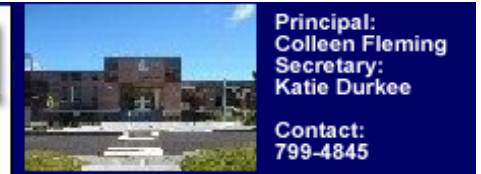


# Dyer Elementary School

“A New Adventure In Learning”



March 11, 2009

Dear Families,

While every month is a busy one, March certainly continues to define itself in unique ways. Our Board of Education has been conducting workshops on the budget which will be presented to City Council. So many unknown variables such as potential impact of any stimulus package, uncertain projected state subsidy and economic realities serve to make this process a challenge. Nonetheless, the Board has thoughtfully and responsibly developed a budget for consideration at the April 8 meeting of City Council. Our operating budget at Dyer reflects a zero increase from last year. Our staffing plan currently includes an additional teaching position, but until we have a good sense of actual numbers which can fluctuate through the end of summer, this position will continue to be flexible. At this time we are anticipating 3 kindergarten classes- as of this date we have 38 students registered for kindergarten in the fall; 3 first grades; 3 second grades; 2 third grades, 3 fourth grades and 2 fifth grades. As you know, we were creative in transforming one of our rooms into a kindergarten classroom this year and made a commitment to keeping that class size smaller. The need for an additional classroom space next year creates a new challenge and we are continuing to explore a number of creative options. I will keep you updated in the months ahead.

On a different note, March brings MEA's, the Maine Educational Assessments, and these are currently being administered to children in grades 3, 4 and 5. This is the last year for the MEA's which are being replaced by another assessment called NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program). The NECAP will be given to the same grades in October of each year with results reported in January. I will share more information about NECAP later. Our children are truly giving their best to the MEA and we are very proud of them as you should be.

Our second trimester ends March 13 and we will send progress reports home Friday, March 20. The reports will reflect an update on your child's current level of performance relative to end of year benchmarks. Please take some time to review the report with your child, celebrating successes and encouraging a continued positive effort as we begin the final trimester. Should you have any questions about the report, don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher. Please sign and return the envelope only.

Staff at Dyer are currently meeting in Professional Learning Teams that are studying a variety of focus areas which will influence our continued work with children. These include vocabulary and concept development; technology integration and resources; differentiated instruction; relationship building within a school culture; writing instruction and assessment; shared math. The findings and recommendations from our collective work will influence the development of our school's goals for next year.

Kindergarten registration is currently underway. If you have a child or know of a child who will turn 5 on or before October 15, 2009, please contact Katie at 799-4845 to set up an appointment. The following are required for registration: original birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of residency.

Preparation is under way for Dyer's annual Variety Show! Under the leadership of Miss Foster and with the help of several staff members, this popular event will feature a program of music, vocal and instrumental, gymnastics, comedy, dance and more! 35 students in grades 3-5 are involved and the performance is scheduled for Thursday, April 2, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Speaking of popular events, Ms. K's after school "Jump For Me" program was certainly popular! 36 of the 41 participants were Dyer friends! In addition to the obvious fun they experienced, the children got a great cardiovascular workout! Now many are gearing up for the *voluntary* Jump Rope For Heart event which will be held at Dyer April 13 and 14. Details will be sent home later.

Our recent Book Swap was a huge success and a special thank you to all families who participated. The collection of books truly rivaled any book fair to date with hard cover and paper back collections in superb condition. Every child left us with a book in honor of Read Across America Day! Special thanks to Sarah Elwell and Sue Morneault for all their work in organizing the day's events. The Book Swap certainly celebrated our community while responding to economic realities. Its success has spawned another swap, a sports equipment swap, which our PTA is organizing for April 9. Details are included in next week's totes.

Recycling at Dyer has been rejuvenated! Just ask your children about all they are recycling at each lunch and within their classrooms on a daily basis. Bruce and Lorraine report that the trash from lunch has been reduced dramatically to less than half of what it had been. Each day a huge bag of plastic milk containers is picked up by one of our parents, and a student, Kaylee Neat, created a colorful visual of all that can now be recycled in our classrooms. I want to especially acknowledge Tricia Neat and Nicole Crozier who have remained forceful advocates for recycling! I strongly encourage you to invite your children to set up the same expectations in your homes. Healthy Maine, the second tier of our enrichment programming, speaks to the importance of this environmental goal for all of us.

"Healthy Me", the first tier, is getting new attention this month as we introduce children to alternative activities to pursue rather than screen (TV and digital games, etc.). Every Tuesday afternoon this month children will be rotating through different classrooms where they will learn new games and activities to enjoy. Keep this in mind when your children may ask for some new gadget!

Finally, at the last Board of Education meeting, the announcement of Mrs. Dalton's resignation was made. I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Angela for the commitment and dedication she has shown to all our young learners these past years. While we will surely miss her next year, we also wish her the best as she assumes a new professional adventure. I also want to thank Maise Broome who has served as substitute for Amy Odom who returns to us March 16.

Just a reminder that Wednesday, March 25 is an early release day and the children will be dismissed at 12:30. Let's continue to hope that a spring thaw is on the horizon!

Sincerely,

Colleen Fleming, Principal