

# LOWELLLIGHT



PTSA Newsletter

Lowell High School

Spring 2008

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Parents, Guardians, Families,

**B**y now you've read about the projected State budget cuts. As part of the Lowell community you're undoubtedly wondering how these cuts will impact your child's education and equally as important, how you can protect your school.

To update you, in order to balance the preliminary budget, it is likely administration will cut a minimum of eleven positions. Cuts will impact departments across the board, including but not limited to World Languages, Visual and Performing Arts, elective classes, and counseling. If your child now enjoys seven class offerings, please be aware that discussions are underway which may result in a maximum of six class offerings.

How could this be? Over the years Lowell has always enjoyed the generosity of family donations through the PTSA's Lowell Fund and our Alumni. These monetary gifts supplemented our budget, allowing us to maintain the excellent core curriculum and stay competitive with private schools and the best public schools in the nation.

Now the Administrative Council has considered recommended cuts regarding positions and instructional programs which were in the past deemed "safe" within the District's budget allocation. The final recommendation rests with our School Site Council.

On March 15, the SFUSD officially sent layoff notices to *more* than the identified eleven

positions due to the education code and union contract. Because of district seniority, teachers who are "noticed" are not guaranteed a Lowell position. You may have read that the Board of Supervisors is considering offsetting some of the district's losses, but this is still under discussion. So I am asking you to please write a check now to the *Lowell Fund* so that we may avert this financial crisis and remain whole.

Lowell families have financial obligations. Many of you are single parents, who have one or more children attending other schools. You work hard and are trying to save for college. Please know that your donation will not be squandered. The Lowell Administration, PTSA, and the Lowell Alumni Association will work closely to ensure the funds you donate are used to support programs important to maintaining Lowell's tradition of educational excellence.

In the cardinal spirit I am,

*Andrew W. Ishibashi*

*Your Proud Principal*

"No act of kindness is ever wasted."

*-Aesop*

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## PTSA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Lowell Families,*

As spring begins, preparations are underway for next years' curriculum. If you are in tune with Lowell, you know we need your help in writing letters of support as well as making donations! The need for public outcry has never been greater. Governor Schwarzenegger has recommended a \$4.8 billion cut for K-14 education, on top of a \$400-plus million reduction for education in the current year. This budget shortfall will affect programs at Lowell by over \$1 million.

The California State PTA opposes any cuts to education and children's programs. As it is, California is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in education spending; \$2,000 less per student than the national average. Please contact our State Assembly member and our State Senator to let them know that investing in public education is one of the most important ways to ensure the long-term growth and health of our state's economy.

### **FLUNK THE BUDGET!**

**Write, call or email your legislator now. Tell them:**

- ◆ The California State PTA opposes any cuts to education and children's programs in the state budget.
- ◆ This budget flunks the basic test of good government and it hurts our children.
- ◆ Our children did not create this financial crisis and they shouldn't have to pay for it.

For the next several months the State PTA will pursue a statewide effort to make sure the Governor and every legislator hear PTA's message: Sample letters have already been drafted for your convenience. Log onto the Lowell PTSA website: [www.lowellptsa.org](http://www.lowellptsa.org) for letters and phone numbers to our state's legislators. May I suggest you print out a few extras and enlist the help of your friends, family and neighbors to do the same?

**Rally 'round Lowell.** As part of the Lowell community, together we can avoid compromising the quality of our children's education by supporting the Lowell Fund. Please send your contribution to the Lowell Fund and be as generous as your family budget allows. Donate on line by visiting: [www.lowellptsa.org](http://www.lowellptsa.org), or send your check in the remittance envelope provided in this issue of the *LowellLight*.

Thank you for your support and your commitment to ensuring that Lowell students and teachers will continue to gain national recognition for exemplary attention to college and career preparation.

