



# Lincoln Options Opus

*A community dedicated to  
learning, kindness, and  
celebration!*



March 2015

## Calendar

### March

- 4 – District Late Start, no AM bus
- 9-13 – Observation Week (8:40 – 12)
- 10 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 12 – Theme Learning Celebration
- 13 – Early Release (11:45 dismissal)
- 15 – Enrollment Lottery
- 16-20 – Classified Staff Week
- 16 – OSD Board Mtg @ 6:30 pm
- 21 – Silent Auction
- 24 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 24-27 – Conference Week, 11:45 dismissal (no activities)
- 27 – Lincoln Spring Fling (Live Auction)

### April

- 1 – District Late Start, no AM bus
- 6-10 – Spring Break, no school
- 14 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 15-17 – CISPUS
- 19 – Full Day Kindergarten Lottery
- 20 – OSD Board Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 24 – Early Release (12:32 dismissal)
- 28 – OCC Meeting @ 6:30 pm

## In This Issue:

- News from Marcela *page 2*
- Options Council Update *page 3-4*
- Spanish Volunteers Needed *page 4*
- Spring Fling Tickets *Page 5*
- The K-Tels *page 5*
- Camp Elderberry *page 6*
- Auction is coming! *page 7*
- Being in Nature (Library Update) *page 8*
- Science Update *page 9*
- Caring for Our Community *page 10*

# Dear Families

*By Marcela Abadi*

As you might know, all 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students are expected by the state to take the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) this spring. Last year's pilot of the SBAC was adopted to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. The SBAC replaced the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), the assessment students were required to take since 2010.

Smarter Balanced Assessments, administered online, presents significant changes over tests of the past, including: writing at all three grade levels and performance tasks that ask students to demonstrate an array of research, and problem solving skills.

Another change is the length of the test. The MSP took 2 days for 3rd graders (one day for reading and one day for math), 4 days for fourth graders (one day for reading, one day for math and 2 days for writing) and 3 days for 5th graders (one day for reading, one day for math and one day for science). The ELA portion in the SBAC takes 3 days to administer and 2 days to administer the math portion for all grades. In addition 5th graders take the Science MSP, so they will have 6 days of testing. (See schedule below)

Since the SBAC is a different test, measuring different standards, comparisons to previous tests cannot be made. SBAC exams will definitely be more challenging for students and scores will likely be lower. Practice tests were given to some school districts around the country and results show passing rates between 30% and 50%. These numbers are substantially lower than the scores we have seen on MSP math, reading and writing tests. The Common Core State Standards are clearly more rigorous and challenging for students.

Families have the right to decide whether or not their student's will be tested. If you are considering opting out, we need to know no later than March 26. Last year many students were opted out at the last minute and we were not prepared. Students not taking the test will experience regular learning/curriculum with a known adult.

April 13	14 Day 1 ELA 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	15 Day 2 ELA 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	16 Day 3 ELA 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	17
20	21 Day 1 ELA Matt, Michael, & Marty	22 Day 2 ELA Matt, Michael, & Marty	23 Day 3 ELA Matt, Michael, & Marty	24 Day 1 ELA Cara
27 Day 2 ELA Cara	28 Day 3 ELA Cara 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders Science MSP	29	30	May 1
4	5 Day 1 Math 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	6	7 Day 2 Math 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	8 Early Release
11	12 Day 1 Math Cara	13	14 Day 2 Math Cara	15
18	19 Day 1 Math Matt, Michael, & Marty	20 Day 2 Math Matt, Michael, & Marty	21	22

# Lincoln Options Council News

By

*Jess Revelas*



Happy March Everyone! This is the part of the year where things start flashing by...the culminating event for our school theme (TONIGHT!), the auction (this year in two parts!), conference week, and then all of a sudden it's spring break and the year's almost over (at least that's how it feels to me).

