

DRAFT PTO Meeting minutes 2-4-04

PTO Business

Kelly McDade presented the minutes of 1-13-04; they were read and approved by a vote.

Principal's Update

Cindy Bencal discussed the MCAS tests.

1. About the tests.
The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System is administered each year to 3rd 4th and 5th grade students. Third grade students are tested in Reading. Fourth grade students are tested in English Language Arts, Writing and Math. Fifth grade students are tested in Science and Technology.
2. A look at some questions.
Ms. Bencal handed out a few sample questions from last year's Fourth grade test. After the parents had finished answering the questions Ms. Bencal reviewed the answers and explained the scoring system for each question. Each student receives a raw score, a scaled score and a proficiency rating. The proficiency ratings are: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Warning.
3. How did we do?
Data from each grade was presented. The break down of actual numbers helps to identify categories of students and assess what support they may need. For instance, there may be a few students that may have missed the proficient category by one or two points and a few other students that may have received a proficient rating but just by a few points. All of these students could be grouped together and would benefit by additional support. In comparison to other elementary schools in the city of Newton, Burr students achieved 7th out of fifteen schools in the Third grade, 8th in the fourth grade and tied for 3rd in the fifth grade.
4. How we use the information?
If less than 80% of children answer correctly on a particular question Ms. Bencal and the staff review the question and determine why it may have been confusing and review the answer with the children. The information is also used to determine which students need additional support and instruction.

More information on the MCAS can be found on the Department of Education's website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas>. If you have questions or would like additional information on the MCAS please see Ms. Bencal.

The next PTO meeting will be held on March 16, 2004. Guest speaker Nancy Beardall from Day Middle School will discuss bullying.

Submitted by Kelly McDade