

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

### March

- **Mar 28 at 7pm:**  
Lila Foundation Meeting
- **Mar 31 at 6pm:**  
Parent Forum on PYP and Student Discipline
- **Mar 31 at 7pm:**  
Annual Meeting

### April

- **Apr 4:** NO SCHOOL
- **Apr 7:** Spring Program-Grade 1 and Grade 2
- **Apr 9:** Foundation Gala at 5 pm
- **Apr 11-29:** MCA Testing Dates Grades 3-6
- **April 14** at 7pm:  
School Board Meeting
- **April 16:** Fun Run for Kids Against Hunger
- **April 19:** 5 – 8 pm, Adult Dance Program
- **April 21:** 6 pm, Parent Forum
- **Apr 25** at 7pm:  
LILA Foundation Meeting
- **Apr 26:** Reading Night

**SAVE THE DATE:  
Family Fun Night-  
June 3**

# A Message from the Director

Greetings LILA Parents,

On occasion, I like to use this space to respond to parent questions, comments, and concerns. During parent-teacher conferences last week, the following question was brought to the attention of LILA administration, and we feel it is a question that other parents may be wondering as well.

### **Parent question: what impact do teacher absences have on my child's education?**

Let's start by listing the reasons for teacher absences:

\***ILLNESS:** Teacher illnesses and their families' illnesses vary widely from year to year, depending on the teacher. We believe, as a general rule, that our teachers are careful not to abuse sick leave, and if anything, come to work when it might be advisable to stay home and fully recover.

\***APPOINTMENTS with PHYSICIANS:** These fall into two categories: 1) routine appointments, which we ask teacher to arrange outside of the school day or during breaks whenever possible, and 2) specific symptom appointments—during or after being sick, these types of appointments often need to be scheduled during the day to meet physicians' schedules. Our teachers take, on average, 3.2 days per year sick leave. Anyone who has worked in a school setting will attest that new teachers are more prone to the viruses passing through the school. With our young staff, we feel very good about the average number of days of illness per year.

\***PERSONAL DAYS:** We afford all teachers with two personal days that they may use during the school year for personal reasons, unrelated to illness. Teachers must get prior approval for these absences, and we limit the number of teachers who can use these days pre- and post-vacation.

\***LEADERSHIP POSITION:** We participate in the statewide Quality Compensation (Q-Comp) program, which adds and additional \$150,000 to the school budget each year. That program is based on master teachers having time out of the classroom to observe and coach their colleagues. Our plan calls for a team teacher working with those individuals, giving them one day per week out of the classroom for these purposes. The team teacher is paid on a regular teaching contract, and is not considered a substitute, but instead is a co-teacher who takes part in planning and assessment. We have been very fortunate to have excellent co-teachers here at LILA.

\***PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** As an IB school and a Spanish immersion school, we do not use stand alone subject curriculums, except for math. The coordination and development of our units of inquiry require significant time in development and required reflection at the end of each unit. In our earlier years, this planning took place outside the school day, and was very time consuming. In those early days, we couldn't afford even subject specialists (music, deportes) and teachers were simply expected to stay late every day. It was common to find groups of teachers working here at 9 pm on any given evening.

That level of commitment is necessary on the front end of any big endeavor and we are grateful to the staff who were here at the beginning, and able to make that kind of commitment. That level, however, is not sustainable long term, and our agreement with teachers from the beginning has been that we would add specialists to give them “prep” time and meeting time for professional development as we were able to afford to do so. This has been a slow process, and this is the first year that we have provided individual grade level teams extended planning at the end of each unit, and a few other days, as necessary, to complete grade level projects.

Note that the need for ongoing professional development is not primarily because we have a young staff; we have an incredibly talented, bilingual staff who are charged with the task of carrying out an extremely challenging program. At LILA, no one teaches a curriculum that comes in a box.

