed school, LILA would have autonomy within the district, yet access district stability and dollars. Currently, state law allows for site-governed schools, but does not provide for charters to merge with districts to become one. Therefore, part of the exploration of this idea involves talking with legislators to learn what statutes would need tweaking to allow this to happen, should we decide to pursue it.

Why would LILA be interested in becoming a District 831 site-governed school?

This would be yet another joint venture in a long list of joint ventures, including the partnership we currently have for Spanish immersion continuation in grades 7 – 12, student trips abroad with both LILA and district students, grant writing, food service, community education, and school and community pride events.

By joining forces with FL, we cement the influence we have on grade 7-12 programming. They've been wonderful at supporting us and deferring to

our ideas and wishes. With us joining them, our influence would be formalized and solidified, regardless of future leadership changes. We have several more ideas for 7-12 programming, such as IB and ongoing Chinese, and we believe we would be in a better position to implement them from within District 831.

While exact comparisons are difficult, district schools do receive more funding per pupil than LILA does. LILA currently receives \$5500 per pupil, without lease aid, from the state and ISD 831 currently receives \$7396 per pupil (with \$971 of that being “referendum aid” that is scheduled to expire next year unless voters approve a renewal).

District schools also have access to Health and Safety dollars that charters don’t. For example, all asbestos abatement in this building has come out of our general fund—the same fund from which we pay teachers and buy library books. In a district school, this would have come out of a separate state fund, set aside for this purpose.

Finally, the district has the ability, when the state can’t or won’t provide appropriate funding, to go to the voters to ask for additional funding. They don’t always get it, but we, as a charter, don’t even have the option of going to the voters to ask. In addition, the district is able to borrow money cheaply, with the state as guarantor, if needed in difficult budgeting years, for example, when legislators decide to hold back 30% of a school’s budget until the following year, as they do now.

Why is District 831 interested in partnering with LILA?

They understand the value of language immersion education and desire the increased autonomy that a charter or site-governed school has, allowing for changes and best practices to be implemented more quickly than in traditional school processes.

They believe our track record and success demonstrate our ability to lead and organize language instruction.

They are impressed by the national recognition we have received for our language immersion program, by our IB authorization, our strong enrollment, our academic accomplishments, and our stable finances.

LILA’s becoming a site-governed District 831 school would empower a no-holds-barred partnership and show our resolve to work together long-term for the benefit of LILA, District 831 and, most importantly, the students of Forest Lake and its surrounding communities.

What’s Next?

We understand that you may have mixed feelings about the site-governed school idea and be unsure of what it means for you and your family. LILA continues to explore this option with caution and thoroughness. Until we know more about what is possible legislatively and how the new state legislature will affect the charter school industry in Minnesota, we will keep this option open. We will continue to provide information to you about what is happening.

LILA AUDIT

Annually, every Minnesota public school must undergo an independent financial audit to demonstrate responsible use of public funding. Each year, LILA has received from its audit firm, Larson Allen, the best opinion they can deliver—a clean audit—and this year was no exception. In LILA's audit report issued October 14, Larson Allen also highlighted other good news: by the fiscal year's end at June 30, 2010, LILA increased its fund balance to 33% of expenses. Auditors normally recommend a 20-25% fund balance to allow for unexpected expenses and decrease the likelihood of borrowing. This year, however, with the State holding back 30% of public school funding instead of the usual 10%, having a 33% fund balance puts the school where very, very few schools are. Like last year, we will likely not need to borrow to bridge that 30% gap. This achievement will help tremendously as the school weathers the next few years of local, state and national economic hardship. Also rest assured that when the state holdback eventually decreases, LILA is prepared to spend down its fund balance accordingly, in order to put education dollars to work.

The school encourages you to review its 2010 audit report; please call Budgets Manager Julie Lundgren at 651-464-0771 ext 229 for more information.



Fifth and Sixth Grade-Spelling Bee

Important Dates:

Classroom Bees will be held during the week of January 3.

Grade Level Bees will be held during the week of January 18.

Winners receive a subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica and advance to district bee.

Study Materials @
www.myspellit.com

Singing Winter Songs in PJ'S



Srta. Jennv's First Graders



Sra. Julie's Kindergartens

LILA Afterschool Happenings

Registration forms for the classes below can be downloaded from the LILA's Enrichment Page--
<https://sites.google.com/a/lakesinternational.org/sra-nancy-hawkinson/afterschool-activity-fliers>



Want to amaze your friends and impress your opponents? Want to increase your IQ while having fun playing Chess and compete for various prizes? Learn from Twin Cities Chess Club instructors who have years of teaching experience. Competitive chess tournaments are scheduled once a year and students can play for real chess trophies! All chess levels are welcome.

Class Title: Twin Cities Chess Club

Instructor: William Wells

Date: Fridays, Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25, Mar. 4, 18 (10 sessions)

Time: 2:15-3:45pm

Fee: \$120



Winter yoga sessions
 3rd 4th and 5th grades Tuesdays 2:15 to 3:30
 Jan. 11th to Feb. 22nd
 Kinder 1st and 2nd grades Thursdays 2:15 to 3:30
 Jan. 13th to Feb. 24th
 \$60 due at time of first yoga session
 Bring a yoga mat and water to drink
 To Sign Up call Michelle at 651-237-6888
 (Volunteer coaches always welcome!)

Yoga For Kids



Forest Lake Ranger 4th grade travelling basketball team has just won their third tournament in a row. LILA 4th graders Jordyn Wald and McKenzie Stumne are part of the team. They have now won 10 straight games.



**Karate
 20-Week
 Program
 January-
 May**

School Board Elections

The Lakes International Community is currently seeking interested candidates for positions on the School Board. The term of office will be for two years, from July 2011-July 2013. There will be opening for three teachers, two parents, and one community member.

In accordance with Lakes International by-laws, licensed LILA teachers are eligible to run for the board if they have taught at LILA for one full year prior to elections. Parents are eligible to run if they have had a child attending LILA for one full year prior to elections. The LILA board will also include a "community member" who is not employed by the school and does not have a child attending the school, in accordance with Minnesota statute, passed in 2009.

Board elections logistics:

Board seats held by teachers and parents are two-year terms.

Board seat held by a community member is a one-year term.

A board member may run for a second two-year term.

No board member may be elected for more than two consecutive two-year terms.

Interested eligible individuals are kindly requested to apply no later than Friday, January 21, 2011 at 4 pm.

Application packets are available at the following link-
<http://www.lakesinternational.org/board/elections.html>



January 17, 8 – 9:30 am

School's Out....but LILA will be full of energy!

The 2011 Twins Winter Caravan is stopping at LILA! So, Grab those homer hankies and come out and help the Twins kick off their new season!

The Twins Winter Caravan is one of the longest running and most extensive offseason team caravans in professional sports. It features teams of current and former players visiting schools, hospitals, corporations and service clubs during the day. Individuals included in the preliminary schedule are Twins players: Matt Capps, Brian Duensing and Sports broadcaster: Dick Bremer