

## Staying Healthy This Flu Season

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued some preventive measures that schools can implement to help keep children healthy this flu season. The guidelines for the 2009-2010 school year include the following:

- Have students with flu-like illness stay home for at least 24 hours after they stop running a fever to avoid the spread of the virus or a likely recurrence
- Separate students and staff who appear to have flu-like symptoms from the main school population until they can be sent home
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and when possible, cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (use a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available)
- School staff should routinely clean areas that students and staff touch
- Persons at high risk of influenza complications who become ill with flu-like systems should speak with a health-care provider as soon as possible

For more information on how to safeguard oneself during this flu season, visit [www.louisianaschools.net](http://www.louisianaschools.net) and click on the H1N1 Information icon located at the bottom of the homepage.



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It is the policy of the Livingston Parish School Board to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disabilities or veteran status in educational programs and activities. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, educational services, financial aid and employment.

## Mark Your Calendar:

Sept. 22	Recruitment Night at Live Oak High School, 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
Oct. 9	Livingston Parish Fair Holiday
Oct. 16	Parent/Teacher Conference Day
Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 21-Jan. 4	Christmas & New Year's Holiday
Jan. 4	Teacher Planning/Preparation
Jan. 5	Resume Classwork
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Holiday
Feb. 15	Mardi Gras Holiday
March 29-April 5	Easter Holiday
April 12-16	LEAP, iLEAP and GEE Testing
May 20	Last Day of Class Work
May 21	Teacher Planning/Preparation

✓ Recruitment Night offers students and parents an opportunity to receive the latest information on career and school opportunities after high school. **All parish high school students and their parents are invited to attend.** For more information, contact the Live Oak High School guidance counselor at 225-664-0778.

# Livingston Parish Public Schools Journal

September 2009 | [www.lpsb.org](http://www.lpsb.org)

## More Student Info Available to Parents

Livingston Parish school officials have a new and faster way to contact parents to advise them of important school events and in cases of emergency.

The parishwide public system has launched School Messenger, a notification system that places phone calls to landlines or cell phones of parents and/or employees in a matter of minutes. The quick turnaround is very remarkable, considering that Livingston Parish will have nearly 25,000 students and some 3,200 employees in its system this school year.

"This new system revolutionizes the way we communicate important messages to our parents, our students and our

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## Live Oak Pilots Parent Portal

Parents of students at Live Oak High School are participating in the pilot of a new Internet-based student information system called PowerSchool. The program has a "parent portal" that allows parents to log on from their home or work computers and access their children's grades, attendance records and homework assignments.

Live Oak High School Principal Tracy McRae said she is excited about the program's capabilities and the positive responses she has received from parents.

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## Schools to Offer First-Ever Parent/Teacher Conference Day

All Livingston Parish schools are hosting a Parent/Teacher Conference Day on Oct. 16, giving parents an opportunity to sit with their children's teachers to discuss their grades, as well as teaching strategies or techniques that can assist their children. Report cards or interim reports for the first nine weeks will be given to the parents that day.

"This is not an open house where the parents simply meet the teacher and get an overview of class expectations. This will be time for one-on-one discussion of only one topic--your child," said Livingston Parish Curriculum Director Jan Benton.

Benton said parents will be able to schedule a 15-minute conference with their children's teachers between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Oct. 16.

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- ASSESS the NEED Supplies Help Again

## School Board

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## Mission

The mission of the Livingston Parish Public School System, in partnership with home and community, is to provide all students with exceptional educational opportunities that will equip life long learners with the skills necessary to become productive, responsible citizens in a global society.

Visit us on the Web at  
[www.lpsb.org](http://www.lpsb.org)



Bill Spear

## Superintendent's Outlook

It is our goal at Livingston Parish Public Schools to promote greater learning and success for all our students. And while good teachers, a strong curriculum and a supportive atmosphere are essential to our students' success, we know that the greatest ingredient to improving our students' success is parental involvement.

