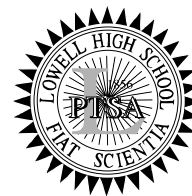


# LOWELLIGHT



## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

*Parents, Guardians, Families,*

Since my arrival at Lowell, **communication** has been a number one priority within the Lowell community. Enhancing **professional development** and our State and National **ranking** among the best high schools have also been a focus. This year our students took 3,100 Advanced Placement exams which, in all likelihood, will advance our national ranking (currently fourth).

Thanks to the tireless efforts of PTSA VP Mona Marachli and student coordinator Tiffany Nguyen, the April 5<sup>th</sup> **Spring Beautification Day** was a huge success. Parents, students, and community members focused on landscaping the courtyard and the front of the school. They worked hard preparing and planting native plants in front of the school and transferring plants from around the campus to the courtyard area. They also painted numerous campus areas and cleaned both inside school and the outside surrounding neighborhood. Students, parents, staff and guests have commented on the improvement of the areas where we worked all day. Make a date to participate next fall!

**More news:** In April, a **fence and gate** were installed on Eucalyptus by the music wing and on Lake Merced between the tennis courts and T bungalows as a deterrent to trespassers. (You can drop off your student at the Lake Merced parking lot by using the driveway on Winston next to Enterprise Rent A Car. Drive all the way up to the basketball courts to drop off.)

Recently, in reviewing our **instructional minutes** report, I found that we have not accurately reported our minutes to the SFUSD and State. We over reported by counting the freshman resource class, a non-credentialed study hall. After much discussion and review of various plans, a committee of teachers and administrators resolved this dilemma by **increasing the amount of BC code for the freshman class**. I have shared the choices with our PTSA, our Principal's Council (leaders from our student council), our Administrative Council (department heads) and administrative team. Freshman English, Mathematics, Social Studies, first-year World Languages and PE electives will meet for 40 and 65 minutes on alternate days to increase instructional minutes. I hope that you understand the importance for this change as it is necessary to be in compliance with the State.

In **student news**, our athletic program, visual and performing arts, JROTC, Lowell Newspaper, and student clubs and organizations continue to bring home accolades and recognition. The spring musical "*Les Miserables*" was a great success. This is due to the students'

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dedication and the staff's endless work on this huge production. In winter **sports**, our Varsity Girls Basketball, Girls Tennis, Cross Country, Boys and Girls Swimming all won city championships. Just recently, our Varsity Baseball, Softball, Badminton and Boys Volleyball teams all won honors as City Champs. Our Varsity Baseball and Girls Soccer both won Transbay Competition against the Oakland Section champions. We at Lowell are truly proud of all of our students who participate in extra-curricular activities.

**Thank you for your generous donations that assisted in saving teachers and staff for the 2008-09 school year!** There is no doubt that your gifts have inspired other parents, guardians and friends of Lowell High to contribute more than ever. As you know, we are facing severe cuts in the state's education budget affecting all public schools. Please take the time to write letters to our governor and senators protesting these cuts. Their contact information is listed on our website.

As we prepare for the end of the school year and plan for the fall, I would like you to know how much I appreciate the warm welcome, support and most of all, the friendships I have developed with the Lowell Community. It is an honor to be your principal.

**Congratulations to the Lowell High School Class of 2008!** I look forward to seeing the rest of our students in the Fall, and wish you all a safe and restful summer.

**Mahalo,**

*Andrew W. Ishibashi*

*Proud Lowell High School Principal*

## PTSA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Lowell Families,*

**I**f you ever worked alongside me at Clarendon Elementary or AP Gianinni, you would know that you can count on me. After serving as Vice President last year, I started this year nervously as PTSA President, not knowing what to expect -- since my mentor and predecessor practically lived at Lowell and did an extraordinary job! I couldn't possibly offer that same level of service.

Early in the year, I recognized that I wouldn't accomplish much if I allowed myself to fret about being over committed and under qualified, or obsessing over my lifelong fear of public speaking! So, I put a smile on my face, harnessed nerves of steel and went full tilt ahead as PTSA leader-in-training.

