Dear Parents,

As discussed at our Back to School Nights, there is always much debate over homework! Some parents think our teachers give too much homework, which takes away from family time and time children might spend on other interests, while others believe we are giving far too little homework and our children are not significantly improving their work habits and skills as a result. This topic was brought to our School Site Council last year and the parents and teachers on the Council reviewed the research and set some recommendations that are in place for this year.

As with all instructional decisions made at our school, we look at the research, the needs of our students, and the teachers’ professional experience to determine policy. The research on homework clearly indicates that there is a significant correlation between homework and achievement at the high school level, decreased benefit at the middle school level, and little, if any, benefit at the elementary level. Still most researchers recommend that students do some homework.

Homework also helps students to develop work habits; strategies that they need to be confident in their ability to complete independent learning tasks in the classroom and at home. We want students to learn how to organize their time and resources and how to work to the best of their ability. The research tells us that in order for students to gain the optimal amount of learning from homework, several components need to be in place at home and at school. At school, the teachers have reduced the amount of homework assigned and ensured that what they do give is authentic, meaningful, and engaging. We have reduced the work at all grades to important reading work, learning essential words, and math work. At upper grades, students may need to complete work or projects not finished at school. There may be a project from time to time in other grades as well.

At home, parents need to support students’ homework endeavors by allowing them the right conditions for homework – a designated, appropriate workspace and the time to work. We also want students to do all work independently. This will help the teachers to know what the students have mastered on their own and what concepts require additional instruction. They can also more accurately judge the quality of their work.

We have very high expectations for our students at school in the kind of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies work they do. We know that the reduced amount of work we give at home will not impact the gains they make through the years and they will be ready for the next level of their education.

Donna S. Tripi, Principal
WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR?
During the first week of school, we asked students about their goals for the 2017-2018 school year. Here’s what they had to say:

- To improve my reading and writing skills – Joshua, 4th grade
- To learn lots of new things while having fun – Dara, 4th grade
- To learn how to write in cursive – Madison, 3rd grade
- To not forget my homework – Quinn, 5th grade

NEW TEACHERS
You may have noticed some new teachers and support staff on the LJES campus. Two of those new faces are third grade teacher, Ms. Heather Polen and first grade teacher, Mrs. Tonya Kepner.

They answered a few questions as an introduction to the LJES community.

TONYA KEPNER, FIRST GRADE
Q. Where did you teach before coming to LJES, and can you tell us a little about your education or experience?
A. I received my teaching credential from SDSU in 1997. I started out teaching part-time (sharing a contract with another teacher) so I could spend more time with my young children. As they got older, I moved into full-time teaching. Most recently, I taught 3rd grade at Sessions Elementary. I’m excited to be at LJES!

Q. What is your favorite book or author?
A. One of my favorite books is Shark Diaries, and one of my favorite authors is Dr. Seuss!

Q. What would your ideal Sunday afternoon look like?
A. My ideal Sunday is boating with my family on the bay.

HEATHER POLEN, THIRD GRADE
Q. Where did you teach before coming to LJES, and can you tell us a little about your education or experience?
A. I received my teaching credential from SDSU and my master’s degree in curriculum design from Lesley University in Massachusetts. I have also completed a math specialist and Gate/Seminar certification. I have been teaching for 12 years, 10 years of those have been in 3rd grade. This past school year I taught at Tierrasanta Elementary but was at Bird Rock Elementary for 5 years prior to that. I have also taught at Johnson STEM Magnet Elementary School and Porter Elementary. I am so excited to make LJES my new home.

Q. What is your favorite book or author?
A. I love Patricia Polacco. Her books are heartwarming and emotionally touch people of all ages. Her stories are relatable and teach life lessons.

Q. What would your ideal Sunday afternoon look like?
A. My ideal Sunday involves time spent outdoors with my loved ones. We love taking the dog hiking or to dog beach. I am happiest when near the water; paddle boarding, surfing (attempting), swimming, or relaxing in the sand.
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The PTO sponsors many events throughout the school year, from Amigos Fiesta to the Family Dance. Some back-to-school favorite PTO activities are the Kindergarten BBQ and the Family Picnic. This year, these events brought out new and familiar faces for evenings of friendship, family, and fun. Here’s a few snapshots from those events.