It is always a struggle to find the right balance between meeting time, to be well prepared, and student contact time, to meet individual student needs. This is an area that we consider very carefully each year, and it has been high on the teachers’ list of priorities to not meet so frequently after school as we have in the past. Often 3 – 4 meeting nights per week were necessary in the past, causing the teacher to take their classroom assessments and preparations home with them after an already long day, to get ready for the next school day. We have reduced after school meetings from four days per week to three days per week. On alternating Tuesdays, teachers have either a staff meeting or a cross-grade level Professional Learning Community meeting. On Thursdays, we provide professional development on many topics; teachers select the areas in which they most need support or help teach these classes. In addition, grade levels are required to meet at least once per week outside of the school day.

As our staff more and more becomes a staff with their own children, meeting this balance of a reasonable workload becomes an increasingly harder challenge. We have, over the past three years, carefully looked at the meetings we require to reduce them to what we consider the bare minimum to provide a quality program and support our teachers’ professional development needs. We continue to look for efficiencies in meetings and ways to increase student-teacher contact time.

We have considered extending our school day one hour two days per week, where students who ride buses would be shuttled to individual elementary schools at 3 pm to catch elementary buses home. We believe we may be able to afford those extra shuttles for two days per week either next year or the year after, as one way to increase student contact time and increase blocks of uninterrupted learning time.

We’ve heard a comparison between LILA and other elementary schools, and it would seem that our teachers have more time away from the classroom. This may well be true. We tell new teachers, as we offer them positions, that this will likely be the hardest job they ever have because of the level of training and commitment needed to be able to offer the kind of program we have and the ongoing need for reflecting and continual improvement in an IB PYP, Responsive Classroom, Immersion school. We have been told more than once that what we provide is equivalent or better to private schools that charge \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year.

We wish we had more money to be able to provide training during the summer and outside of school. One of the goals of the LILA Foundation, in fact, is to fund some additional special programs such as arts specialists, full time classroom tech specialists, dedicated English teachers or classroom aides in each classroom. All of these would allow more scheduling flexibility and give students more teacher contact time. We at LILA strive for the same things parents wish for their children: to develop critically thinking, socially capable, culturally aware young people who can thrive in a diverse, global society.

If you have more questions about how our Q-Comp program, our teacher benefit package or our professional development plans all fit with PYP at LILA, please plan to attend a Parent Forum on Thursday, April 21, at 6 pm in the library to have your questions addressed.



## LILA NAMED NATIONAL SCHOOL OF CHARACTER

LILA has been selected as a 2011 National School of Character (NSOC) Finalist! The Character Education Partnership (CEP) sponsors the program to recognize schools and districts that demonstrate an exemplary level of implementation of CEP's *11 Principles of Effective Character Education* and identify sites to serve as models. Schools and districts that achieve this status agree to offer guidance and outreach to others in their journey in character education. This year a record 50 schools and districts have been selected as finalists.

Our task now is to provide additional information and data to our NSOC evaluator about how we incorporate character education into our curriculum and its positive effects on our LILA community. Our evaluator will also come to LILA for a site visit on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The list of winning schools will be posted by May 9<sup>th</sup> on the CEP website. Whether or not we are listed among the final "winners," we are honored and excited to be a finalist! Go LILA!

## PTO NEWS

*"Discover why some of the richest people in the world are not millionaires, they are volunteers."*

### HELP WANTED!

Although Family Fun Night is still a few months away – June 3<sup>rd</sup> to be exact - work on donation requests for our Silent Auction is underway. Examples of some major donations we've already received include Disney Park-Hopper Passes, a Keurig brewer & coffee kups, Stampin' Up products, StoryPeople prints, among others! If you haven't had the opportunity to volunteer yet this year, this is a great project that will only require a couple hours (as you have the time) and can be done from the comfort of your own home (no meetings necessary!). Please contact Maria Bloomberg, PTO Board Member and Parent Volunteer at [mariabloomberg@wdemail.com](mailto:mariabloomberg@wdemail.com) or 651.464.0297 Everything you need to help out will be provided.