*Wanda Chang*

*PTSA President*

*Parent of Lowell Student ('08)*

## WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN STAND TO LOSE?

By now you know that **California's multi-billion dollar budget deficit** threatens to harm our rich, diverse college preparatory curriculum. Unlike some large high schools, where most students take the same basic courses, Lowell offers more than 182 different courses in a typical semester, including nearly 39 courses in the World Language Department alone.

Teacher layoffs at a typical high school, while painful, are simpler to implement. If every 10th grader takes the same math class, then you reduce the number of sections of that class, thereby increasing class size. But at Lowell, where many courses have only one or two sections per semester, **the only way to deal with faculty reductions is to cancel many of these courses.** This deprives Lowell students of the ability to choose from a broad variety of courses, a Lowell hallmark for decades.

The breadth of language offerings at Lowell is perhaps unequalled at any other public high school in America and the envy of many private schools. Currently, Lowell offers three years of instruction in nine different languages plus honors and AP courses in selected languages. If enough students request a fourth year, every effort is made to provide the opportunity to take a fourth year language class. Budget cutbacks may **force Lowell to reduce the number of course offerings in world languages.**

Faculty layoffs will obviously result in larger class sizes, but most classes at Lowell are already fairly large. **Larger classes mean fewer opportunities for students to voice their opinions and ideas** and less of a chance to forge a personal relationship with their teachers.

Another unfortunate but very real result of larger class sizes is that **teachers are likely to assign fewer or shorter assignments to their students.** A typical Lowell teacher has five classes, so he or she could go from grading 140 papers to 170 papers.

Lowell's highly motivated students often take more than the normal load of six courses, so as to pursue interests and courses beyond those required for graduation or college admission. But budget cutbacks could **force Lowell to limit students to only six courses per semester**, thus preventing them from taking complete advantage of Lowell's unique curriculum.

Cutbacks are **likely to affect library and nursing services** as well, making it harder for Lowell students to find appropriate space to study or to gain access to healthcare services.

Lowell counselors have demanding jobs, given the difficulty some students have adapting to Lowell's challenging academic environment and the fact that more than 99.5% of Lowell students are college bound and require assistance in navigating the college admissions process. The current **student-to-counselor ratio of 350 to 1 could rise to 400 to 1** or more.



**Please help save Lowell's unique curriculum now by making a generous, tax-deductible gift. Make your checks payable to the Lowell Fund.**

*Debbie Gee Wong  
Director of the Lowell Fund*

## FAQS: THE BUDGET CRISIS

**Q:** If we families are successful in raising all or most of the \$1.35 million needed to preserve Lowell's curriculum and programs, will the school district respond by cutting Lowell's funding even more in future years?

**A:** Although a theoretical possibility, it is considered highly unlikely that the success of these fundraising efforts will have this effect, given the school district's strong support for a strict formula-based funding method for individual school sites (basing funding only on overall enrollment and the numbers of students with certain special needs).

**Q:** Will PTSA become the employer of teachers funded through this effort?

**A:** Absolutely not. Your tax-deductible contributions will be directed to a special school district trust account (closely audited), so that any teachers, counselors or others funded through this account will remain school district employees.

**Q:** Won't this budget crisis persist for several years? Will the Lowell families become a perennial funding source for faculty salaries and benefits?

**A:** It is expected that the current budget crisis will persist through the 2008-2009 school year. While nobody knows how much state and local funding Lowell will receive in future years, the PTSA expects those sources to once again fund all faculty and staff salaries and benefits so that our only fund raising campaign will be the Annual Fund.

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## SLATE OF PTSA BOARD CANDIDATES FOR 2008-2009

Heartfelt thanks to the following individuals who have stepped forward to volunteer for next year's PTSA Board:

**President:** Bob Lee

**First VP:** Terry Abad

**Second VP:** Scott Lee

**Recording Secretary:** Caroline Scott

**Parliamentarian:** Kuassi Mensah

**Treasurer:** Mona Marachli

**Financial Secretary:** to be confirmed

**Auditor:** to be confirmed

**Historian:** Tiffany Lau

The slate will be voted on at the PTSA meeting on April 16th. All are welcome to attend PTSA meetings, which are generally held on the first Wednesday of the month. The Board meets at 6 p.m. and the general meeting starts at 7 p.m.