First and foremost, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the **2007-08 PTSA Executive Board** members for their faith in me to lead the PTSA through another successful year. Their collaborative energy and dedication helped me stay focused. These wonderful people are:

|                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b> | – Victor Martinez    |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</b> | – Mona Marachli      |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                     | – Stephanie Kurkjian |
| <b>Financial Secretary</b>           | – Betsey Mar Ho      |
| <b>Recording Secretary</b>           | – Denise DuBay       |
| <b>Auditor</b>                       | – Amporn Leininger   |
| <b>Parliamentarian</b>               | – Kuassi Mensah      |
| <b>Historian</b>                     | – Bob Lee            |
| <b>Student Representative</b>        | – Sanyee Yuan        |
| <b>Teacher Representative</b>        | – Steve Schmidt      |

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Last summer we were informed that we would welcome a new Principal, **Andy Ishibashi** from Washington High School. I met with Mr. Ishibashi just before the school year started to “see if we could work together” and to assure him that the PTSA would gladly support and assist with his transition. In my monthly review or planning conferences with Principal Ishibashi, he has proved to be an outstanding administrator, popular with staff and students, and an all-around “great guy.” He’s been a wonderful asset to the school. We are lucky to have him, and I wish him many years of success at Lowell.

With her ever-present “can do” attitude, **Debbie Gee Wong**, Director of the Lowell Fund, expertly led a campaign to “Rally ‘Round Lowell” in response to the Governor’s proposed cuts to education funding for schools. Lowell came close to cutting 12 staff and teacher positions, which would have severely diminished the quality of education for our students. I am happy to report that next year’s programs will continue to be offered with little compromise. Much gratitude is due to Mr. Ishibashi’s keen analytical skills and experience with budgeting, the community’s response with donations to the Lowell Fund, and the generous assistance of the Lowell Alumni Association.

In the tradition of hard work and high standards, Lowell is being heralded again as the **Best High School in San Francisco** (ranked #54) in *Newsweek’s* 2008 list of “Top 100 High Schools” in the nation.

Our community was also recognized for public service. President Bush made a stop recently in San Francisco to present senior student Richard Berwick the **President’s Volunteer Service Award**.

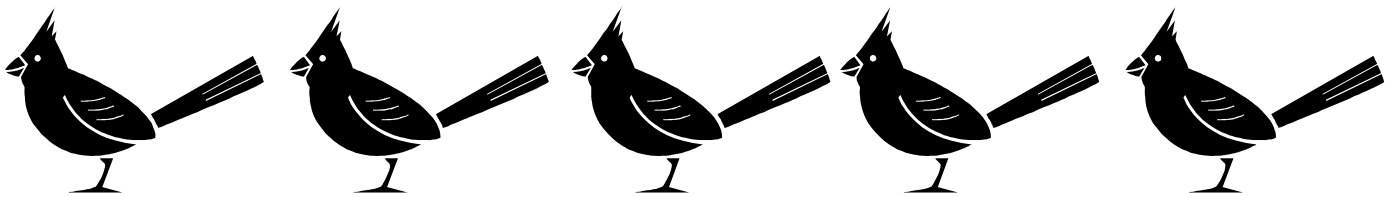
Our beloved 151-year-old school is holding up well and looking better than ever. Students, parents and staff came together on **Beautification Day** by the hundreds to lend a hand to paint, landscape, make repairs, and apply TLC to the walls and hallways of the school corridors.

It is now time for me to remove the Lowell Cardinal apron that I have donned for the past year. I leave the school with much pride that I helped make a difference in ensuring that the community continues to thrive.

I am honored to turn the leadership over to the capable hands of **Debbie Gee Wong, next year’s PTSA President**. Best wishes to Debbie and her outstanding cabinet of new officers.

*Wanda Chang  
PTSA President  
Parent of Lowell Student ('08)*

**GO CARDINALS!**



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## LOWELL COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE BUDGET CUT IS A SUCCESS!

**I**n February of this year, the Governor announced the likelihood of a **10% budget cut** to all public schools because of the State budget crisis. For Lowell High School, 10% represents \$1.35 million of possible budget reductions.

