

October 18, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I have received notification from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that the Esten School did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on the MCAS tests that were administered during 2011. In order to achieve AYP, our school needed to demonstrate improvement in six areas for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 in the content areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Although our English Language Arts scores did improve minimally, this gain did not meet the goal that had been set by the DESE.

We are very pleased to report that the majority of our students scored in the Advanced and Proficient categories and we had very few students who failed this assessment. This year we will provide extra support for our students who scored in the Needs Improvement and Warning categories to ensure that they have the skills to be successful. Our teachers are committed to demonstrating improvement in all six areas in 2012. In order to better meet the needs of our students as they learn to read and write we have:

- Provided our teachers with Professional Development opportunities in the *Keys to Literacy Program and the Keys to Open Response*
- Initiated a Grade 4 writing program known as *Empowering Writers*
- Emphasized reading non-fiction books and articles and writing non-fiction reflections
- Hired a Poet to spend a week teaching our students how to read, write, and interpret poetry
- Hired a Literacy Coach to work with the students and staff at all three elementary schools to enrich our Guided Reading Program
- Analyzed data from MCAS, DIBELS, GRADE, and DRA in order to differentiate instruction

Our students' performance on the math portion of the MCAS assessment was very impressive. As a result, we will continue to improve upon the plan that we established last year which included the implementation of the *EnVision's Math Program* including the technology component; the use of manipulatives; the differentiated instruction during R.T.I. blocks; and the emphasis on critical and creative thinking in response to word problems.

If you have any questions regarding our curriculum or Adequate Yearly Progress, please feel free to call me at any time.

Sincerely,

Carol McGrath
Principal