



Family News - Tuesday, June 5, 2018

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, June 6: E/MS Field Trip

Tuesday, June 12: 8th Grade 'Moving On Ceremony', 10:00 AM

Friday, June 15: Elementary/Middle School Field Day

Tuesday, June 19: High School Beach Day

Thursday, June 21: Last Day of School, Early Release 11:30 AM

The challenge with MCAS

BY: Amy Davis, *Elementary & Middle School Principal* & Jen Kracoff, *LPS Speech and Language Pathologist*

As we reflect on the process of administering MCAS this spring, we are increasingly aware of how challenging it is for our students. Thinking through the factors that make MCAS so difficult remind us once again that using MCAS scores to show progress is not effective, especially in the EMS. Here are our top 5 reasons that MCAS is extra hard for our EMS kids:

1. It is a grade level test. Most of our students are not yet at an independent grade level for Math or Reading Comprehension; yet what they are asked to do is independently compute, comprehend, answer, write, and perform at grade level.
2. Accommodations are not modifications. A lot of thoughtful time is spent at IEP meetings discussing MCAS accommodations that will help students better access components of MCAS. For example, a Read Aloud accommodation may bypass decoding difficulties, but students who are not comprehending on grade level are still going to struggle. Typing may be easier for a student than physically writing, but a student may still struggle to understand the question being asked because they didn't understand the grade level passage.
3. They can't be reminded of their strategies. Some of the strategies that teachers put into place every day in the classroom can't be used on MCAS. For example, teachers can't tell students go back to the text, add more information, look at this key word, think before answering during the MCAS testing session.
4. Students rush. MCAS is long and not fun, and students want to be done. Without a teacher guiding them (i.e., telling them to look back, re-reading multiple times, helping them understand key points), many students race through so they can be done. One student was observed to say, "I know that MCAS doesn't really count until 10th grade. So I'm not really going to try. I just

want to be finished.” Some students mention that their parents have given them that message as a way to decrease anxiety surrounding the test. We say, “MCAS is a do your best test,” and explain that MCAS at any level is a great way to get practice for the 10th grade test. However, while we consistently remind students to do their best, we cannot guarantee that they will.

5. Burnout happens. In addition to the length of the test making students speed up to finish, students get burnt out quickly. Even students who can fully comprehend and compute at the beginning tend to fade as the test continues. Students have been observed to fully plan their first open response (use a Thinking Map, make an outline, edit their draft) and yet by the last open response they simply write a few words because of fatigue.

All this is being shared in a way to help shed a light on the challenges that our students face with MCAS. MCAS scores should not color your understanding of the real progress that students are making every day at school. For now, we all get a break until next year.

High School Counseling Supervisor

Please join me in congratulating our very own **Meredith Sullivan** who will be taking on the role of High School Counseling Supervisor permanently, as of July 1st. Meredith began her work at LPS twelve years ago and has been a positive contributor to our school ever since. In addition to providing counseling services, she has held a part-time Dean of students position, as well as a Student Council advisor.

Prior to coming to LPS, Meredith worked in specialized foster care as a supervisor and director. She provided clinical supervision of staff as well as the managerial aspects of the agency.

Meredith's supervisory skills, clinical experience, professionalism, and dedication to the LPS community will be a great addition to our administrative team.

Congratulations, Meredith!

Work Study for 2018-19

The Work Study department is making strong efforts to establish new job placements for our students to participate in as they enter the work study program at the beginning of their senior year. As a department, we are working hard to make connections throughout the community in order to open doors to some additional opportunities for our students and we need your help. If you know of a business or have a connection with an employer within a 10 mile radius of LPS, we would love to hear from you. Please contact **Brigid Flynn**, Work Study Transition Guidance Coordinator, to talk about potential employer connections throughout the Newton community that may be willing to give our student interns an opportunity to learn.

Thank you,

Brigid Flynn, *Work Study Transition Guidance Coordinator*

617-965-0764 ext. 454, Bflynn@learningprep.org

LPS wins Excellence award

Learning Prep School is proud to have been recently selected as a 2018-2019 National Association of Special Education Teachers (N.A.S.E.T.) School of Excellence. This distinction has been bestowed upon select qualified licensed private special education schools.

Selection as a NASET School of Excellence is the highest level of recognition a private special education school can achieve through our professional association. This honor is presented to private special education schools that meet rigorous professional criteria and have demonstrated truly exceptional dedication, commitment and achievement in the field of special education.

High School Beach Day

Just a reminder that High School Beach Day will be held on **Tuesday, June 19th** at [Lake Cochituate](#) in Wayland, MA. Permission slips will be going home this week but can also be [found here](#). All permission slips are due by **June 13th**. Please keep a look out!

2018-19 School Year Calendar

The 2018-19 School Year Calendar is now available. Find it on the LPS website under *Calendar* or [download a copy here](#).

Elementary/Middle School Yearbook

LAST CALL! Get your EMS 2017-2018 yearbook for only \$5.00. Let your child's homeroom teacher know if you need another order form.

State of the School

A State of the School update went out to the LPS Community in May. If you missed it, [you can find the full update here](#).

MCAS News

MCAS are almost to a close! As you plan doctor visits, please keep this in mind. If you know ahead of time that your child will be absent during any testing sessions, please let Gretchen Petersen know at x 617-965-0764 ext. 310. It is also important for students to eat a healthy breakfast before coming to school and to bring snacks to eat when they take a break. The schedule is as follows:

June- Science

- Grade 9, Biology: June 6 & 7
- Retests: June 6 & 7, only for students who have not yet passed Science MCAS.

The students will be tested 1:1 or in small groups and provided with MCAS accommodations listed in their current, signed IEP.

If you have questions regarding MCAS, please contact **Gretchen Petersen** through email at gpetersen@learningprep.org or at 617-965-0764 ext. 310.

Summer program (Extended Year Program)

Learning Prep School Summer Program (Extended Year Program referred to as EYP) is a 4-week program beginning **Monday, July 9th and ending Thursday, August 2nd**. The program will operate Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. The EYP is designed to maintain progress and prevent substantial regression through structured educational and social experiences. The program is modeled after the regular Learning Prep School program but includes activities to help provide a "camp-like" feel. The EYP is open to any student who is enrolled at Learning Prep School.

Elementary/Middle School (entering grades 3-8):

Program components consist of academic classes, social skills groups, arts/crafts, organizational support, interactive games and structured field trips. The academic areas will include reading, math, writing, and social communication.

High School (entering grades 9-12):

Program components consist of functional academic classes, social and transitional/pre-vocational skills development as well as travel training through local educational trips. The functional academic areas will include reading, math, and writing. All students entering 12th grade will be participating in a work experience, 2 days per week.

Enrollment Information:

The Summer Program (EYP) is not approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). A school district seeking placement in the LPS Summer Program may submit the Notification of Intent to Seek Approval for Individual Student Program (form 28M/3) to DESE. Parents may choose to enroll independently.

The tuition for Summer Program (EYP) is \$3,300. Please contact **Maria Fitzpatrick**, Summer Program secretary, for enrollment forms at 617-965-0764 ext. 125 or at mfitzpatrick@learningprep.org.

Spread the word about Learning Prep School

If you know someone who may be interested in Learning Prep for their child, please encourage them to attend one of our Open House events:

just added **Wednesday, July 11, 2018** at 10:00 AM

RSVP's appreciated to:

Korina Martin, Director of Admissions

[617-965-0764](tel:617-965-0764) ext 226 or kmartin@learningprep.org