National studies show that when parents get more involved in their children's educational development, the children tend to have higher grades, test scores and graduation rates; better school attendance; increased motivation and better self-esteem; lower rates of suspension; decreased use of drugs and alcohol; fewer instances of violent behavior; and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education. More important, the positive results of parental involvement occur regardless of one's social status, race, ethnicity or the parents' level of education.

That's why this year we're implementing strategies and programs districtwide to strengthen communication efforts with our parents, thereby helping them stay more informed of and involved with their children's day-to-day educational development and learning activities.

The first tool implemented this year is School Messenger. This parishwide notification system allows us to call parents in a matter of minutes to alert them of important notices or changes at their child's school. The system can notify parents of report cards, open houses and schoolwide activities. Some schools also plan to use the program to notify parents of their children's absences or account balances.

Another program is an Internet-based student information system called "PowerSchool." This program has a "parent portal" that allows parents to go online at home or work to view their children's class assignments and grades. The parent portal is currently being piloted by Live Oak High School. Already the program is getting rave reviews from parents and showing a large number of participants. PowerSchool is currently being utilized at all school sites. The parent portal will be offered to other schools on a voluntary basis beginning in January.

To increase parental involvement, we're also sponsoring for the first time, a Parent/Teacher Conference Day on Oct. 16. Parents can schedule a 15-minute session with their children's teachers to discuss grades, classroom assignments and strategies to better help their children learn. Unlike traditional open house gatherings, this one-on-one conference will allow time for the teachers and parents to focus solely on individual children's grades.

And for those parents who would like more assistance with improving their children's educational development, they can now visit our new Family Resource Center, located in Room 165 of the Literacy and Technology Center. The center provides free educational materials on loan, and a certified teacher and family facilitator are on staff to help customize materials to the students' needs.

I would like to encourage all our parents to take advantage of these new programs so they can be better informed and more involved with their children's educational development. By increasing parental involvement in our schools, we can improve the overall success of our students. To learn more, visit our district website at [www.lpsb.org](http://www.lpsb.org).



ASSESS the NEED volunteers, left to right, Matthew Barksdale, Vertis Crowder, Jr., and Livingston Assessor Jeff Taylor loaded school supplies into the back of Michael Stewart's truck. Stewart, second from left, is assistant principal at Springfield Middle School, and he was one of several Livingston Parish school officials who visited the Literacy and Technology Center to collect school supplies that were distributed to needy children at their respective schools.

## ASSESS the NEED Collects \$35,000

The ASSESS the NEED school supply drive has once again helped to provide school supplies for hundreds of children in Livingston Parish whose families cannot afford these classroom essentials.

Livingston Parish Assessor Jeff Taylor, who has sponsored the parishwide school supply drive for the past nine years, said this year's campaign collected about \$35,000 for its cause. He said between 1,700 and 2,000 students benefitted from the program.

"Our program has once again positively touched the lives of many children thanks to the caring and generosity of so many people," Taylor said.

Taylor said this year's program was once again supported by several businesses and community organizations, and a multitude of donations from individuals. He said the majority of individual contributions were collected by volunteers over three consecutive weekends at the Wal-Mart stores in Denham Springs and Walker.

ASSESS the NEED is a not-for-profit program that makes school supplies available to needy children in public schools parishwide, including those in pre-K through 12th grade. Over the past nine years, the campaign has collected nearly \$380,000 in money and supplies. Those numbers do not include an emergency campaign after Hurricane Katrina that collected 6,000 book bags filled with school supplies to go to hurricane victims in several parishes and Jasper, Texas.

## More Student Info Available to Parents

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employees. Within minutes, we can notify our parents of school closures due to weather or dates of schools reopening after a weather-related closure," Superintendent Bill Spear said.

"But to make this system work like it's intended, we must have good phone numbers in our system. It's important that our parents make sure we have their correct contact information," Spear said.

