

Lincoln Options Opus

A community dedicated to learning, kindness, and celebration!



Calendar

February

- 2 – OSD Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 2-6 – Washington Children's Choice
- 4 – District Late Start, no AM bus
- 10 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 12 – Lincoln Science Fair @ 6:30 pm
- 16-17 – No school, mid-winter break
- 20 – Winter Dance
- 23 – OSD Board Mtg @ 6:30 pm
- 24 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 25 – District Late Start, no AM bus
- 25 – Enrollment Info Night
- 27 – Early Release (12:32 dismissal)

March

- 4 – District Late Start, no AM bus
- 9-13 – Observation Week (8:40 – 12)
- 10 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 12 – Theme Learning Celebration
- 13 – Early Release (11:45 dismissal)
- 15 – Enrollment Lottery
- 16-20 – Classified Staff Week
- 16 – OSD Board Mtg @ 6:30 pm
- 21 – Silent Auction
- 24 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 24-27 – Conference Week, 11:45 dismissal
- 27 – Lincoln Spring Fling (Live Auction)

February 2015

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Dear Families

By Marcela Abadi

As you might now know, this year 3rd, 4th and 5th graders will be taking the mandated state test called Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium, SBAC (previously called MSP, Measure of Students Progress). This test was developed to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades 3-5, and to measure progress toward college and career readiness.

The SBAC will be administered completely online.

"These computer-based tests will help schools evaluate how well their students performed by comparing them with students from other schools across the nation. The end-of-year assessments also will empower families by providing them with a clear indication of how well their children are progressing toward mastering the academic knowledge and skills necessary for college and career readiness." (from the OSPI website:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>)

We encourage you to become informed about the tests your child is required to take through federal accountability (NCLB). Below are the directions to access the practice SBAC tests from your computer.

1. Go to the Olympia School District Website at: <http://osd.wednet.edu/>
2. Click on Departments near the top of the page, then Assessment on the left side of the page.
3. Click on Smarter Balanced Testing under the Assessment tab.
4. Click on yellow highlighted "Link to Practice Tests". Use Firefox or Chrome for the test to run correctly. (Bookmark the link on your computer for student practice at any time).
5. **Below** the Please Sign In Session ID box, click on the Practice and Training Test Site right hand arrow.
6. On the next screen, in the Please Sign In box, click on "Sign In".
7. In the Grade Box, select a Grade. 3, 4, or 5 and then select Yes. (*If you have middle or high school schools, you can select a different grade level at home.*)
8. Students will need to look at the:
 - Math Practice Test
 - Math Performance Task
 - ELA Practice Test
 - ELA Performance Task
9. After choosing a test, the page will come up to Choose Settings, scroll down and click on the Select button at the bottom of the page.
10. It will say, Is This Your Test? Scroll down and select Yes, Start My Test.
11. The following page is Test Instruction and Help and will be important for students to review before starting the practice test. Click on Begin Test Now.
12. At the end of the test, students will need to End Test and Submit. The test is not scored as it is a practice test.
13. To get to the next test, repeat the above directions.



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me in the office.

February is one of my favorite months at Lincoln and in the Pacific Northwest. First of all, we get a whole day just to celebrate love, which, if you think about it, is what our school is all about. Second, and relatedly, it's spring already! As I write this in mid-January, the tulip tree in my backyard is budding, new grass is growing, and it's light until 5:30. Whew—we made it!

I remember Leo's first year here in Wendy F-R's class. I almost died from the cuteness of seeing kindergarteners and first-graders passing out their sweet valentines to each other. I still so much enjoy seeing the kids' appreciation and affection for each other, and their acknowledgement that there is something to love in each and every one of their class members.

Lincoln's focus on inclusiveness is an important part of our kids' everyday lives. You may have heard your child mention our "policy" that "you can't say you can't play." In other words, if a kid asks another to play, the other kid or kids can't say no. Having this rule makes me feel more relaxed about playground interactions. The rule may not be foolproof, but it's something for everyone to fall back on.

Speaking of which, there is a lot going on with our playground! **Everyone's noticed the new equipment, which we got for free—thanks to the Olympia School District!**

The Playground Committee is envisioning much bigger and better improvements, too: we are hoping to have a larger climbing structure, and possibly other new equipment, installed soon. We'll keep you updated on how you can help with this process!