In true Cardinal spirit, the school community has effectively rallied around the school budget cuts. The success of the campaign has been in response to a budget crisis solicitation which involved over 4,100 letters of various pleas mailed out within a 60-day period and a Town Hall meeting in March with a subsequent mini-Town Hall meeting in April.

The result is that we have raised **\$333,000** to date from our fundraising activities. **600 families** have contributed, or **23%** of our school community. The participation is far less than the 100% that we need. However, those who did contribute did so generously. We also received support from parents of alums who continue to support the level of academic excellence that their children benefited from.

Lowell's ever-supportive and generous **Alumni Association** provided the school with a check for **\$250,000** to help with the real challenges it faced: elimination of a seventh class option, reduction of teachers/counselors/Dean/support staff, elimination of some electives, reduction of library and computer lab courses, elimination of supplies, and increased class size. **Lisa Clay**, Lowell Alumni President and **Terry Abad**, Development Chair of the Alumni presented the check to Lowell Principal Andrew Ishibashi and PTSA President Wanda Chang at the March 18<sup>th</sup> Town Hall meeting, and received a well deserved standing ovation!

The **SFUSD** also released an additional **\$391,000** of unrestricted and special education funds.

Cumulatively, we have been able to rally **\$974,000** in monies toward our much needed school resources and programs. The joint efforts of the Lowell fundraising community, Lowell Alumni Association and SFUSD have enabled us to preserve all of the staff, programs, support and supplies that we were truly at risk to lose. It was a great pleasure for our Principal, Mr. Ishibashi, to be able to **rescind layoff notices** that were handed out in March.

The bottom line is that **THIS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE WITHOUT YOUR HELP**. To each and every one who wrote a check, made an online donation and submitted an employer match, **THANK YOU** for preserving our school's program and staffing!

If you are among **the 77% who have not yet contributed**, we still need you. There is no magic budget solution for the State. We will be faced with ongoing budget challenges. We need your participation – everyone's participation – to ensure that Lowell does not again find itself in a similar dire situation. The burden does not fall solely upon the 23% who gave early. It is not too late for you to make a check out to the Lowell Fund or go online to [www.lowellpts.org](http://www.lowellpts.org) to let your child, the students, the teachers and the Lowell community know that you care and are willing to make an investment in the future of our school and student body! Our work to support our school is not done.

In the Cardinal Spirit,

*Debbie Gee Wong*

*Director of the Lowell Fund*

## A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

**O**f my ten years teaching at Lowell High School, this has been one of my favorites, in large part due to the fabulous support offered to Lowell by this year's PTSA. Some of the parents that I've been fortunate enough to work with have been around the PTSA for years. It's been terrific continuing my role as the faculty representative and getting to volunteer with the likes of **Stephanie Kurkjian** and **Amporn Leininger**, both of whom had children in my classes 5 years ago or so. We've all benefited from their institutional memories and work ethics. Thank God for **Lila Lee** once again coordinating this issue of *The Lowellight*. You all are awesome! I'd also like to thank PTSA President **Wanda Chang** for her wonderful leadership through this year. It's been fun and I am proud of what we've been able to accomplish.

It's also been great seeing new parents rise to the occasion of leading our PTSA. Thanks to **Mona Marachli** for organizing two outstanding Lowell Beautification Days, **Debbie Gee Wong** for raising so much money for The Lowell Fund, and the rest of the Executive Board for your friendship, support, and inspiration.

Most impressive to me about this year with PTSA is that for the first time in my PTSA

experience, we've had a contested election. There have been many spirited emails batted back and forth and a few tense moments at our meetings, which to me indicate how many parents want to get involved and how seriously they are trying to make Lowell even better than it already is. This is the best news of the year - finally there are seemingly too many parents willing to fill all of the leadership positions available on the PTSA Executive Board.

As someone who volunteers a lot of time and has tried to serve Lowell to the best of my abilities, I realize that leadership roles do not equate to any "real power", but more accurately mean little more than "a lot of work." Thank you so much to so many of you for agreeing to accept this work, and congratulations to the Lowell community for what will assuredly be an amazingly successful academic year in 2008-09.

As a small-town boy who grew up on a cattle ranch, I love working with the PTSA because it makes me feel more connected to the Lowell community and not so overwhelmed by living and teaching in "the big city." Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to serve and represent Lowell faculty in this most excellent of organizations. Have a great summer!