Spear said the system may be utilized to notify parents of the issuances of interim reports and report cards, open house dates and other schoolwide activities. He said employees can be notified of important meetings and deadlines. The system can be programmed to call districtwide, by individual campuses or by segments within the district or each school.

He also said the system has been integrated with the school's attendance system and may place phone calls to parents when their children are absent from school.

The system is also capable of sending e-mail messages. Parents can request e-mail notification instead of phone notification in some cases.

## Live Oak Pilots Parent Portal

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"This new program gives our parents a great way to stay informed and involved in their child's education. It is user friendly and it provides detailed explanations," McRae said.

McRae said more than 76 percent of the students' records were accessed within the first week of announcing the use of PowerSchool to parents at Live Oak High School's open house. She said log-on usernames and passwords were assigned to all students, giving them and their parents immediate access to the system. Parents were given unique log on codes, as well.

McRae also said parents have the option of having e-mail notifications sent to them automatically when the system updates their children's records. The e-mails can be sent daily, weekly, every two weeks or monthly, per the parents' instructions.

Sandra Brewer, director of technology, said PowerSchool is currently being utilized at all schools. The district hopes to make the "parent portal" available at other schools as early as January. She said school participation will be on a voluntary basis.

## Teacher Spends Summer as Park Ranger to Become Better Educator



Dottie Hartman stands next to an Anasazi pictograph at the Natural Bridges National Monument in southeastern Utah. The pictograph, or rock-art painting, was created by a prehistoric Southwest Pueblo culture, which is believed to be the ancestry of the modern-day Hopi tribe.

Becoming a better teacher often means going the extra mile. For Dottie Hartman, it meant traveling 1,500 miles and spending 10 weeks in the hot, arid environment of southeastern Utah.

Hartman was selected this past summer to participate in the Teacher to Ranger to Teach program. The program enrolls teachers to work in national parks for the summer then afterwards designates them as official liaisons to share their experiences with their students and to encourage the students to connect with their national heritage by visiting national parks.

Hartman lived and worked at Natural Bridges National Monument, which features the second- and third-largest natural bridges in the world, carved from white Triassic-aged sandstones that compose the Cedar Mesa.

Hartman served as an interpretive ranger, leading guided hikes, operating the park telescope, manning the visitor center, monitoring archaeological sites and conducting evening presentations. She also assisted park biologists with looking for and removing exotic plant species from along the park's hiking trails.

"This program is a great way to become more knowledgeable and more understanding of our nation's cultural geography. I'm looking forward to sharing my newly gained insights with my students, and I hope I can inspire them to be lifelong learners and explorers," Hartman said.

## Family Resource Center Opens

The Livingston Parish School System has created a Family Resource Center to assist and support families with their children's education.

The center provides free educational materials on loan, including videos, books, games, flashcards, electronic games and resources, special needs information and ACT prep materials. The center will also offer a variety of workshops throughout the school year.

A certified teacher is on staff to assist parents, along with a family facilitator who specializes in resources for children with exceptionalities and special needs.

The center is located in Room 165 of the Livingston Parish Literacy and Technology Center, located at 9261 Florida Blvd., near Walker. It is open on Tuesdays from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Parents may call 225-667-1098 or send an e-mail to [jennifer.rabalais@lpsb.org](mailto:jennifer.rabalais@lpsb.org) for information.



## District Continues Progress on Construction Projects



The new 3,600-square-foot addition at Frost School includes a library and five administrative offices. The new addition will free up two classrooms and space for the school's speech therapists.

Architects are currently working on a design for the new Live Oak High School. The school board expects to accept construction bids once the design is completed and approved. Meanwhile, the school board recently voted to construct multi-purpose facilities at Northside Elementary and Lewis Vincent Elementary. Both multi-purpose facilities are expected to be completed by August 2010.