## TEN REASONS **Not** To Give ...

Over the years, parents have come up with the darnedest reasons **not** to donate to our beloved Lowell Fund. We thought we'd share (and refute) a bit of their dialogue.

*Bonnie Jones, Former Lowell Fund Director*

*Debbie Gee Wong, Lowell Fund Director 2007-2008*

- 10 I paid tuition to the privates, K-8. This is my time to get back for all the taxes I paid.** Your past taxes paid for a minuscule part of public education. And hey, you spent all that dough and now you want to scrimp in the home stretch?
- 9 This is a public school and it should be free!** Ain't that the truth. And it is free at most of the other high schools -- they cut the enrichment classes and counselors and raised class size long ago.
- 8 My son isn't making it at Lowell. Why should I give? Or better yet ... My son teaches himself and those teachers are lucky to have my kid!** Ten years from now, you can brag that your son went to Lowell. People will actually be impressed and think your kid was a genius.
- 7 My husband/wife holds the checkbook.** Find yourself a sock drawer and stash a bit away each week. Consider a garage sale once a year with proceeds to the Lowell Fund. Donate your tax refund check. Take your lunch to work one day a week, or, better yet, go to [www.lowellptsa.org](http://www.lowellptsa.org) and make a monthly credit card pledge. Then when you receive my letters you can say to yourself, "Hey, I'm giving already!"
- 6 I would give if you forced all the families to make a contribution.** Wait a minute; I think I have a crowbar in my car trunk. If I could force you all to give, I would. In a few years when those college bills come in, try ignoring them. But seriously, I realize that

some families just don't have the resources to donate.

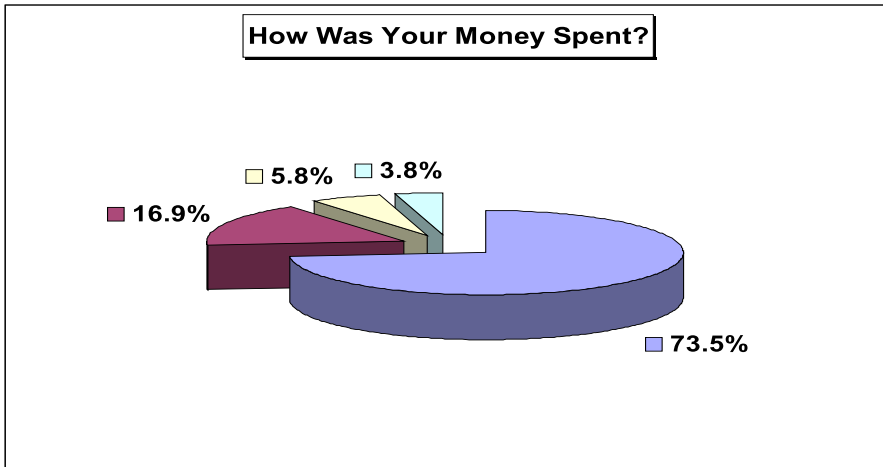
- 5 I'm a single mother and can't make a contribution.** Ouch! I hate the word "can't." You need to think hard on this one. If there is a wayward ex languishing out there, feel free to send us an address. We'll mail him one of our famous letters.
- 4 There are lots of rich parents at Lowell. They can write the checks.** And all three of them do! Big ones. But this is a community effort. Do the math and you'll realize that every family needs to make a contribution; \$75,000 covers the cost of just one teacher.
- 3 I need to know that MY child will benefit from the Lowell Fund.** That's a tough one. Does your child show up most days of the week? If this is a concern, write a Lowell Fund check for \$500 or more directed to a specific department or program. We will see that YOUR money goes to THAT program.
- 2 I already spend a lot of money at Target, Safeway, etc. and they give to the school.** Unless you're spending \$50,000 dollars at these stores, your donation is but a drop in the bucket. Don't stop shopping, but these shopping excursions aren't covering your donation.
- 1 I can't give. I'm saving for college!** Brace yourself—we're ALL saving for college! But our kids will have a tougher time getting there if they can't get the necessary classes to make them stand out.

