

Volume 13 Issue 13
Nov. 16, 2009

Learn Today, To Lead Tomorrow

Liberty Common School
Common Knowledge, Common Virtues, Common Sense
1725 Sharp Point Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80525, (970) 482-9800
A National Charter School of the Year, A Nationally Recognized Blue Ribbon School,
A Certified Core Knowledge Visitation Site School,
A John Irwin School of Excellence

What is Happening In Nov. and Dec.

Nov. 17- 5th and 6th Choir, 6th
Band Concert 6:30 p.m

Nov. 19- BOD Mtg. -7:00 p.m.

Nov. 25-27- Thanksgiving
Break

Dec. 1- Upper School Concert-
6:30 p.m.

Dec. 11-Dec. 12- Seussical The
Musical, 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 15- Kinder & 1st Grade
Concert- 6:30 p.m.

Liberty Common School Board of Directors 2009-2010

Terri Fisher- 223-0989
Kayleen Fraley-377-8850
Craig Horton- 207-1454
Dave Kleen- 377-9579
Dan Provaznik- 223-0188
Jeff Webb-545-9636
Bill Werst- 631-8379

Board of Directors Meeting:
General Session 11/19/09
7 p.m.
Academic Support Team Rpt.
Science Dept. Report

BOD AGENDA
Financial Review, Science
Specialist Report, Adopt
Amended 2009-10 Budget
Academic Support Team
Coordinator Report

**January lunch calendars
are due Dec. 1st. Please
check PowerSchool for
balances.**

Headmaster Writing By Russ Spicer, Headmaster

A Common Core Curriculum

In his book "The Knowledge Deficit," E.D. Hirsch frequently emphasizes the importance of having a sequenced, broad base of knowledge in order to read well and perform well academically. He argues that the more background knowledge a person has about a subject, the more likely that person will be able to understand that which he/she is reading and learning. Many modern day approaches to teaching reading mainly emphasizes decoding and places little importance upon the content. Hirsch contends that this is why students in America experience a continual slide in reading performance after the 4th grade. It is during this time that the exposure to a variety of content and vocabulary is crucial. By having a broad, rich curriculum, the students are more likely to have reading and academic success.

Hirsch continually stresses that modern schools are very fragmented in their approach to teaching, which often leads to excessive repetition and gaps in knowledge. He also contends that many schools take a more progressive, romantic approach to education and thus do not tend to provide students with solid, structured, knowledge based education, but merely a hodge-podge of general, formal skills.

Though an agreed upon basis of core knowledge for all schools makes sense as a way to address these concerns, there are many naysayers to this approach. Many schools and districts argue that they want control over what is taught and having an agreed upon curriculum would be a negative thing. In his book "The Knowledge Deficit," E.D. Hirsch quotes a writing penned in 1930 by William Bagley, of the Teachers College, about this subject: "The notion that each community must have a curriculum all its own is not only silly, but tragic. It neglects two important needs. The first, as we have already seen, is the need of a democracy for many common elements in the culture of all the people, to the end that the people may discuss collective problems in terms that will convey meanings. The second need is extremely practical. It is the need of recognizing the fact that American people simply will not "stay put." They are the most mobile in the world... Under these conditions, failure to have a goodly measure of uniformity in school subjects and grade placement is a gross injustice to at least ten million school children at the present time."

By using the Core Knowledge Sequence, Liberty Common School and other core knowledge schools are adhering to the agreed upon sequence of a knowledge based program. Every teacher in every grade knows exactly what content is covered in what grade. There are no gaps or excessive repetitions. The curriculum is very broad, culturally relevant and academically aggressive. Core Knowledge students are being exposed to many things that will help them become better readers, culturally literate, and productive members of society. The founders of our school understood this when they chose the Core Knowledge curriculum. Our students have been reaping the benefits of that decision ever since.