On Monday March 2, the Council held a testing information night that I hope you were able to attend. In April, the new Smarter Balance Assessment test (SBAC) is being given to 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders at all public schools in the Olympia School District, including Lincoln. As you know, Lincoln's philosophy states that "testing will be minimized" at our school, so the administration of high-stakes standardized tests here always causes us not a small amount of soul-searching and consternation. High stakes tests are required across the nation under the No Child Left Behind act, and schools or districts that do not have the requisite passing rates are placed under heightened scrutiny and increased pressure to have their students perform well on the limited set of skills that the test assesses. But there is an out: our school is required to give the test; however, families are allowed to opt their child out of the test if they choose not to participate in this kind of testing. The questions that opting out raises, however, are numerous. Will it affect my child's future? Will it affect their ability to participate in accelerated programs in middle school? Will it have a negative effect on their attitude toward or comfort level with testing? Will a large number of Lincoln students opting out cause a backlash from the district or the state?

Most of these questions are unknowns, so opting out does represent a real risk. Alice Burman, the OSD testing coordinator, came to our information night and provided some information about the question of getting into "Highly Capable" middle school programs. Both JAMS and the new 6th grade Hi-Cap Humanities programs have a two-tiered lottery (1st Pool and 2nd Pool) and they use a combination of MSP and MAP scores to determine which pool a student's application goes into. Please contact Jen Flow, 596.8557, for further details about how opting out of the SBAC/MSP affects Highly Capable program entrance. In terms of how skipping the test will affect your child's ability and attitudes toward testing in the future, only the family can decide.

As for how opting out will affect the school, we have only last year to go on: about 30% of our students opted out last year, and there were no negative repercussions, at least that have been obvious to us over the past

*Continued from previous page.*

year. What opting out can do is send a message to administrators and politicians that we reject the testing model of education, and stand by Lincoln Option's philosophy that our kids' education should value individual strengths and talents, and emotional intelligence, rather than being based on comparison to other students and schools within a limited, traditional skill set. In the words of the State School Superintendent of Georgia, Richard Woods, "Our broken model of assessment is too focused on labeling our schools and teachers, and not focused enough on supporting our students. Our current status quo model is forcing our teachers to teach to the test." Even if teachers here at Options are not "teaching to the test" in a literal way, testing narrows our curriculum and reduces project-based learning experiences. The Culminating Event was originally scheduled for May, but students in our school will be testing from April 12- May 22, making it necessary to have the culmination our school wide theme happen two months early.

Marcela has requested that if you do choose to opt your child out of the SBAC, you complete your form (available in the office) and return it by March 26. Last year the school was not prepared for the high number of kids that opted out, and was left scrambling to cover the kids who were not taking the test. This year we want to be prepared! There is a huge amount of information regarding standardized testing available on the web for those who want to know more. A great place to start is the Washington Post blog, the Answer Sheet, which covers education policy and school reform: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/>. I also recommend a great article that I recently read that talked about skills that would really be worthwhile to assess: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2015/02/26/things-every-kid-should-master/uM72LGr63zeaStOp9zGyrJ/story.html>. For an impassioned letter from teachers about why they oppose these standardized tests, see: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/branden-rippy/parcc-is-30-days-of-destruction\\_b\\_6793198.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/branden-rippy/parcc-is-30-days-of-destruction_b_6793198.html). In addition, on Monday, March 16 teachers from all over the district will share their feelings of dissatisfaction with administering the SBAC and other standardized tests with the Superintendent and School Board.

On a lighter note, I hope to see all of you at the **silent auction on March 21st** and at the **Spring Fling (live auction and wine!) on March 27th**. Tickets are available for the Spring Fling in the office. Happy Spring! With love from your OCC President, Jess

## Spanish Speaking Volunteers Needed

The Spanish Committee is looking for native Spanish speakers (and those conversational in Spanish) interested in helping with a Spanish Activity Evening for Lincoln Families; or in leading extra Spanish related activities during school hours.