The Livingston Parish school system is managing several construction projects in an effort to expand and upgrade campus facilities throughout the district.

Several projects were completed earlier this year, including the renovation and expansion of the field house at Denham Springs High School, installation of a 600-foot carpool driveway at Gray's Creek Elementary, construction of a covered walkway for Walker Elementary and the paving of parking lots at Walker Elementary and Westside Junior High.

Other major projects still underway include a new administration and library addition at Frost School and a multi-purpose facility at Seventh Ward Elementary (both projects should be completed by the end of the year), and the new Juban Parc Elementary, Juban Parc Junior High and South Fork Elementary (all three schools will open August 2010).

## Enrollment Growth Leads to Athletic Improvements

With the Livingston Parish school system growing at a fast pace, more and more space is needed at the school campuses to accommodate student enrollments. That need has been especially evident in the Denham Springs school district.

When including the freshman campus, Denham Springs High School is one of the top 10 largest high schools in the state with about 1,900 students in grades 9-12.

Creating separate freshman and high school campuses has helped to manage classroom space, but the two campuses still share athletic facilities. The facilities become crammed with student-athletes after school, especially during the times when sport seasons overlap.

To better accommodate the large number of students, the district recently expanded the high school's athletic facilities, using surplus dollars designated for the Denham Springs School District.

Track practice areas were added to the high school site, including areas to practice for long jumps, high jumps and pole vault. A three-lane track was also added to the sidelines of the football field.



Denham Springs Freshman Devin Dugas and several of his classmates lift weights in the newly renovated high school field house as part of their workout routine for the school's freshman football team.

The Denham Springs High School field house was expanded from 1,200 square feet to 3,000 square feet, which included enlarging the 600-square-foot football locker room to 1,200 square feet and adding 100 additional lockers.

These improvements are the first made to the Denham Springs High School field house since it was built in 1984.

# Schools Recognized for Academic Growth



The principals of the eight parish schools achieving academic growth recognition by the state were honored by the school board. Pictured from left to right are (front row) Allison Raborn of Walker Elementary; Diane Smith of Doyle Elementary; Cynthia Gill of French Settlement Elementary; Kelly Jones of Denham Springs High; Arlene Wilson of Levi Milton Elementary; (back row) Superintendent Bill Spear; Kenneth Fohne of South Walker Elementary; and Jim Richardson of Gray's Creek Elementary. Not pictured is a representative for French Settlement High School.

Eight schools were honored by the Louisiana Department of Education at the end of the last school year for achieving Exemplary Academic Growth or Recognized Academic Growth for the 2007-2008 accountability cycle.

For a school to be recognized by the state for Exemplary Academic Growth, it must meet three criteria: 1) the school must meet or exceed the state's growth target, 2) all subgroup performance scores must increase at least two points, and 3) the school is not in school improvement. For a school to be recognized by the state for Recognized Academic Growth, it must meet or exceed the state's growth target.

Those Livingston Parish schools recognized for Exemplary Growth were French Settlement Elementary and Levi Milton Elementary. Those earning Recognized Growth honors were Denham Springs High, Doyle Elementary, French Settlement High, Gray's Creek Elementary, South Walker Elementary, and Walker Elementary.

## Parish Introduces Dual-Credit Course in Criminal Justice

With top-rated shows like *CSI* and *Law and Order* on the television every night, it is not surprising that many young people are interested in the field of criminal investigation these days. School officials believe that heightened interest could lead to career opportunities for many parish students.

That's why the district is piloting two sections of a criminal justice course this year for graduating seniors. Seventeen seniors at Albany High School are taking the class on their campus from 7:20 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. every day, while another 16 seniors from Doyle, Live Oak and Walker are attending a 12:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. session at the Literacy and Technology Center. The daily three-hour course is also worth 3 credit hours at the Louisiana Technical College.