I will end by having you take a look at some of the sound bytes I captured while walking around our school for about one hour. It is clearly evident that our students are receiving a very broad and rich, content based education. Our teachers do a superb job of researching the content within the curriculum and presenting it in a clear and engaging manner. I love Liberty Common School.

* Pop artist Claes Oldenburg takes regular objects and recreates them on a huge scale. He creates large monuments. He was part of the pop art movement. Why do they use commercial objects? Pop artists use commercialization for de-personalization. (8th grade Core Art)

(Continued page 3)

Liberty Boys Basketball Schedule

Monday, Nov. 16th Liberty at New Vision (4:30 start)
 Wednesday, Nov. 18th Liberty at HMS
 Thursday, Nov. 19th Rez at Liberty (Team photo)
 Monday Nov. 23rd Ridgeview at Liberty

All games begin at 4:00 p.m.

Tournament Schedule:

1st Round is on November 30th

Quarter Final is on Dec. 3rd-High Seed Hosts

Semi Finals is on Dec. 7th– Location TBD

Intramural Soccer Update

Intramural Soccer makeup date is **Wed. Nov. 18th**, 3rd/4th graders play from 3:15-4:00 p.m. and 5th/6th graders play 4:00-4:45 p.m.

Lady Liberty Basketball Tryouts Coming

Attention 7th and 8th grade girls who love basketball: Tryouts are December 16th and December 17th from 3:15-4:30 p.m. In order to tryout you must have a current physical and a complete sports packet. Forms may be picked-up in the Front Office. Any questions can be directed to Mr. Ronen or Mr. Churchill.

Liberty Common School Families Warm Others This Winter

Thank you to the families of Liberty Common School who generously donated coats, hats and gloves for the Fort Collins Winter Warm Up. Because of your generosity, we will help protect 190 people from the cold winter elements. Thank you.

Props Needed for Seussical Jr.

Time to clean out the basement, storage unit, closets and crawl spaces and help make the job of the Prop Crew of Seussical Jr. easier. The following are items needed for this fun production. Please mark your items with your name, if you would like them returned and bring them to the Front Office.

- Huge pair of glasses
- Baby kangaroo puppet
- Director chairs (2)
- Yellow umbrellas (5-6)
- Lute/guitar-looking thing (blue)
- White doctor coats (3)
- Mini piano
- Big butterfly nets (2)
- Coat with frilly sleeves (Latin style with multi-colors)
- Flashlights (50)
- Long benches (2)

Homework Club Seeking Help

Homework Club is needing tutoring and homework help after school, Monday-Thursday, 3-4:30 p.m. If you are interested, please contact Linda Thelen-Academic Support Coordinator, ext. 167, or Susan Porter, Homework Club Supervisor, ext. 120.

High School Update from Bob Schaffer, Project Manager

What's the difference between a pony and pone? Understanding the distinction is very important as it impacts every kid at Liberty Common School. How? You must keep reading.

Recently, Headmaster Russ Spicer and Project Manager Bob Schaffer sent a letter to all Liberty households. It is unlike the routine letters sent by the school. This one asks for money and includes a return envelope to make giving even easier. Have you sent yours back yet? That is, with a check in it?

Thanks first to the many parents and Liberty supporters who have immediately generously responded. Your contributions are already being put to productive use. It turns out we sent the letter at just the right time.

In fact, the urgency of our request increased a few days ago when Gov. Bill Ritter proposed cutting state funding to public schools by 4.6 percent in the 2010-11 budget. He says he has no choice.

You do.

That brings us to a pony. It's a small horse important to the settlement of the West. Consistent with our Western heritage, we know what to do when a dollar gets scarce.

Rather than panic or complain, we decide what's important, fix our bearings, "saddle up" (or "cowboy up" as they say at a rodeo), and ride ahead with purpose. That's what we're doing at Liberty with confidence and optimism.

The school is expanding. The new high school, Liberty Common High School, is on track to becoming the best high school in Colorado. Our kids will keep receiving the best education around.