If you haven’t already done so, please support the PTO. A family membership is only $35 and 100 percent of your membership dues go directly towards sponsoring all these memorable activities.
BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

The LJES PTO is excited to offer families the Birthday Book Club! The Birthday Book Club is a great way for the library to continue to increase its collection of books while commemorating your child’s birthday. What better gift than to help develop a child’s love of reading? All books are $20 and may be purchased on the LJES PTO Store Website. [http://ljespto.3dcartstores.com](http://ljespto.3dcartstores.com).

A special dedication will be placed in the book with your child’s name and birthday month. They will receive it as a special delivery to their classroom and they will be the first to check it out of the library. All money received will be cycled back into the Birthday Book Club to purchase more books. Children who celebrate summer birthdays may also participate. They will receive their books in the month of May.

JOIN THE LJES CHOIR

Calling all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade singers!

Choir practices have already started for this year, and a record number of third grade students arrived to practice bright and early that first Friday morning.

Led by the dynamic Ms. Julie Greathouse, LJES choir provides unforgettable performance opportunities around the community, including the La Jolla Open Aire Market, La Jolla Rec Center, and televised tapings at KUSI. Combined 4th and 5th grade choir rehearsals happen at 7:10 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Third grade choir rehearsals are at 7:10 a.m. every Friday. If you have questions, ask Ms. Julie or this year’s choir president Katta Cox in Ms Bergers class.

PIZZA WEDNESDAY UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Pizza Wednesday is a longstanding, beloved tradition at LJES. In addition to giving parents a break from the endless packing of lunches, students have a chance to mingle with their friends, enjoy a slice (or two!) of pizza and support the PTO.

But did you know Pizza Wednesday was in jeopardy for the 2017-2018 school year? Bjorn Backlund, who has been the chair and lead organizer for the past 3 years, “graduated” from his position. Thankfully, Ben Grieve offered to chair Pizza Wednesday and keep the tradition alive.

At our first Pizza Wednesday, Mr. Backlund returned to hand the reins over to Mr. Greive. It was a smooth transition thanks to these men and a group of dedicated volunteers. New volunteers are always welcome, come join the fun any Wednesday you’re free.

QUALITY SCHOOLS IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD

Our district adopted their vision for our schools several years ago with a long term plan to develop a world-class school system for all of our students entitled Vision 2020. This entails having Quality Schools In Every Neighborhood (QSIEN). For the first time, in the 2016-2017 school year, the district recognized schools for outstanding work in one of the indicators of a quality school. These schools would set the criteria for future years.

Our school was recognized for Quality Indicator 3 -- Quality Leadership, Teaching and Learning. We received an award, as pictured, at the first Board of Education meeting of the school year on September 12th.

Thanks to the teachers for their outstanding work in the classrooms and to our students for their outstanding work as learners!
NEW MARQUEE!

Perhaps you’ve noticed new school signs around LJES … here are some details about them:

**Q:** Is our new school sign a marquis or a marquee?

**A:** A Marquis (in some European countries) is a nobleman ranking above a count and below a duke. It is a marquee. A marquee may refer to a sign often placed over or next to the entrance of an establishment.

**Q:** Why did LJES get a new marquee?

**A:** Electronic marquees are a perfect outreach tool and can convey important school information while parents are picking up or driving by. The signs are LED.

**Q:** How was the project funded?

**A:** Our site decided to use some of our discretionary funds provided through the Propositions S and Z bonds.

**Q:** How long did this process take?

**A:** Too long! Who knew our marquee would have to go through customs? Literally 14 months and the persistence of parent, Aimee Lansky, who spearheaded the project, and our principal.

**Q:** What's so special about the signs?

**A:** The signs have stars, fire and other great graphics. They can also play videos of events at the site.

**Q:** What happened to the old marquee?

**A:** The old marquee dating back over 15 years was taken down over the summer by a two man demolition crew (Rob Wells and Patrick Lansky).