While thinking about a new playground, and considering a proposal from a "natural playground" company, I realized that we have a natural playground already: the wetland. The wetland was created by a group of dedicated volunteers from Lincoln. It provides a beautiful learning environment that is an eco-friendly destination for the runoff from the paved areas on the school grounds. There is a pond, a beautiful amphitheater, a viewing platform, and trails all contained in our own little patch of PNW paradise. Right now, kids can only go in the wetland when they are with a class, accompanied by a teacher. Many of the kids clamor for more time there. **What if they were allowed to play and explore in the wetland during recesses?**





Continued from previous page.

Could this be way to enrich their play-time experience without spending any money at all on new equipment?

Well, yes, but the thing is that there are not enough recess teachers to watch the kids over there. Currently we have four adults supervising, and they already have to cover a lot of kids spread out over a large area. This is where we come in. **I'd love to find parent volunteers who could commit to supervising the kids in the wetland during recesses.** Of course it would be too much to try to cover all the recesses, all the days. What about lunch recess (that way only half the kids are out at a time), one or two days a week? I'm pretty sure we could make this happen—of course under the guidance of Paul, Marcela, and the recess teachers. If you'd like to help coordinate this, grab me in the hall, email or text me.

The other huge thing that is happening in February is that we are getting ready for our main fundraising event, the AUCTION! This year there will be a big change in the way the auction happens, which I'm really excited about. Instead of one event that combines both the silent and the live auction, we will have two events: The silent auction will be a daytime event, on **Saturday March 21 from 1-3:30**; the live auction will be an adult, evening event, off site (alcohol will be served), on **Friday March 27 from 7-10pm**. We are excited to try this out, have fun together, and raise money for our program!

On that note, I'd love it if everyone could start thinking about an experience they could donate as an auction item this year. What are you good at that you could share? A special dinner? A massage? A birding trip? (Okay, that's ours!) A braiding workshop? (Yes—this will be offered, and I'm going!) A recording session? A drum lesson? We have so many amazing talents here...I can't wait to see what we come up with.

Happy February!

Love, Jess
jessrevelas@comcast.net

Spanish Speaking Volunteers Needed

The Spanish Committee is looking for native Spanish speakers (and those conversational in Spanish) interested in helping with a Spanish Activity Evening for Lincoln Families; or in leading extra Spanish related activities during school hours.

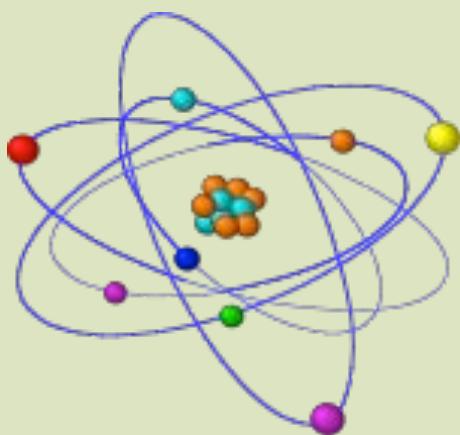
The goal is to expose our children to Spanish language and Latino cultures in fun, active, interesting ways - books, art, games, active play, theater, cooking, music....?? If you have time or have ideas to share, please contact: Karen Lacy-Roberts 359-2064 (no texts) lacyroberts@earthlink.net

Camp Cispus Coffee Sales

Every year, the fifth grade students at Lincoln attend Camp CISPUS, a three-day outdoor education camp. It is, by all accounts, a fantastic send-off for our oldest students. Each school in the district contributes funds to cover camp expenses. We're asking the Lincoln community to help by—drinking coffee! More specifically, the locally roasted coffee that the fifth graders will be selling throughout the month of February. It's easy: find a fifth grader and order! Or, you can order on the form next to the volunteer sign in sheets in the front office. You will have your freshly roasted coffee within two weeks.



If you own a business, consider selling bags of our coffee at your register or purchasing several for your break room. Contact Jenni Crain, jleighcrain@gmail.com, or Reiko Callner, jcallner@comcast.net, with any questions or ideas. Thank you!



**Lincoln Science Fair
Thursday,
February 12
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Lincoln School Gym**

*This year students should drop off projects before school on 2/12, if it is convenient for families.
They will be on display for classes to see during the day.*

Entry forms are available in the office

Kindergarten Enrollment Information Nights

By
Mollie Gavigan



Help Spread the Word About Kindergarten Enrollment Information Nights Set for February 25 and March 3. By far the most important way families find out about Lincoln Options is through word of mouth from parents of students, coworkers, teachers, and friend – in other words, YOU!

Please help us spread the word about Lincoln Options, especially if you know of any families whose children will be entering kindergarten this fall. A robust enrollment is the key to keeping Lincoln a viable alternative school. See details below about how you can help.