The goal is to expose our children to Spanish language and Latino cultures in fun, active, interesting ways - books, art, games, active play, theater, cooking, music....?? If you have time or have ideas to share, please contact: Karen Lacy-Roberts 359-2064 (no texts) [lacyroberts@earthlink.net](mailto:lacyroberts@earthlink.net)

## ***Spring Fling Tickets On Sale NOW!***

Tickets are now available for our fabulous new adult-only live auction event, the Spring Fling, happening March 27<sup>th</sup> 7-10pm at the Woman's Club in downtown Olympia! Tickets are only \$15 each for a night of fun in support of Lincoln Options. Enjoy light snacks. Wine will be available by donation. There will be limited childcare available on site by reservation for \$5 per child. We will have entertainment, speakers, and a live auction for wonderful items donated for our school by local supporters! There will be something for everyone, and everyone is invited!

Purchase your tickets as early as possible for the Spring Fling by calling or emailing me or dropping into my shop downtown, Belleza Ropa, at 101 Capitol Way N. There will also be forms you can fill out and drop into the OCC funds box in the office and we will hold your tickets at the door.

Thank you for all your support of Lincoln and I look forward to having a wonderful night out with you!

Jeannine Kempees, Auction Chair, 360.531.3046



**Thanks  
for  
dancing  
with  
The K-Tels  
at  
Lincoln's  
Winter  
Dance!**

# Mark your Calendar

for

2015's Campout

**Friday, May 29, 2015**

at

**Camp Elderberry**

Camp Elderberry, Lincoln's illustrious, end-of-the-school-year community event and graduation will be held on **Friday, May 29**. This is a Lincoln Options day-long celebration—it's more than a field trip! Families are a central part of this end-of-the-year festival. . . . *please try and come*. Take the day off work! This is a great opportunity to meet more of the Lincoln community.

If you are new to Lincoln, Camp Elderberry at Panhandle Lake is a full-day, outdoor experience with the whole community. There are lots of activities during the day and a huge potluck in the evening, ending with the Fifth grade graduation ceremony. You may also choose to campout in one of the rustic cabins, a tent, or really rough it in the dormitory.

More information will come home via kid-mail. In the meantime, if you have questions, call Jill Lieseke (561-4154 or [jilllieseke@yahoo.com](mailto:jilllieseke@yahoo.com)) for more information! We'll see you there!

**We are still looking for a couple of shadows to continue the Camp Elderberry legacy, come join our team! We have so much information to pass on that will help with the organization for the coming years and we want to relay this information to you!**

**5th grade families:** Graduation is organized by 5th grade parents. Please talk with your child's teacher if you are willing to be a part of organizing this piece of Camp Elderberry.

Please join us at these two fabulous events in support of the programs we love at Lincoln!

## The Silent Auction

*When:* Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> from 1pm to 3:30pm

*Where:* Lincoln gym.

*What:* Silent Auction with hundreds of offerings at a variety of prices to choose from. Something for everyone! Dessert Table full of wonderful treats to purchase. Family Friendly – childcare will be available in the school, and a playground volunteer. The parent band will play for us.

*How much:* There is no charge to attend this event.

## New!! The Lincoln Spring Fling

*When:* March 27<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 10pm

*Where:* Women's Club Building, Downtown Olympia (venue rental fees have been generously donated)

*What:* Live Auction with selected Silent Auction items Special guest speakers – learn more about what makes Lincoln so special. A chance to get to know other Lincoln Parents and supporters at a “grown-up” party. Snacks, desserts, and wine available.

*How much:* There will be a \$15 per person charge for this event to assist in covering food expenses. Wine will be available for a donation of \$5 per glass.

**Volunteer!** Come to our Thursday team meetings or sign up to help with a particular task—contact Jeannine Kempees at [kempeesj@yahoo.com](mailto:kempeesj@yahoo.com) or 360-531-3046 for details.

**Donate!** If you have something to donate, please fill out the form on the other side of this page or the on-line version at <http://lincolnoptions.org>. Not sure what to donate? Consider offering an activity (lead a hike, cook a dinner) or teaching a skill. Wonderful donations in the past have included bird watching tour, kayak trip, tennis lessons, or anything you can think of! Donation information is available at [lincolnoptions.org](http://lincolnoptions.org), or pick up a donation form at the office. Also, consider asking any of the businesses you frequent for a donation for the auction, such as a gift certificate.