**Q:** How many hours does Ms. Tripi save now that she doesn’t have to put up letters by hand?

**A:** So many that she now has time to not only feed her many cats, but play with them, too.

TATE PHILLIPS

LJES fourth grader Tate Phillips made headlines on local news for his volunteer service. Here’s an excerpt of the story by reporter Katie Schoolov, reprinted with permission from KPBS.

Every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the summer, 9-year-old Tate Phillips spent time singing, dancing and making music with seniors at Jewish Family Service’s Balboa Avenue Older Adult Center.

“Someone plays music, and people dance, and we have entertainers,” said Tate. “It’s really fun, and I just feel like I’m making a difference. I think it helps them interact with people, and get active.”

The center’s special program offers exercise, games, live entertainment and a hot kosher lunch to area seniors Monday through Thursday for four hours. About 80 percent of the participants have Alzheimer’s disease or dementia.

74-year-old Anita Berger has Alzheimer’s, and has been coming to the center since January 2016.

“He makes everybody feel loved and wanted. He gets up and dances with everybody, and calls everybody by name,” she said. “It just makes me feel young again.

I love the music, I love the comradery, and kids like Tate. For us old folks, is just such a refreshing thing. He has is just a real loving little boy. He loves everybody, and everybody loves him. (Read the full version at www.kpbs.org/news)
Being your 2017 / 2018 PTO President is one of my proudest accomplishments. I love that I get to help our organization provide our school with so many family fun community events throughout the school year, from the Family Picnic to the Amigos Fiesta and all the other events in between. These could not happen without the financial support of our families ($35 per family) or the volunteers who so graciously spend hours planning, organizing and running them. We do this all with love in our hearts so our children can not only get a world class education but get to be part of a community where they make friends, have fun and enjoy coming to school everyday.

We are so fortunate that our Friends Foundation, led by Angie Yazici will continue to drive the fundraising efforts to help keep our class sizes down, provide amazing enrichment classes for our children and keep our campus looking beautiful. We make a great team and I hope that shows in our passion for this school, the passion we have for bringing these awesome community events to LJES and the passion to fundraise.

The success of the PTO doesn’t happen on its own. It’s built on a solid foundation of parent volunteers that I am so proud to be working side by side with every day. I want to personally thank our PTO board as well as all of our Committee Chairs; they are the ones that do all the heavy lifting without asking for anything in return. The Yearbook, Tidings, the Handbook, the Web site, Photography, Logo Design, Logo Wear, Box Tops, Gardening, Hospitality, School Supply Kits, Student Council, Welcome Committee, Kindergarten Liaisons, The Directory, After School Enrichment, Homework Club, Robotics, Health and Safety, PTO Membership, Pizza Wednesday, Book Fair, Art Fair, Science Fair, Birthday Book Club, Movie Night, Family Dance and the Talent Show, are all the events and programs run and organized by the PTO!!!

Your financial support and volunteer support are critical to our success. Please Support the PTO. It’s a small investment with BIG returns.

I am honored to serve as the president of Friends of La Jolla Elementary, Inc. this year. I am fortunate to be working with a wonderful group of individuals who sit on our board. The enthusiasm they have for our school and the talent they bring from current and past careers are a great asset to LJES. I am also thrilled to be working closely with our wonderful PTO president and my friend, Mira Costello. She gets things done with her go-getter attitude – maintaining traditions, yet open to and excited about new ideas. We are both eager to see what the year holds for our parent groups.

My 12-year-old asked me several months ago which group was more important, PTO or Friends. My honest answer was that neither group would be as successful as they are, without the other. If the PTO did not hold fabulous family events our children refuse to miss or keep us connected through Tidings and Yearbook, we would not have such a close-knit community of families who are willing to invest in our school. Our award-winning school attracts these wonderful, involved families because of the high academic standards held by Ms. Tripi and our teachers, as well as the enriched education that is provided through Friends funding.

Friends raises funds to support and enrich educational programs at LJES that are not provided through federal, state, or local funding. Allowing only $8,700 per student, California is ranked 46th in per student funding, meaning that nearly $3,500 is needed per student just to reach the national average of funding. To help bridge this gap, Friends raised over $700,000 and delivered educational benefits of $1,200 to each and every child on campus last year. We fundraise so we can provide these educational benefits year after year. I hope you can be a Friend and invest in our children through participation in our fundraisers: donate to the Annual Giving Campaign, shop the Open Aire Market every Sunday, advertise your business with us or patronize one who does, support the spring gala, and attend the La Jolla Art & Wine Festival in October. Let’s work together to make our school the best it can possibly be!