**Lowell is a bargain!** Look how many foreign languages our kids have to choose from, how many AP classes are offered, the number of sports teams, and the quality of the visual and performing arts. Lowell is safe, kids are there to learn and accomplish, and most of them have fun while they're at it. People all across the country have heard of Lowell, the oldest public high school west of the Mississippi, and one of the best. **\$500** per semester, or **\$20** per month, or a one-time donation of **\$500, \$1000, \$5000** or whatever you can afford—it's a small price to pay for all that. *So just write the check!*

## HOW WAS YOUR MONEY SPENT LAST YEAR?

The PTSA spent **\$383,559** last year – every penny of it from you! How was your money spent? On salaries and programs at Lowell, of course! Look at the chart below. **Over 90% of PTSA income went directly to Lowell:** \$282,000 to supplement faculty and staff salaries, \$49,192 in grants awarded to faculty, staff, and coaches, and \$15,560 in donations you designated for individual programs and courses at Lowell. Less than 10% of PTSA income went to Lowell indirectly, through the PTSA activities that support the School. Our PTSA Executive Board oversees all PTSA activities. The list is long - the fabulous Book 2 Book bookstore and VICCI center; faculty, staff and parent hospitality; school beautification projects; the Library and VICCI copiers, the Lowell Fund, the PTSA website, transaction fees, professional fees, licenses, permits, postage, and printing.

PTSA Expenses FY 2006-2007		
Gift to SFUSD	\$282,000	73.5%
Grants & Designated Gifts	\$64,752	16.9%
PTSA Operations & Projects	\$22,266	5.8%
Book 2 Book	\$14,541	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$383,559</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



*-Stephanie Kurkjian  
PTSA Treasurer*

## THANK YOU TO LOWELL FUND DONORS

Fall 2006-Spring 2007 Campaigns

**Kindness in words creates confidence  
Kindness in thinking creates profoundness  
Kindness in giving creates love**

~ Lao Tzu, 6<sup>th</sup> Century

The following is a list of individuals and families who, through their generosity, light the way for our students to thrive and for our teachers to have the resources they need to make Lowell High School an academically stimulating and richly diversified high school experience. The standards at Lowell exceed those of other high schools in the City. Without the support provided by donors to the Lowell Fund, this fine institution could not continue to operate at its current level, and programs and resources that our students and faculty have come to count on would become vulnerable.

Most importantly, our students will benefit, now and in the future, from your generosity. In the words of Lao Tzu, thank you for showing your kindness by giving and therefore creating love for our children and the Lowell community.

Cardinal Circle (\$3,000 & up)

Michael Bien  
Tina Cervin & David Gavrich  
(Waste Solutions Group)  
Gregory Gilchrist  
Stephen Gerard  
Bari & Stephen Ness  
Lynn Pearson-Buchbinder  
Robert Pollard  
Steven & Sharon Wasserman  
Waterfront Container  
Leasing Co., Inc  
Catherine Willis & Peter  
Rowson

Victoria Dunham & Peter  
Losh  
Brendan Earley & Margie  
Palazuelos  
Shufina & Mark English  
Lois & Roland Feller  
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Joanne & Michael Fox  
Mary E. Gassert  
Daymond & Lisa Gee  
Laura Goldin  
Josh Goodman & Karen  
Kerner  
Stanley Gu & Li Ping Luo  
Joseph & Rachel Hahner  
Kevin & Marilene Harvey  
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Cynthia & Ronald Hiura  
Jack Hong  
Richard Hood  
Joanne Ja & Harry Ja Wong  
Carolyn Johnston & Karl  
Olson  
Lisa Kakehashi & Gary  
Furney  
Jay S. & Yoo Jung Kim  
Lily King  
Florence Kong  
Bonnie & Don Kung  
Stephanie & Tom Kurkjian