*Steve Schmidt*

*Lowell PTSA Faculty Representative*

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## *We Need Your Input!*

The 2008-09 PTSA Board would like to know what topics you are interested in hearing and learning about at the PTSA meetings. Topics can include counseling or school services, college admissions, college planning, clubs, etc. Please e-mail me with your ideas for topics for next year's PTSA meetings. Your opinion counts! E-mail [dgeewong@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dgeewong@sbcglobal.net)

## A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

**A**t the first PTSA meeting of the year, held in conjunction with the freshman parent orientation night, I stood onstage at the podium to introduce myself as the year's PTSA Student Representative and promised the incoming parents that I would share the secret to succeeding at Lowell. Drawing on my own experiences from my three years here, I revealed that the secret was networking.

This past year, as Student Body Council Community Liaison, I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to expand my networks by serving as the student voice on a number of influential decision-making committees. I have helped with the creation of the budget on the School Site Council, speaking up for the importance of counselors to the student body. I have interacted with student representatives from the district on the Student Advisory Council, discussing how to promote civic engagement through the YouthVote program. I have worked with the student leaders on the Lowell Student Association to raise over \$4,000 for orphans in China during Social Awareness Week. And this year, it has been my honor and pleasure to serve as the Student Representative to the PTSA.

When friends ask me about the meetings that I attend for my different organizations, I always

bring up the PTSA, describing the unique atmosphere of our meetings. It has been incredible interacting with parents who care so much about staying involved with their students' lives, contributing to the Lowell community, and volunteering their time to improve the school environment. Instead of being intimidated, as I admit I thought I would feel speaking to a room full of parents, I have felt very comfortable at each meeting.

Labeling myself "the Student Guru" with my monthly reports, I have enjoyed presenting updates and connecting the parents with news on class fundraisers, school dances, and student life. I have also seen firsthand the great level of dedication of the parents through their involvement in Lowell Beautification Day and organization of the Budget Crisis Town Hall Meeting. I would like to thank the members of the PTSA who have welcomed me, worked with me, and encouraged my student role on the Executive Board this past year.

I hope for the future, in approving the creation of the PTSA Student Affairs Council last May, that there will be increased student participation on the PTSA and more students can engage in an experience as enriching and memorable as my term on the PTSA has been. Thank you.

*Sanyee Yuan*

*Lowell PTSA Student Representative*

## PTSA ELECTION NEWS

Congratulations to new Executive Board Members 2008-09:

**President** - Debbie Gee Wong

**1st Vice President** - Scott Lee

**2nd Vice President** - Marny Leslie

**Recording Secretary** - Caroline Scott

**Treasurer** - Mona Marachli

**Financial Secretary** - Lisa Pollard

**Auditor** - Jamie Lewin

**Historian** - Tiffany Lau

Thank you to **Carol Kocivar** and **Terry Norbury**, former alum parents, for their guidance and invaluable assistance with the unprecedented Open Election. Special thanks to our three efficient election tellers: **Victor Martinez**, **Daniel Soo Hoo** and **Dennis Weaver**.

## THANK YOU TO LOWELL FUND DONORS

(checks postmarked 10/25/07 - 05/31/08; online donation transaction dates 10/28/2007 - 05/31/08)

The 2007-2008 Lowell Fund campaign is a true testament to what we can achieve as a community! We raised over \$333,000 in response to the State budget crisis. The overwhelming response of the call to action will result in saving the seventh class option, faculty and staff positions, electives and library and computer lab hours. We are grateful to the following supporters of Lowell High School, the #54 Best High School in the nation (May 2008, *Newsweek* magazine). **If your name is on the list, give yourself a big pat on the back for helping to save our school program!**

*Debbie Gee Wong,  
Director of the Lowell Fund*

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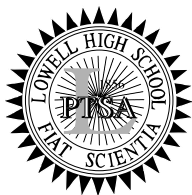
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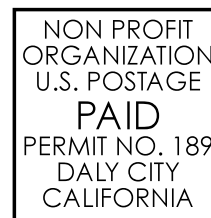
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