



GRAND CENTRAL NEWS

March 19, 2010

From the Principal

MCAS begins on Monday, March 22. While MCAS test results are important measures of academic progress for students, their families and the school, it is important to keep these assessments in proper perspective. MCAS is a measure, but **not the only measure** of your child. The information generated by the MCAS assessment can be informative to you and useful to the school and school system. The results help identify academic strengths and needs on an individual, school, and district level. We use the MCAS tests to help us provide a better education for your children.

In order to help ensure the MCAS captures a true image of your children's current academic progress, it is important that every student comes to school ready and relaxed. Your child's level of comfort is helped by arriving at school on time, focused, and well-rested. Absences require make-up sessions that cannot duplicate the classroom environment and may adversely affect test scores.

Please assure your children, that while the MCAS assessments can be a challenge, they are well prepared and that they can do a good job. Remind them that MCAS scores are not used for report card grades and do not determine whether or not they are promoted at the end of the year. The scores will be reported to you, so let them know that you want them to give their best effort.

As educators and parents, we know that good teaching brings good results. There are always ways to improve what we do in education. The MCAS results help focus our attention on what we need to do to improve and determines in which areas our tight resources are targeted.

Your support is appreciated.

Thank you,
Sharon Bird

PLACEMENT

As we enter the last third of the year, it is natural to look to the future. As the placement process gears up, classroom teachers and specialists work hard to develop class lists for next year that are balanced based upon boy/girl ratio, learning styles, academic strengths/needs, as well as the social mix. While we cannot accommodate requests for specific teachers, information that parents provide to their child's teacher or the principal about a child's academic, emotional, or social make up are considered in the decision making process. Information from parents is shared with the entire placement team, which is made up of sending and receiving teachers at each grade level, specialists, and the principal. All of the information that we know about your children helps to insure that classes are made up of students who will work together successfully.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: A CONCERN FOR FAMILIES

According to guidelines and procedures from the Massachusetts Department of Education, students referred for educational services under the special education process could be denied services due to poor attendance. *Simply put, if your child is not **in school on time** on a regular basis, then there is reasonable cause to assume that their lack of academic progress is due to missed instruction rather than to a disability.* Thus, the specialized instruction required for students with disabilities would be denied to a child with high absenteeism.

PENNIES FOR PATIENTS

Thank you to all who donated to our Pennies for Patients campaign. We collected \$527.38 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society! We appreciate the enthusiasm of students and staff in helping fund lifesaving cancer research.

Stoneham Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

Who we are...

The Stoneham, Massachusetts Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is a state mandated advisory group that provides input to the School Committee, as well as information and support to parents and guardians about the special education processes and programs offered to children from age 3 to transition (age 22).

We are a system-wide organization of parents, teachers and administrators working in partnership to promote an innovative educational environment where children with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities, while ensuring that our schools are safe, nurturing and challenging learning environments for all children.

Our Mission...

Our mission is to inform, advise, and promote a better understanding of special education needs and issues within our community. By doing this, we hope to encourage the respect and acceptance of children with special education needs, while ensuring access to a free, appropriate, and public education for all children.

Membership...

Membership is open to anyone interested in special education services and the laws and regulations that protect children receiving these services. Special Education includes services children receive through the Stoneham Public Schools' Special Education Department, an IEP (Individualized Education Program), a 504 Accommodation or an Out-of-District placement.

Join today...we welcome your participation!

If you are interested in becoming a member or would like more information about Stoneham Special Education PAC, please contact us through email.

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