Anne Scheel Larsen & Boris  
Matija Peterlin  
Gary & Linda Lau  
Van & Sandra Le  
Nel Leal & Darlene Gong  
Andrew D. Leavitt  
Lily & John Lee  
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Shari Marks & Troy Wiggins  
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Anita & Russell Murphy  
Angela L. Neff  
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Sue Plasai  
Fred Pollack & Dorte  
Lindhardt  
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Susan Rutberg  
Thomas Scharffenberger  
Anne Simons  
Irina Syrtsova & Pavel Syrtsov

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Michael Udelson  
Marybeth & Kevin Wallace  
Narongchai Wirattigowit  
Welton & Debbie Wong  
Paul Wong & Mei Zheng  
Kuang-Wong  
Shirley Yu  
William Zhao

Benefactor (\$500 & up)

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Debra Asher & John  
O'Hearn  
Marion Baer  
Sharon Beese  
Brian Bender  
James Mannah & Pamela  
Bohmann  
Kathleen Brown  
Ani & Thomas Burke  
Eduardo & Rosana  
Bustamante  
John Caba  
Ben Chan & Tinna Tan Chan  
Joe Chan

Leadership Circle (\$1,000 & up)

Orlan Lucio Aguilar  
Susan Allen  
Laurence & Miriam Baslom  
Nina & Michael Berg  
Rosa Maria Bonilla  
Patricia Booth & Glenn Lew  
Constance Borden  
Donna Chee & Kenneth  
Chin  
Julie Chin  
Kenny & Maria Chin  
Ellen & James DiMatteo  
Michael Edelhart & Jean  
Atelsek  
Linda Drumright

Wanda & Jonavan Chang  
Walton Chang  
Andrew & Florence Chau  
Ernest & Meng Qi Chen  
Gary Cheng  
May Fong Cheng & Steven  
    Ru Yi Huang  
Yong Cheng  
Min & Wilson Chew  
Newton & Bessie Chew  
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    Aranda  
Henry & Carol K. Chiu  
Mundy Chu & Bi Jian Huang  
Hermann Chu  
Philip Chu & Mei Mei Chu  
Xuan Chuc  
Cuítlahuac Cruz & Angela  
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Qing Dong  
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Che Pui Fok & Amy Fok  
Sau-Sum Fok  
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    Ludlow  
Jamie & Allen Fung  
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Dina Goldman & Ross  
    Moody  
Alice Graham  
Lee Greenholtz  
Deborah Greenwood &  
    Edward Whitmore  
Karen Hamai & Bruce Wong  
Trudy & G.S. Hamm  
Chun Han & Bei Wang  
Wendy Hanamura &  
    Michael Okagaki  
Roberto Hernandez  
Betsey M. & Stephen B. Ho  
Dale Holzschuh  
Margaret & James Hom  
Raymond & Shelley Hom  
Linda & Steve Hornbostel

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Anna Johengen  
Bonnie Jones  
Elizabeth Junus & Budi  
    Harjono  
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    Scoble  
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    Miyake  
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    Laderman  
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Wilson F. Lau  
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Charlene Lee & Eugene  
    Leung  
Connie & Stephen Lee  
Frances Lee  
Gerald Lee  
Sug Woo & Soon Hee Lee  
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Robert W. & Ivy Lee  
Wah Lee & Mei Fang Liu  
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Shapiro Leung  
Vincent Leung  
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Cui Hao Li  
Chandra Liem  
Rebecca Loh  
Burton Louie  
Carol & Nelson Louie  
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Hong Chang Ma  
Gary Mankin  
Dale Martin  
Noel McCarthy  
Jie Ying Ming & Jian  
    Qiang Li  
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York & Song Moy  
Terrance Mulrooney