Mira Sanchez Costello
Mom to Sofia (4th grade) & President, LJES PTO

Angie Tetmeyer Yazici
Mom to Esra (7th grade) and Leyla (4th grade)
President, Friends of La Jolla Elementary, Inc.
The La Jolla Open Aire Market was started 19 years ago by former LJES parents. It has become a weekly event that brings the school and the community together. We have cultivated the finest local farmers, artisans, and food vendors and we are one of the largest farmers’ markets in San Diego. Our market earnings help pay for teachers, technology, art, music, and other enrichment programs not funded by the district. The more sales we have, the greater the benefit to our children. So grab your friends and family, and shop every Sunday from 9am to 1:30pm, rain or shine, on the upper playground. It’s an easy and fun way to contribute to our school every week!
The primary goal of Friends of La Jolla Elementary is to reduce class sizes for our students by funding classroom and support teachers. To achieve this goal, Friends works closely with our principal Donna Tripi to determine which grade levels have the greatest need. In order to make this happen, approximately $355,000 is needed to fund 3 additional teachers and 2 support teachers.

**WHAT WE CAN DO WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS...**

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*No support teachers*

**SHARED SUPPORT TEACHER**

**3rd**

+1st/2nd combo class

**4th**

+3rd/4th combo class

**Campus and Technology Improvements** ($35,000)

**Weekly Spanish Program** ($45,000)

**Enhanced Classroom Resources, Including Robotics** ($110,000)

**3 ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM TEACHERS & 2 SUPPORT TEACHERS TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE ($355,000)**

**ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS: MUSIC, ART, PERFORMING ARTS/YOGA, AND TECHNOLOGY ($165,000)**

**A PUBLIC EDUCATION IS FREE. AN ENRICHED EDUCATION IS NOT.**

**DONATE TODAY.**

Our suggested donation is $550 per child. 100% participation is our goal.

Questions? Contact Jenny Hochberg at jennyli100@yahoo.com or Aimie Takata at altakata@gmail.com.

Donations can be made at www.friendsofljes.org/annual-giving-campaign/

Donors who have contributed or pledged $1,000 or more by Friday, October 27, 2017 will be invited to an Annual Giving Campaign Cocktail Celebration to be held on Friday, November 3, 2017.
DOUBLE YOUR DONATION WITH CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

What is a corporate matching gift? Matching gift programs are when a company will match, usually dollar for dollar, a monetary donation made by an employee to a nonprofit. For example, if an employee of Wells Fargo donates $500 to our school foundation, Friends of La Jolla Elementary, then Wells Fargo will match that gift, resulting in a total donation of $1,000.

Don’t underestimate the importance of matching gifts. Last year alone, Friends of La Jolla Elementary received over $20,000 in corporate matching gifts, resulting in combined employee and employer donations of nearly $40,000! These matching gifts included any donation to Friends, not just to the Annual Giving Campaign.

Many companies match donations to charity. Companies who have made matching gifts to Friends of LJES include Qualcomm, Pfizer, Bank of America, Sanofi, United Health Group, Charles Schwab, Merck, Allianz Global Investors, AXA Advisors, and Dell. So please check with your employer to see if they have a corporate matching program and double your gift!

LA JOLLA ART & WINE FESTIVAL – OCTOBER 7 & 8

The 9th annual La Jolla Art & Wine Festival returns to La Jolla Village on October 7th and 8th. This 2-day juried art show and fundraiser is free and open to the public. The festival features the works of over 150 established artists from San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange County, Baja and beyond. There is something for everyone including a silent auction, roving entertainment, a gourmet marketplace, the family art center, and a wine and beer garden. Proceeds benefit all three public elementary schools in La Jolla and Muirlands Middle School. This festival would not be possible without the help of parent volunteers. Please visit www.FriendsofLJES.org for more information on volunteering your time.
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