

Lufkin En-Lightning

Shining the light of success on all.



Aug. 1, 2009

Message From Dr. Parry Graham, Principal

Dear Lufkin Parents,

August is here, which means Track 4 is back and Track 3 is enjoying their first track-out. Overall, we have had an incredibly smooth opening to the year, which is a testament to our wonderful staff, to you, and to our students.

One of the biggest changes this year is PLC Wednesdays. Back in the spring, the WCPSS School Board changed the schedule of every Wake County school to allow teachers structured time to collaborate during the school day. This means Lufkin will let out one hour early every Wednesday, at 1:25 p.m. I know this new schedule represents a challenge for some of our parents, especially when considering childcare. At the school, however, this new schedule represents a real opportunity for us to improve the quality of teaching and learning happening in our building every day.

One of the greatest challenges to improving K-12 education is teacher isolation. Traditionally, teachers have been individually responsible for deciding what and how to teach in their classrooms. While we have incredibly talented, dedicated, and knowledgeable teachers working at Lufkin and in Wake County, this system of isolation ignores one of the most important lessons the business world has learned over the past 50 years: teamwork produces better results than isolation.

The challenge for schools is that it takes time for teachers to work in teams, and it is incredibly difficult to design a school schedule that creates the necessary time for teachers to meet and collaborate. By deciding that every

school in Wake County will have an hour each week for teachers to come together and work in collaborative teams, the School Board has made a powerful commitment to helping improve the quality of teachers' work and students' achievement.

At Lufkin, we will be using PLC Wednesdays in a variety of ways. On the first and third Wednesdays of every month, our teachers will meet in content-based teams (for example, all of the 7th grade Language Arts teachers). During these meetings, teachers will align their curriculum, share best practices, develop common assessments, analyze student learning results, and develop remedial and enrichment opportunities for students. On the second and fifth Wednesdays, teachers will meet in same-student teams (for example, the 7-4 team) to discuss student progress and identify cross-curricular interventions for students who are struggling academically or behaviorally. On the fourth Wednesdays, teachers will meet in vertical teams (for example, all of the Math teachers) to align curriculum across grade levels and ensure that students are developing the content and study skills they need to be successful in the next grade.

By working in teams, our teachers are able to respond collectively to student needs. For students who are struggling, it means we can intervene quickly, appropriately, and comprehensively. For students who are ready for additional challenges, it means we can provide enrichment opportunities that will deepen and extend student knowledge and skills.

Over the course of the year, we will provide examples of teachers' work during PLC time so you can see how this time is being used; for example: action plans, meeting minutes, common assessments and intervention plans. And, when you are in the building—whether it is for an Open House, a parent-teacher conference, to volunteer, or just to join your child for lunch—please ask us about our PLC work and how it is helping us better serve you and your children.



Dr. Graham

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Blackboard: Lufkin's Online Communication System

Welcome to the world of Blackboard! It is here that students can access team websites to learn about homework assignments and announcements. Each student has an account, which requires a unique username and password. Blackboard can be accessed through the Lufkin Road Middle web page at <http://lufkinroad.wcpss.net/home/modules/news>. The Digital Dropbox feature found in Course Tools allows students to send files between home and school, rather than use personal email accounts.

Parents can view Blackboard sites through the Guest Access feature. The path for parents is:

Blackboard portal, Course Sites tab, Middle Schools, Lufkin Road Middle School, then select the team site.

Parents do not have accounts with usernames and passwords. The Guest Access feature allows parents to see course announcements and homework assignments. The Digital Dropbox is not available through Guest Access.

If students forget their passwords, they may come to the Media Center to have their passwords reset. If you have questions about Blackboard, please contact Mrs. Ruby at druby@wcpss.net or 363-1069.

Lufkin's Jennie Jones Chosen as Wake County's Middle School Physical Educator of the Year

Lufkin Road Middle School is proud to announce that Jennie Jones has been selected the Wake County Middle School Physical Educator of the Year and is Wake County's nomination to NCAAPERD for the State Middle School Physical Educator of the Year. Way to go, Jennie!

Access Lufkin's Media Center From Home

Students may access Media Center resources from home. From the school website, click on the Media Center tab and then choose Research Links or copy and paste this link into your browser to go directly to the Research Links page: http://lufkinroad.wcpss.net/media_center/researchlinks.htm.

Encyclopedias, Culturegrams, NCWiseOwl and the World Fact Book are all available at school and at home. For home access, please contact the Media Center at 363-1079 for usernames and passwords. To locate appropriate websites, use the Lufkin Library Catalog, click on "WebPath Express" and type in your search topic.

Battle of the Books Club Begins Aug. 6

The Battle of the Books Club will meet the first and third Thursdays of each month beginning August 6. This is *THE* club for avid readers who like competition! It is open to students in grades 6, 7 and 8, and will meet in the Media Center from 2:25-3:30 p.m.

The BOB list can be found on the Media Center webpage. Students will recognize some tried and true titles, such as *Bud, Not Buddy, Just Ella* and *The View From Saturday*. Some of the newer titles added are *Drums, Girls, & Dangerous Pie, The Wednesday Wars, and Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*. This book list has something for everyone.

The county competition is typically the last Saturday in February or the first Saturday in March. A date has not yet been announced. As we approach the competition date, the club will meet more often.