Enrollment Information Nights will be February 25 and March 3, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., in the Lincoln cafeteria. Attendance at one of these meetings is required to participate in the lottery for admittance to Lincoln. Childcare will be provided. During the Enrollment Information Nights, parents will learn more about the Options program, philosophy, and parent involvement opportunities. They also will learn about the lottery process, Lincoln's unique way of accepting students who live outside the Lincoln service area.

Contrary to popular belief, it is NOT almost impossible to get into Lincoln. Usually most, sometimes all, kindergarteners who live in the Olympia School District are accepted and enrolled in the Options program. Families in the Lincoln Service Area and siblings, who are entering at Kindergarten level, are guaranteed access to the Options program. The lottery is a way to ensure that all families outside the Lincoln service area have an equal chance of admittance.

We all love Lincoln Options and know that it is a unique school offering multi-age classrooms where social, emotion, and academic growth are equally valued, and where cooperation, social justice, and sustainability are taught and practiced. **Now's the time to let others know exactly why we have our children enrolled here.**

You can help. The Enrollment Committee is distributing information on the Enrollment Information Nights throughout the community. **The committee can use assistance with flyer distribution. Additionally, consider helping to get the word out to potential Lincoln families through conversations and social media.** Please contact Mollie & Curt Gavigan at gaviganclan@gmail.com if you would like to assist with flyer distribution, or would like information for electronic distribution. Thank you!

Additionally, the Olympia School District is hosting an informational event for parents and guardians who will have children in kindergarten in the 2015 – 2016 school year. This event, 'Learn All About Kindergarten,' is Saturday, February 21 at 10 am in the Capital High School Commons. Lincoln Options will be there to answer questions about their half day and full day kindergarten programs. http://osd.wednet.edu/media/kindergarten_handout.pdf

Please join us at these two fabulous events in support of the programs we love at Lincoln!

The Silent Auction

When: Saturday, March 21st from 1pm to 3:30pm

Where: Lincoln gym.

What: Silent Auction with hundreds of offerings at a variety of prices to choose from. Something for everyone! Dessert Table full of wonderful treats to purchase. Family Friendly – childcare will be available in the school, and a playground volunteer. The parent band will play for us.

How much: There is no charge to attend this event.

New!! The Lincoln Spring Fling

When: March 27th from 7 to 10pm

Where: Women's Club Building, Downtown Olympia
(venue rental fees have been generously donated)

What: Live Auction with selected Silent Auction items
Special guest speakers – learn more about what makes Lincoln so special. A chance to get to know other Lincoln Parents and supporters at a “grown-up” party. Snacks, desserts, and wine available.

How much: There will be a \$15 per person charge for this event to assist in covering food expenses. Wine will be available for a donation of \$5 per glass.

Volunteer! Come to our Thursday team meetings or sign up to help with a particular task–contact Jeannine Kempees at kempeesj@yahoo.com or 360-531-3046 for details.

Donate! If you have something to donate, please fill out the form on the other side of this page or the on-line version at <http://lincolnoptions.org>. Not sure what to donate? Consider offering an activity (lead a hike, cook a dinner) or teaching a skill. Wonderful donations in the past have included bird watching tour, kayak trip, tennis lessons, or anything you can think of! Donation information is available at lincolnoptions.org, or pick up a donation form at the office. Also, consider asking any of the businesses you frequent for a donation for the auction, such as a gift certificate.

Participate! Most importantly COME TO THE AUCTION EVENTS! These events are the primary financial support for our Spanish program, wetlands and gardens, and teacher classroom funding. Our school counts on the auction to create the amazing atmosphere we love at Lincoln Options!

*For 2015
our Options
Are Endless*

By Auction Committee



**Silent Auction:
Sat. March 21
1 – 3:30 pm**

**Live Auction:
Fri. March 27
7 – 10 pm**

New Format for our Lincoln Auctions!

By The Lincoln Auction Committee

Dear Parents.

As you are no doubt aware, the annual Lincoln Options Auction events are rapidly approaching. And while every parent may not have volunteered to help procure auction items and/or donations, we are asking that each family take a little time and help the Auction committee extend the opportunity to contribute to a new and broader community base. The committee already has a list of past contributors and donors to our program, and those contacts are all being contacted via letter and with follow up calls asking for support. We are also asking that each family help provide some new potential donors. It is easiest to request donations or auction contributions from businesses and community organizations that we utilize. For example, my children attend Tae Kwon Do, ballet, and swim lessons every week. Because we help support these businesses, it is much easier to ask for their support for a community cause that we believe in. When requesting a donation, it is helpful to point out that this is also an opportunity for some inexpensive marketing for their business, as their donation will be spotlighted and their services highlighted to a group of several hundred local parents and community supporters. Chances are that the cost of any donated services or offerings will be offset by the potential of new business resulting from the exposure opportunity our auction presents.