Family Fun Night and our Silent Auction help make our Language Ambassador program possible as well as allow the PTO to support our classrooms, teachers and school as well as offer fun & educational events throughout the year.

Thanks ~ Gracias

### Flores Fundraiser

*Primavera* has arrived and back by popular demand is LILA's *Primavera* Flores Fundraiser. Each year the Flores Committee strives to make this fundraiser bigger and better!

#### Some changes this year include:

- ~ Even more Perennials
- ~ 4.75 Container Garden Plants
- ~ Gift Cards to be delivered prior to Mother's Day

#### Dates to know:

Packets home 3/21  
Orders due 4/11  
Delivery day 5/13



**Science-Mystery Game Vanished**

If you have, know, or work with children ages 11-14, encourage them to sign up for a first-of-its-kind, live, online interactive science mystery event created by MIT and the Smithsonian. Through challenging games, puzzles, and real scientific thinking, players must uncover the truth before time runs out. The free, 8-week online event begins April 4.

<http://vanished.mit.edu/user/register>

**Kids Against Hunger 5K/1 Mile FUN RUN**

**WHEN:** Saturday, April 16th, 2011 - 5K Start time 10:00 a.m. 1 Mile Start time 10:45 a.m.

**WHERE:** Hardwood Creek Trail (Sunrise Prairie Trail) - Race Starting Point/Headquarters - Forest Lake Transit Center, 19955 Forest Road North, Forest Lake, MN

**WHY:** Raise money for KIDS AGAINST HUNGER!!

Help stomp out hunger one step at a time by participating in the 5K/1 Mile Fun Run or by purchasing a T-Shirt!!

Registration Forms @ <http://www.lakesinternational.org>

**MN Arts Count Census Be Counted!**



Dear friends,  
Whether a personal or professional interest, arts are important to you – and to the quality of life in Minnesota. The Minnesota Legacy Amendment passed in 2008 helps support creative expression through grants dispersed by the Minnesota State Arts Board.

As part of dedicating funding to the arts from the Amendment, the state legislature has called for the Minnesota State Arts Board and the state’s regional arts councils to conduct a census of artists and artistic organizations to measure the far-reaching influence of the arts in the state.

The Minnesota State Arts Board invites anyone who, professionally or personally, engages in any and every form of creative expression to participate in the MN Arts Count census. Do you sing? Act? Dance? Write? Draw? Paint? Sculpt? Photograph? Weave? Play an instrument? Compose?

No matter how well or how publicly you share your talents, be proud and be counted.

Go to [www.MNArtsCount.com](http://www.MNArtsCount.com) <<http://www.mnartscount.com/>> to complete the census. If you prefer, paper surveys are available by calling 800-748-3222 ext. 225.

Please help us spread the word. Tell your friends to be counted, too. Follow us on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/MNArtsCount) <<http://www.facebook.com/MNArtsCount>> and [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/MNArtsCount) <<http://www.twitter.com/MNArtsCount>> .

Thank you!  
MN Arts Count 2011  
From ballet to bottle caps, your art counts.

*Reserve your tickets now  
to attend the 2nd annual*

## **LILA FOUNDATION**

*Spring Fling!*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011  
DELLWOOD HILLS GOLF CLUB**

**29 East Highway 96 • Dellwood, Minnesota**

**\$120 per couple or \$60 individual ticket**

**\$500 for Table Sponsors (10 tickets)**

Reservations accepted until April 7. Sorry, no tickets available at the door.

**5<sup>00</sup>** *Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres / Silent auction opens*

**6<sup>30</sup>** *Welcome*

**7<sup>00</sup>** *Dinner*

**7<sup>45</sup>** *Live auction begins*

**9<sup>05</sup>** *Winners announced and closing remarks*

## **NEW THIS YEAR!**

An auction catalog will be distributed a week prior to the event.

If you are unable to attend but would like to bid, please contact

Nicki Vincent at: [donaproPERTIES@hotmail.com](mailto:donaproPERTIES@hotmail.com) regarding absentee bidding.

*Brilliante*