The piloted course is being taught by Kelly Fagan, a former classification officer at Angola State Penitentiary and a certified course instructor. She said students will be introduced to the theories and ideologies of criminal justice that are the foundation of many of today's laws and statutes. She said students also will learn how the correctional system works, from the point of arrest to the sentencing.

Fagan said the students will be required to do a profile study on a real crime case. They will research the criminal's background and the facts of the case and then apply criminology theories to the case.

"I want the students to have a better understanding of the social issues that contribute to acts of crime," Fagan said. "What makes people act the way they do? Often we can pinpoint actions that bring on the chain of crime."

Fagan said the class will host some guest speakers, including a state trooper to talk about DWI crimes and traffic-related issues, as well as a defensive tactics instructor who will demonstrate basic self-defense tactics. She said the students will also go on field trips to the Angola State Penitentiary, the New Orleans city morgue and the state office of the Department of Homeland Security.



# Mascot Selected for Juban Parc Schools



School officials for Livingston Parish Public Schools announced this summer that the jaguar will be the mascot for the new Juban Parc elementary and junior high schools. The two schools will also wear teal and black as their colors.

A contest was held among junior high students at Denham Springs Junior High and Southside Junior High to determine the mascot for the new schools. Students were asked to write essays on why school officials should select their recommended mascot for the two new schools.

D. J. Landry, a sixth-grader at Denham Springs Junior High, won the contest with his essay, which presented three reasons why the jaguar is the "perfect mascot" for the new schools.

Landry said jaguars are very intelligent creatures, representing the knowledge that will be learned by the students who attend the new school. Jaguars also "stick together" as a pack, he said. "Everyone knows that Southside Junior High and Denham Springs Junior High have been rivals for years, but by bringing half of both schools to Juban Parc Junior High, they'll have to stick together and become close friends just like a pack of jaguars," Landry said. Plus, the alliteration in the name Juban Parc Jaguars would lend itself to having the mascot named "JJ," Landry added.



D. J. Landry of Denham Springs Junior High was presented with a \$100 cash prize from Alvin Fairburn & Associates for winning the mascot contest. He also earned another \$100 from Renaissance Development Group. Pictured from left to right are Denham Springs Junior High Principal Jennifer Barclay; School Board Member Buddy Mincey, Jr.; Alvin Fairburn of Alvin Fairburn & Associates; contest winner D. J. Landry; Superintendent Bill Spear; Tony Bull, CEO of Renaissance Development Group; and Damisha Landry Golmond, mother of D. J. Landry.

## First-Ever Parent/Teacher Conference Day

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She said scheduling forms will be sent home with the students. Parents are asked to check two time slots that work best with their schedules and return the forms to their children's teachers.

"At that time, each school will work with the requests to best accommodate the parents' schedules with those of the teacher. The school will follow-up with the parents to let them know the time of their conference," Benton said.

Benton said her office has researched best practices in other school districts across the United States and found that parent-teacher conferences have positively impacted student performance.

Benton said the conferences are limited to 15 minutes because of the large enrollments at all the schools.

However, if parents need additional time with their children's teachers, follow-up appointments may be scheduled for a later date.

She also said persons who are unable to attend a conference time on Oct. 16 can select a morning or afternoon time on Oct. 19 or Oct. 20.

### How to Get the Most in 15 Minutes!

- ◆ Be prompt.
- ◆ Make notes of things you want to discuss.
- ◆ Come with a positive attitude toward the conference. Think of the teacher as a true partner.
- ◆ Keep in mind that your child may be one of three at home, but one of many in a teacher's class.
- ◆ Try to restrict your references to this year, not previous school experiences.
- ◆ Avoid discussing other children. Remember, you have 15 minutes to discuss your child.
- ◆ Inquire as to specific techniques, strategies or resources that have been used to assist your child.
- ◆ Do not anticipate spending much time on achievement test interpretations. Concern yourself more with classroom performance.
- ◆ If you need more time, ask about scheduling an additional conference.