If you have questions, contact Mrs. Ruby, Media Specialist, at 363-1079 or druby@wcpss.net.



Lufkin is Registered for 'My Coke Rewards for Schools,' 'Box Tops' and 'Campbell's Labels' Rewards Programs

You can also link your Harris Teeter and Food Lion grocery store cards to Lufkin

From Coke to Box Tops, there are plenty of ways to raise money for Lufkin Road Middle School. Here's the Lufkin rewards line-Up:

My Coke Rewards: to participate, go to www.mycokerewards.com and register to be a member of the program. Then, enter the codes on bottle caps, 12-packs or 24-packs of Coke products. Be sure to select Lufkin Road Middle so the points go to our school.

Box Tops for Education: cut them out and



Image provided by Coca-Cola

send them in to raise cash for Lufkin. Learn more at www.boxtops4education.com.

Campbell's Labels for Education: Remember, we do not save the front labels of soup cans, we save the UPC code and the pencil logo. Learn more at www.labelsforeducation.com.

Grocery store cards. If you haven't already, relink your VIC card at Harris Teeter and your Food Lion MVP card to Lufkin. It's so easy to do, and your school community appreciates every cent!

Volunteer Registration for 2009-2010 Underway **

If you're interested in volunteering at Lufkin Road Middle School, below is information about the volunteer registration process.

- All volunteers must register **EVERY** school year.
- You can register at any school in Wake County. Just be sure to select Lufkin as one of your schools.
- Register **EARLY** in the year. It takes just a few minutes. Don't let a late registration cause you to miss out on a field trip!
- Being a field trip chaperone, a one-on-one tutor, or a club sponsor requires a Level 3 or 4 clearance. Bring your driver's license number, social security number and addresses for residences during the last seven years for a background check that **CAN TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS.**
- Volunteers **WILL NOT** receive an automatic confirmation of their registration or background check clearance. You will **ONLY** be contacted if there is a problem.



Please contact Sandra Boyd in the Media Center at 363-1079 or email sboyd@wcpss.net if you have any questions or concerns about registering as a volunteer at Lufkin.

The Newbery Book Club Begins Meeting Aug. 6

The Newbery Book Club will meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month beginning Aug. 6 from 2:25-3:30 p.m. in the Media Center. New members are welcome to join us! Club members get the opportunity to read books that have just been published and then have lively discussions about them. We use criteria from the American Library Association to decide which book is worthy of receiving Lufkin Road's "Mock" Newbery Award and award the prize in January. If you'd like more information about the club, please contact Ms. Boyd at sboyd@wcpss.net or call her in the Media Center at 363-1079.

Questions or comments about the *Lufkin En-Lightning* newsletter?

Email Beth Shugg at pta484@wcpss.net. Please submit September newsletter submissions by Aug. 28.

GYM SHORTS

The start of a new school year is upon us and the new Healthful Living Rotation is in full swing. The whole department feels things are going great, and we hope you have heard about all the wonderful stuff happening in Healthful Living.

Classroom Needs

Keeping our goals and objectives in mind, there are a few items that are necessary for your child to have each day they report to Healthful Living. Please help your child be successful each day by making sure they have:

- Appropriate clothes and shoes for Physical Education and Fitness
- A notebook with paper and pencils for Health.

Physical Education

Physical education classes will look different this year. **We rotate every 3 weeks.**

- Please note that kids will start going outside as the weather changes.
- We will never go out in inclement weather or dangerous temperatures.
- Safety of our kids always comes first.

Fitness

We will continue to implement fitness, but this year it will be during Health weeks.

- Students will need fitness folders
- Daily log sheets will be put into place for assessments.

Health Class

Our department always starts off the school year with a new standard course of study. Our rotation has changed this year and we will be rotating every 3 weeks. The students will be in PE for 3 weeks and then Health for 3 weeks. During Health they will also participate in Fitness for a week. Look for the new schedule the first few days of school or check blackboard sites.

Reminder: the Abstinence until Marriage Curriculum is always on file in the main office for your viewing.

Contact your child's Healthful Living teachers via email:

Marti Capaforte: Mcapaforte@wcpss.net

Jennie Jones: jljones@wcpss.net

Andrew MacWilliams: amacwilliams.net

Ryan Rodgers: Rodgers@wcpss.net

John Merritt: Jmerritt@wcpss.net

Sara DeMarco: sdemarco@wcpss.net

Physical Education Uniforms

Lufkin's P.E. uniform consists of:

Black shorts and any Lufkin T-shirt
(red or grey)

Lufkin shirts can be purchased through the P.E. department. They cost \$10 for the older style, and \$12 for the new style.



Lufkin Road Middle Has Upgraded to Office 2007. Have You?

Can't open documents in Blackboard or email attachments? Lufkin upgraded from Office 2003 to Office 2007 at the beginning of July. It has been a learning process for us all! You may find that documents in Blackboard were more than likely saved as Office 2007. Teachers are now making an effort to save their work as Office 2003 to accommodate students and parents. At school we are encouraging students who have Office 2003 at home to save their documents appropriately before using the Digital Dropbox feature in Blackboard.

Microsoft offers a free download, which enables Office 2003 users to open Office 2007 documents. Google "Microsoft Compatibility Pack 2007," download the free software, then run the program. It will minimize future difficulties and it's easy!