**Participate!** Most importantly COME TO THE AUCTION EVENTS! These events are the primary financial support for our Spanish program, wetlands and gardens, and teacher classroom funding. Our school counts on the auction to create the amazing atmosphere we love at Lincoln Options!

*For 2015 Our  
Options Are  
Endless*

*By Auction Committee*

Connect with  
nature...  
every day!!

## Children Benefit From Being in Nature

By Donna Dannenmiller

***Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better - Albert Einstein***

Now that the weather is warming, it is time to rethink the importance of nature in daily life. Many factors compete to lure children indoors...television, computers, and electronic games to name a few. **Jennifer Ward**, (LibrarySparks March 2010) author of nature books and a featured speaker on national television and radio has a lot to say about the subject:

### **Did you know?...**

Children with views of and contact with nature score higher on tests of concentration and self-discipline. The greener the contact, the better the scores. (Wells 2000. Taylor et al. 2002)

Children with symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are better able to concentrate after contact with nature. (Taylor et al.2001)

Early experiences with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder. (Cobb 1977, Louv 1991)

Exposure to natural environments improves children's cognitive development by improving their awareness, reasoning, and observation skills. (Pyle 2002)

Nature buffers the impact of life's stresses on children and helps them deal with adversity. The greater amounts of exposure, the greater the benefits. (Wells & Evans 2003)

Wonder is an important motivator for lifelong learning (Wilson 1997)

Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance, and agility...and they are sick less often. (Grahn, et al. 1997, Fjortoft & Sageie 2001)

**Books serve as a wonderful springboard for exploring the outdoors. Come in for a browse.**

**Connect with nature...every day!!**



Dear Lincoln Community,

I am writing this letter to share with you why Dave and I chose to put “Lincoln Values” into action and vaccinate our children.

With both kids in middle school now, we are grateful for the time they spent at Lincoln Options learning in a community committed to empathy and compassion. As hard as it is to teach young children a sense of responsibility to the larger community, the Lincoln Options teachers skillfully weave this value into the curriculum by minimizing competition and emphasizing the collective good. Of course this is why so many families choose Lincoln Options for their children.

What does this have to do with vaccinations? I believe that one way to express empathy and compassion is to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of the community. But with almost a third of the students at Lincoln Options unvaccinated, the fact is the Lincoln community lacks enough immunity to prevent an outbreak of infectious disease. Luckily this is not a big problem for healthy and strong children. However children with conditions such as heart disease or cancer who are unable to receive vaccines for medical reasons are left exposed and at high risk for disease or even death. Which brings up the question: As a community, could we do more to treat our most vulnerable children with empathy and compassion?

I see vaccines as an opportunity for adults to step up and put “Lincoln Values” into action. Parents can begin by having an open conversation about the risks and benefits of vaccines with their health care provider, carefully considering not only the welfare of their own child but also the health of the community as a whole. We adults demonstrate caring when we discuss our fears about vaccines with a trusted medical professional and educate ourselves about the science behind vaccines.

The decision to vaccinate is a chance to model how tough personal choices can serve the greater good of the community and protect the most vulnerable. As you reach for the phone to schedule a visit with your health care provider, I hope you will think about the famous quote from Mahatma Ghandi, "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."

For more check out the PBS website:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/vaccines-calling-shots.html>

For material to read online try:

<http://pubs.withinreachwa.org/publication/?i=166805>

## Caring for Our Community is a Lincoln Value

*By Addie Spencer,  
Parent of Two  
Lincoln Graduates*



Lincoln Options Opus

March 2015

## It's our Opus.

If you have an item for the Opus, please forward it to Sarah Clifthorne at [opuseditor@gmail.com](mailto:opuseditor@gmail.com). The deadline for submissions is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for the next month's issue. Questions? Feedback? Suggestions for improvements? Contact us via email. Thanks!



Our community is gearing up  
for our all  
school theme: A Sense of Place.

**Please plan on attending  
the celebration of this theme on  
Thursday, March 12, from 6–8:00 pm.**