That brings us to pone. In days of old, pone was a legal writ authorizing the court to take a defendant's property if he didn't show up for trial. Today we call it bail. Pone, (pronounced *poney*) is derived from the Latin word *ponere* which means to seize.

We have no intention of seizing anything. But the necessity of showing up, or in this case pitching in, really does have a bearing on the outcome for our school. We really need everyone to answer our appeal for contributions -- generously.

We wouldn't ask were it not important. Pone, by the way, is where we get the phrase "pony up," which is what we're counting on everyone in the Liberty family to do.

There is the difference. That is how.

(Continued from page 1)

*The ratio to the number of chairs to tables is 3 to 4. The ratio of tables to chairs is 4 to 3. Does it matter what order they are in? Yes. Tell me why it is important to have the order right. Don't forget ratios need to be written in the simplest form. (5th grade math)

*Raise your hand if you can tell me a word that starts with the phonogram "z." Yes, zebra and zipper. Now, let's make the "z" sound together. (Kindergarten)

* Today we are going to talk about animals that live in the Antarctic. Please write down the names of animals found in Antarctica in your best handwriting. (Kindergarten)

*"Life Doesn't Frighten Me" is a poem written by Maya Angelou. Poets often write about important things happening to them at that point in history. (4th Grade)

* Someone will lift the weight 10 centimeters by pulling the weight up using a pulley. Then someone will have to figure out the distance you moved the weight and also the force needed to move the weight. Work equals force times distance. (8th grade science)

* What happens to per capita income where economic freedom is present? Please write down what you know about economic fascism. Up or down? The average annual growth rate in the U.S.S.R in its last decade of existence, was it up or down? What two curves intersect so a retailer can find a good price for a product? (Economics)

* Follow along as I read the Latin (teacher reads Latin text). We will translate this after I read. What did that say? What is Cornelius' attitude toward Sextus? (Latin I)

* An observer on a blimp at 2450 feet is directly in line with two ships. Angle of depression to ship B is 40 degrees 15 minutes and ship A is 31 degrees 40 minutes. How far apart are the ships? (Alg. II)

* Many had been kidnapped and taken against their will from their homes in Africa. They were crammed into ships and some died on the voyage. They were taken to North and South America and Europe. (2nd grade)

Notes from the Music Department

We in the Liberty Music Department are so excited about this year's concert schedule.

We have some thoughts on how our audience can help our student musicians have the most success in their programs this year. Each performance is a result of 2 to 4 months of practice. As such, we want to do everything we can to ensure that the audience can hear the performance and our musicians on stage can focus on the difficult task of performing for you to the best of their abilities. To help make this happen, we would like to communicate a few guidelines for our audience this year:

- Please turn off cell phones or other noise-making devices.
- Please use the back door of the performance hall/gym when leaving.
- Please keep children with you in the seating area, rather than up front on the floor or out in the hall unsupervised.
- If you have to leave, please do so between songs.
- The students work hard to create a good performance for the audience so if you can, please try to stay for the entire concert. We realize your time is valuable, so we will do all we can to keep things moving in our performances.

Thanks for all you do for Liberty music!

We hope you will attend the following concert dates:

Nov. 17, 2009-5th, 6th grade Concert-6:30 p.m.

Dec. 1, 2009- Upper School Concert-6:30 p.m.

Dec. 11, 2009 and Dec. 12, 2009-Liberty Common Musical, Seussical the Musical, 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 15, 2009- Kinder Concert-6:30 p.m.

Feb. 9, 2010- 1st and 2nd grade Concert-6:30 p.m.

March 9, 2010-Upper School Performance- 6:30 p.m.

April 13, 2010- 3rd and 4th grade Concert-6:30 p.m.

May 4, 2010-5th and 6th grade Concert—6:30 p.m.

May 11, 2010-Upper School Concert- 6:30 p.m.