



January 2008 NEWSLETTER

Key Dates

Jan 14 & 16: D-S Superintendent public interviews 7-9:30 pm. DSMS Chorale room
Jan 18: PTO Quarterly Meeting 8:30-9 am
(with recap 5-6 pm in DEDA room)
Jan 21: No School
Jan 22: School Committee Meeting 7 pm
Feb 11-15: Books from the Heart
March 12: Parent/child Green speaker 7 pm

Happy New Year! Welcome back!

Mission: Chickering-Family Communication

Phone tree: On 12/13, Chickering students were dismissed at 1:30pm. At 8:30am, Mr. Downing notified the PTO, and we initiated our emergency phone tree to alert parents. Due to a separate issue, Comcast had blocked email blasts from the school, so the phone tree was extremely valuable. Overall, we received very positive feedback from parents, although we share Mr. Downing's apologies for failing 3 of the 400+ families (although in all 3 cases, the school erred on having the children stay safely at school). THANK YOU to room parents who tirelessly e-mailed and called, and to Page Kolligian for organizing the phone tree.

Along with Mr. Downing and the School Advisory Council, we analyzed the day. A few key lessons:

- The "Yellow Form" indicates what you want for your child in case of early dismissal: bus or pick-up. Please know (and write down) what you requested. And please have a plan with your child. **Note:** The Yellow Form trumps any pick-up note that you have written for that day (for play dates, lessons, carpools, etc.).

- Chickering will give room parents a list of the yellow-form instructions for each class.
- In any future calls, room parents will do their best to give 3 pieces of information:
 1. Time of dismissal - Chickering and Region
 2. A reminder of what is on your yellow form. (Please don't rely on room parents for that info; know what you requested!)
 3. Instructions for you to call the office if you need to override your yellow form. The room parents are not responsible for making any changes with the school.

Even if Chickering has Reverse 911 in the future to enable rapid communication, we still see the value of a phone tree for family-specific information such as yellow-form instructions. (Although we may prune the tree so that families don't get 2-4 calls.) Please make sure that room parents have cell numbers, work numbers, etc.

School photographer: The people have spoken.

70 families responded to the request to rate their satisfaction (1-10) with Coffee Pond.

- 61% rated 7-10 with comments such as "great, keep them, very happy, awesome, don't change, pleased, like them, well done."
- 9% rated 5-6 and/or "fine, OK, fair."
- 30% rated 1-4 and/or "not at all, disappointed, don't like, not pleased."

The combination of these results and Coffee Pond's incredible customer service has led us to renew their contract for 08-09. We are sorry that 30% of you were disappointed. Please be assured that we will pass along all feedback and will work with them to improve ratings next year.

Quarterly meeting: To better communicate with working families, we will host 2 versions of our Quarterly meeting. Friday Jan 18th: 8:30-9am (stay for the all-school MLK assembly afterwards if you'd like) and 5-6pm at DEDA pick-up. You can call into 712-432-3900 during the AM session.

Mission: Funding Chickering projects

Fundraising: WOW! THANK YOU to all families who contributed to the 2007-08 check writing campaign. We blew away our estimates and are thrilled to report that we raised over \$27,000!

This funds the "Classroom/Teacher Support" and the "Community" portions of our annual budget.

Thanks to our fall efforts, we have raised over 50% of our 2007-08 goal. Mark your calendars and line-up those babysitters for our big Spring Event on **Saturday, April 5, 2008**. Anyone still interested in helping with the event, please email!

Easy Money for Chickering

A constant reminder that you can earn free money for Chickering based on your family habits. Pine Hill raises \$6K; Maynard schools over \$10K. Box Tops for Education, EcoPhones, Target REDcard, PatronBooks.com, DineGift.com, Upromise. Lost your flyer? Visit Chickering's site.

Curriculum Enrichment

Keep an eye out for these terrific programs happening in January:

- K: Wingmaster (Birds of Prey)
- 1: Suzanne Bloom (Author)
- 2: Brian Lies (Author)
- 3: Techsploration (Circuits & Electricity)

Mission: Volunteers at Chickering

To help: Email [Dover PTO@Comcast.net](mailto:DoverPTO@Comcast.net)

Books From the Heart: If you haven't yet experienced it, *Books from the Heart* is a family-funded program, which stocks the library beyond what is funded by the school budget. Each year, 275-300 picture, chapter and audio books are purchased by parents and contributed to the library to revitalize the shelves. Children can recognize their teacher on a bookplate in the front of the book and then be the first to take "their" book out of the library. The program will run in February, prior to vacation. Email us if you would like to volunteer to sell books.

Playground task force: On 12/6, the Playground Task Force met to discuss the best use for volunteers on the playground, as well as potential short and long-term equipment enhancements. They look forward to working with the Assistant Teachers to find best way to help with recesses. Interested in joining the effort? Email us!

Pick-up: Chickering seeks volunteers to help facilitate a smooth end-of-day pick-up process. We need parents willing to stay for 10 minutes to ensure that each child leaves with an adult. The most likely candidate for the job is one who picks up on a regular basis... perhaps they could cover "Thursdays", etc. Sign up at pick-up or email us.

Fifth grade graduation: It's not too late to join a committee. Call if you would like to help plan.

Luncheon

Diane Hardin x0897, Sue Monleon x8183

Yearbook and Class photo

Joanna Brach x9099, Becky Gladstone x1850

T-shirt, slogan and class gift

Lisa Kirby x2365

07-08 Initiative: "Go Green"!

PTO web site: One of our goals this year has been to "go green" in our communications. To get **DoverPTO.org** up and running, we are looking for able-fingered men & women to "beta test." Email us if interested. As we said before, we hope this will be the "go to" site for all things Chickering.

Energy task force: Parent Paul Wood continues to work tirelessly with Mr. Downing, Chickering building staff (Steve Onorato), Dover School Committee and D-S administration (Dr. Davis, Rich Mathieu and Ralph Kelly) on improving classroom temperatures (which should benefit the learning environment and potentially utility bills too!). The original system designers, TMP Engineers, have been hired to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the HVAC system and recommend potential solutions. Thanks to Paul and the Energy Task Force (parents Larry Fish, Sara Molyneux and Kim Cone and teacher Ken Wadness) as well as Ralph Kelley, Rich Mathieu and Steve O for their efforts and commitment.

Green Speaker: Save the date for our Spring Speaker... a Parent/Child speaker! On Wed March 12th 7pm, Dr. Nicolas Oreskovic, a pediatrician from Mass General will be discussing the ways in which we can all contribute to a greener world. You and your children will leave the evening with a list of the top 10 steps you can do to stay green.