

# Lufkin En-Lightning

*Shining the light of success on all.*



July 1, 2009

## Message From Dr. Parry Graham, Principal

Dear Lufkin Parents,

Welcome to a new school year! We are excited to see Tracks 1, 2, and 3 students on July 7, and Track 4 students on July 27. The beginning of the school year on a year-round schedule is always an exciting and busy time. We are looking forward to meeting our students and families who are new to Lufkin, and to welcoming back familiar faces.

We have all seen and experienced the challenges brought on by the economic downturn, and the school system has unfortunately not been spared budget cuts, both at the county and state levels. I considered writing my message this month about the steps we are taking as a school and as a school system to deal with the tightening budget, but instead I would simply like to make you a promise. Yes, our school has been impacted by the financial situation, and there may be additional tough choices ahead. But at Lufkin, our promise to you is that we are committed to ensuring that every student receives a high quality education, no matter the challenges. This is a phenomenal school, with an incredibly talented and dedicated staff, a wonderful student body, and a supportive parent community. We will meet any challenges head on, and base our decisions and our efforts around what is best for our children.

Our first month of school promises to be a busy one. Our 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams have been planning transition activities to help our new 6<sup>th</sup> graders adjust to the middle school schedule and environment. In my experience, rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders face three primary challenges as they leave elementary school: organization, socialization and maturation. In middle school, students have multiple

teachers and face increased academic expectations. Homework, new grading practices, and a challenging curriculum require that students develop organizational skills to keep up with the new pace. In addition, middle schoolers increasingly perceive the world through “social” eyes. Peer groups gain greater importance, and adolescents struggle both to fit in and to figure out their own identities. Finally, support structures start to recede as teachers expect students to learn how to advocate for themselves, and parents expect increasing levels of independence at home and at school.

The longer I spend in public education, the more convinced I am that effective habits—study skills, organization, work ethic, self-confidence and self-advocacy—are at least as important, if not more important for academic and life success as cognitive talents. At Lufkin, we place a strong emphasis on building students’ work habits as well as their academic knowledge, and we hear from high schools and former Lufkin parents that these dual emphases serve our students well. Our 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will work with your child and with you to help students navigate and overcome the challenges of the middle school years. There may be some tears and frustration along the way, but that is the nature of the beast! “Smooth sailing” is simply not a phrase in the middle schooler’s vocabulary, but we are here to ensure that your child enjoys and benefits from this time of transitions, emerging at the other end prepared for high school and beyond.

Finally, a housekeeping reminder. Our school hours for next year have changed slightly: we will begin homeroom at 7:25, as we did this year, but we will let out at 2:25 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Wednesdays, we will let out at 1:25 to allow our teachers time to work in collaborative teams. (I will include more information about PLC Wednesdays in next month’s message. July 8—our second day of school—is a Wednesday, so students will be going home that day at 1:25 p.m.

Again, welcome to a new school year. We are excited to have you here at Lufkin, and dedicated to ensuring a high quality education for your child!

Dr. Parry 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](mailto:druby@wcpss.net) or 363-1069.

## Lufkin's Paulette Thomas Accepted to 'We the People Middle School Institute'

Lufkin Road Middle School has some bragging to do. Paulette Thomas, a Social Studies teacher at Lufkin Road Middle School, has been accepted to attend the We the People Middle School Institute at James Madison University the week of July 19-27. Congratulations Paulette!

## PTA Purchases 12 LCD Projectors

The Lufkin PTA has purchased 12 LCD projectors for the school. Thanks mostly to this purchase, in addition to the LCD projectors in each Social Studies classroom, Language Arts and Science classrooms will each have an LCD projector as well. Thanks PTA!

## 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](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.

## Upcoming Lufkin Road Middle Dates to Remember

6<sup>th</sup> grade Meet the Teacher, Tracks 1, 2 and 3: July 6, 1-3 p.m.

7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders pick up schedules, Tracks 1, 2 and 3: July 6, 1-3 p.m.

8<sup>th</sup> grade info sessions 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 will discuss modified schedule for the 2009-2010 school year:

July 6, 1:30 and 2:15 p.m.

6<sup>th</sup> grade Meet the Teacher, Track 4: July 25, 9-11 a.m.

7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Track 4 picks up schedules: July 25, 9-11 a.m.

First day of school for Tracks 1, 2 and 3: July 7

First day of school for Track 4: July 27

# 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto:sboyd@wcpss.net) if you have any questions or concerns about registering as a volunteer at Lufkin.

### Lufkin PTA Volunteers Needed for the Following Committees and Positions

Honor Roll Committee for Tracks 2 and 4

Teacher Appreciation

PTA President Elect for 2010-2011

Contact PTA President Cathy Wood if you're interested at [apexwoodpile@mindspring.com](mailto:apexwoodpile@mindspring.com).

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

Email Beth Shugg at [pta484@wcpss.net](mailto:pta484@wcpss.net). Please submit August newsletter submissions to Beth by July 27.