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Pan Kau & Shirley Ng  
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Yenny Saadikn  
Hugo & BowYoung Salinas  
Thomas Scharffenberger &  
    C. Victoria Simonds  
Wendy Scheffers & Howard  
    Levitt  
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Maggie Tang  
Wayne & Betty Tang  
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David Van  
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Cynthia & Tim Wai  
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Hsieh Wah & Lin Chieh  
    Weng  
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    Steve Schwartz  
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Rita Yee & Herbert Toy  
Xiao Feng You  
Angela & Bing-Nga Young  
Guoping X. & Daniel Yu  
Stella & Tony Yu  
Sam & Donna Yuen  
Anthony Yun & Rose Chen  
Susan Xiao Ling Zhao &  
    Xiaobing Cui  
Shirley Zhu & Chin Wei So  
Tina & Chao Hong Zhu

*(\$100 & up)*  
Marjan Farshad Afsarifard  
Jesse & Ann Agbayani  
Julia H. Arnon  
Wai Lee Au Yeung & Melody  
    Ou Yang  
Filomena Bartolome  
Grigoriy & Marina Basin  
Sharon Bleviss & Kirk  
    Whitlatch  
Warren H. Branzburg  
Nabila Bseiso  
Otto Rene Cardona  
Gloria & Democrito A.  
    Carvajal  
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Victor Chan & Siu Mui Chiu  
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    Karl Scherer  
Jill & Scott Chase  
Peter & Phung Chau  
Gary Chen  
Quong Chee Chen &  
    Xin Min Liu  
Shuru & Yeamow Chen  
Susan Chen  
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Ava Chou	Jin Hua Huang & Jin Rui Hu	Peng & Xue Ling Ji	An Phan & Chi Tran
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Leonel Dickey	Belinda Ichiyasu	Meng Liu & Lizhen Chen	Da Qin
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Tamara Galanter	Yang Kim Le & Hoai Quang Tran	Barbara & Lindo Morucci	Geraldine & Patrick Soltani
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Henry Ho & Christina Ho	Helena & Dig Leung	Zan Guang & Yan Fang Llu Ou	
Agnes & Andrew Hom	Onyx & Helena Leung	Bao Lian Pan	
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I would like to thank the following for volunteering their time to support the efforts of the Lowell Fund. **Cynthia Ashe** and **Anne Worth**, acknowledgments; **Betsey Mar Ho**, financial secretary; **Rita Yee Toy**, freshmen welcome; **Daniel Soo Hoo**, mailing; and **Stephanie Kurkjian**, PTSA treasurer. I am extremely grateful for the assistance that these wonderful individuals provide.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Lowell Fund, please contact me at [dgeewong@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dgeewong@sbcglobal.net).

*Debbie Gee Wong*  
*Director of the Lowell Fund*

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### SPRING CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

(dates subject to change)

- April 16** PTSA Meeting
- April 17** Band Concert
- April 18** Junior Prom
- April 24** Orchestra Concert
- May 5-16** AP Exams
- May 23-24** Dance Concert
- May 25** Senior Prom
- May 30** Spring Choir Concert
- June 9** Senior Picnic
- June 10** Senior Luncheon
- June 10** Graduation Rehearsal
- June 11** Graduation Ceremonies

*Congratulations, Class of 2008!*

### SPRING MUSICAL

*"Do you hear the people sing?"* This year's musical is the multiple Tony award-winning pop opera **Les Miserables**. The plot gives dramatic life to Victor Hugo's story of suffering and salvation during a tumultuous period in French history. **Les Miz** packs an emotional wallop that has thrilled audiences around the world.

With a cast, crew, and orchestra totaling over 100 students, we are presenting our own epic for your enjoyment!

**April 10, 11, 12, at 7:30 pm**

**April 13 at 2:00 pm**

Carol Channing Theater  
1101 Eucalyptus Drive, SF

Tickets: **\$8** on the catwalk,  
**\$10** at the door



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