Please take some time and think about who you know that we might be able to get to contribute. Even if you are not comfortable doing the actual requesting, please try to forward 5 - 10 suggestions to the auction committee so that we can broaden our base of support in the community. Have you had your car serviced somewhere locally in the recent past? Do you have business connections that might donate? Maybe your family has a favorite restaurant that you ask to support us. Perhaps you have family members who would like to contribute toward the educational programs that Lincoln provides for our children. All of these are opportunities to request support for our programs. Remember, these events are where the funding comes from for things like the organic garden, the wetlands exploration program, and the Spanish program. I know how valuable these "extras" that Lincoln provides are to our children and their learning, so please take a little time out to do your part to help.

Thank you, The Auction Committee



Place Based Education

By Paul Rocks

Our community is gearing up for our all school theme A Sense of Place.

**Please plan on attending the celebration of this theme
on Thursday, March 12, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.**

At the heart of place based learning is the idea of connections. We want students connecting to nature, to people, to community.

David Sobel, the author of *Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education*, defines place-based education:

...[a]s the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop strong ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environment quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school. (Sobel 2004,7)

Each classroom is approaching the theme of place in unique ways. Here are some of the experiences students are engaged in: exploring special places, trips to Nisqually, Mt. Rainier, McLane Creek, learning about mushrooms, plants, animals, wetlands, pulling ivy, cleaning Lincoln, working with the mayor on water conservation, connecting with local tribes, and lots of mapping,

See you on March 12, until then, keep connecting!



Some Observations About Parenting Challenging Children

*By Michael Dempster,
Parent Band and
Choir director, former
Lincoln Options science
and music teacher*



As the parent of a feisty boy (who's now 29), and teacher at the elementary school level since the mid '70s, I've had some years of experience exploring the appropriate use of adult authority in our relationships with children. Every year I see parents struggling with children who have difficult behaviors, and I've learned a thing or two I'd like to pass along in case you find it helpful in dealing with your little cherub.

Many adults in my generation, the early baby boomers, came of age in a time of heady social upheaval and cultural growth. Many of us were inspired and liberated by the new possibilities that grew out of the questioning of traditions and traditional authorities. In many ways the time had come for a reevaluation of the standard operating procedures of our culture.

Many of us criticized the American way as being too dry, cold, analytical, acquisitive, and conformist, and in many ways we were right, leading to shifts in our national consciousness in the directions of tolerating diversity, acknowledging the beauty and delicacy of the biosphere, and seeking more humane relationships across the board, be they among and within nations, between teachers and students, or among members of the same family. In many ways these shifts in values persisted and are a legacy the baby boom generation can be proud of.

What I'm fascinated by lately is how the application of these practices and styles of thought, as time goes on, can lead to some unanticipated difficulties in our attempts to raise liberated children. It may be that some of the habits of mind that seemed to serve many of us well as young adults may not be entirely appropriate intellectual and social tools for children.

In particular, I'm discovering that children of elementary school age need, for their own sense of security, to have confidence in their elders and a significant level of built-in respect for legitimate authority, rather than an inclination to question leadership.

Adults who tend to be skeptical of authority figures may find it difficult to be effective in providing adequate boundaries for their own children. And adults who show disdain for regulations large or small in front of their children undermine, I think, the basic trust that children need in order to feel secure in the space that holds them as they grow.

I wish I had understood as a younger parent my responsibility to unilaterally determine many of the basic features of my child's experience; to require things of him and limit him in ways he may not understand or appreciate at this time in his life. It is honorable to take this stand because I have experience and wisdom beyond his years that gives me a perspective he cannot have, and I love him, and I am responsible for his healthy development. This requires me to be more than a partner with

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him in negotiating limits and freedoms. It is appropriate for me to determine, out of wisdom and love, expectations that do not necessarily align with his.

An unbalanced emphasis on honoring individuality, nurturing self-esteem, and encouraging freedom of expression can give kids an inflated sense of their rights and an underdeveloped awareness of their responsibilities.

Some parents have difficulty saying “no” to their children. In spite of our inclination to love and provide for our kids, it is healthy for youngsters regularly to experience not getting what they want. Learning to live within limits and to tolerate delayed gratification equips children to deal with realities they will experience throughout their lives. Just as we give kids experience with math to improve their coping and creating skills as they grow into adulthood, we owe them basic experiences with limits.

This kind of leadership still requires that we meet children where they are, but we need to go beyond that to a form of guidance that is less affected by the kid’s temporary emotional responses to our limits, and more guided by our considered judgment of what is best for the child.

An observer of children and families (whose name escapes me now) drew some interesting conclusions about effects on children of parenting styles which differed in their levels of both love and guidance:

--Low love, low guidance parenting constitutes neglect and results in youngsters who give up.

--Low love, high guidance parenting is authoritarian, leading to rebellion, anger, and low self-esteem.

--High love, low guidance parents are over-permissive, and their children tend to be anxious, demanding, manipulative, and also have low self-esteem.

--High love, high guidance parenting is authoritative, gently guiding kids into habits of character which will serve them all their lives.

William Damon, in his book, Greater Expectations, remarks that this latter kind of authoritative parenting (not authoritarian) stresses “both communication and control, both respect for the child’s perspective, and commitment to the adult’s standards.....It is this dual focus that many adults find so difficult to maintain.”

So how do well-meaning parents know what standards are appropriate to unilaterally enforce with their children? Not an easy question. In earlier times the culture held a uniform set of standards that virtually everyone accepted as legitimate guidelines for children. This kind of tribal uniformity is not in place today. Yet I think many of us know in our hearts what we don’t like in the behavior of children, and we can draw inspiration from at least a few basic qualities of healthy humans which have stood the test of time, such as fairness, kindness, honesty, patience, persistence, humility, and social responsibility. Poorly socialized behavior will not serve children or the community, now or in the future.

Growing out of this base comes the realization that adults must set reasonable boundaries for children, both to help them feel safe that the adults they rely on are competent to manage the landscape, and to help them learn to consider the needs of others and develop compassion. It helps them establish their right relationship to the community, a wholesome balance between give and take. (A don’t-miss article with specific examples of teaching consideration can be found by googling: washington post are you raising nice kids.)



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Just yesterday I watched a child impatiently interrupt a parent who was in conversation with another adult. The parent told the child not to interrupt, then proceeded to ask the child what he wanted. The lesson the child takes away? Interrupt Mom and she'll listen to you. Naming the rule and not convincingly requiring compliance, does not teach it.

A common experience among parents is that when they have to draw the line sufficiently emphatically to get their kids to comply, the children seem to relax. They are comforted, perhaps, by their parents' demonstration of sufficient strength. Children need to experience that the adult in charge of them is strong enough to keep the chaotic tendencies within themselves and the environment in control, so they feel safe.

But to be effectively emphatic does not mean to come at kids with frightening intensity. Once a parent has decided on a clear behavioral requirement which is within the reach of the child's abilities, communicating this to the child effectively depends crucially on tone and timing. In the heat of a confrontation is not a good time. Choosing a quiet and comfortable time with the child, bedtime, perhaps, to explain the new boundary is a communication process with peaceful power.

The most effective messages include a straightforward explanation of why the limit is good for the child, telling them that your job as a parent is to help them grow in the best way you can, assuring them that you will be there to support them as they rise to this expectation, and defining clear consequences (such as the temporary loss of a favorite toy or activity) that will apply to forgetting the new requirement. Then calmly apply the consequence when the child goes over the line.

This where we need to avoid being swayed by the child's temporary emotional discomfort and attendant fussing. If we confidently enforce the expected behavior, children tend to get the message that, yes, indeed, the new limit is a requirement. And as a wise teacher friend once observed, children generally will learn whatever behaviors they are allowed to practice.

I'm increasingly convinced that a lot of the difficult behavior we see in children grows out of assumptions held by their elders about power relationships. Essentially humane and deeply respectful of the worth of the individual, these assumptions can lead to insufficiently directive parenting styles which miss opportunities to build pro-social behaviors, leave children uncomfortably adrift as they test the leadership of their puzzled elders, and interfere with the creation of healthy and happy communities.

Much of this I would have been amazed to hear myself say a few years ago. I wish I had understood this perspective from the time my child was small. "All You Need Is Love" sounded like a great idea to me in my youth, and now I see that part of loving children is guiding them firmly to do the right thing for themselves, their families, their school, and their world.

Garden Work Party

Sat. Feb. 21st, 10 am – 2 pm

We are planning on replacing the cover to the greenhouse (if weather permits).



Please join us if you can.

The garden committee has big plans for growing produce in the greenhouse this spring.

Lincoln Options Opus



February 2015

It's our Opus.

If you have an item for the Opus, please forward it to Sarah Clifforne at opuseditor@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is the **15th of each month** for the next month's issue.

Questions? Feedback? Suggestions for improvements? Contact us via email. Thanks!

