

EAC QUESTIONS

APRIL 14, 2015 PARENT MEETING

1. NOTIFICATIONS FROM NURSE AFTER STUDENT INJURY

QUERY: What is the procedure for parent notification when a student is injured at school?

BACKGROUND: A student was tripped during gym. The student was sent to the nurse by the teacher. The student was given a cough of drop and sent back to class. When the student came home, her foot was swollen and very painful. It was later discovered that the student had a broken foot. The parent was not informed about the tripping incident in gym class or that the student had seen the nurse. No incident report was received by the parent.

Answer:

If a student presents with pain related to a possible injury, the school nurse examines the area for swelling, range of motion, color and ability to bear weight. The student will be asked their range of pain on a scale of 0-10. Depending on the injury a splint may be applied, and the student will be assisted by wheelchair to the parent's car. In severe cases (ex. suspected compound fracture) an ambulance will be called. Parents are informed of injuries that take place in school.

The question refers to an injured student being sent back to class with a cough drop. This would certainly be atypical. In this situation the parent should have contacted the nurse directly for follow up information.

2. WET FLOORS IN ENTRANCE WAYS AND HALLWAYS

QUERY: On rainy and snowy days, how are entrance ways and hallways in the schools maintained/prepared to prevent students from slipping on wet floors? Can better mats or floor dryers be used to provide better safety for the students and staff?

BACKGROUND: Extremely slippery floors at the 5th grade entrance doors, especially on snowy days, have been observed. Snow sticking in students' shoes and then melting onto floor may be causing the issue.

Answer:

Additional mats had been ordered prior to the first significant snow storm; however, they did not arrive until after that first storm. At the time of the next significant snow event, the new additional mats were placed in several areas, in both buildings, and this greatly reduced the amount of moisture on the floor. Staff will continue to monitor and maintain these areas for excessive moisture to help prevent any hazardous situations.

3. TESTING DAYS

QUERY: Can the standardized test taking schedule be altered to allow for breaks between multiple continuous days of testing? Can the schedule be adjusted to allow students to take two testing sessions per day (instead of one), and thus, alleviate the need for five (5) days of continuous testing?

BACKGROUND: A parent was concerned about the amount of stress placed upon students when the schedule includes multiple days of continuous standardized testing.

Answer:

We adjusted our testing cycle for the End of Year (EOY) PARCC assessment. Grades 5 through 8 completed Math testing one week and the ELA the following week. This provided our students with a break between testing sessions. Grades 3 and 4 had a shorter EOY testing cycle. Their testing block was scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday. We received information from the Department of Education that testing next year will be consolidated from two testing cycles (PBA and EOY) into one testing cycle. As of yet, we are not sure what this will entail; however, we do plan to continue to schedule our testing to include breaks in the testing cycle. Based on input from our staff, we do not plan on scheduling two testing sessions per day.

4. PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

QUERY: Is there a need for parent teacher conferences in the current format – e.g., do we still need five ½ days to allow for conferences when the majority of students are succeeding/doing well, especially when the parents always have the option to communicate with teachers via e-mail and phone calls at any time during

the year? Could it be stressed that conferences are intended for parents with specific concerns in order to reduce the number of conference days?

BACKGROUND: A parent raised a question about the need for the current number of teacher conference days in light of decreased enrollment and very few academic issues among students.

Answer:

To clarify: four early dismissal days are scheduled in December for parent conferences (not five). Typically a fifth early dismissal day is scheduled the same week for teacher inservice.

An optimal education is one of the most important things in a child's life. Research has shown that strong communication between parents and teachers is key to academic success. Four early dismissal days allow for a 15 minute discussion between teachers and all parents. We feel these once a year face-to-face meetings are crucial towards building school/home relationships. The parent/teacher conferences we offer are the minimum needed to assist parents in understanding and supporting the educational programs of which their children participate. Additionally, we believe these meetings are important for all learners.

5. 3RD GRADE PARCC

QUERY: How does the PARCC test impact the 3rd grade curriculum? How much time is allocated to Science and Social Studies instruction?

BACKGROUND: Parents of students who are going into 3rd grade are concerned about the PARCC test's impact on the 3rd grade curriculum.

Answer:

Our ELA and math curriculums are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The PARCC assessment has been designed to assess these standards. In addition, embedded with these standards are 21st Century College and Career Readiness skills including expectations for technology as a learning and communication tool. Our ELA and math instruction naturally leads to PARCC preparation. We are also required to teach the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) for science and social studies. At the elementary level, we provide instruction in these content areas and utilize a cross curricular approach to our

instruction. Science and social studies instruction embedded within ELA and ELA standards are a component of science and social studies lessons. Third grade has scheduled science and social studies instruction daily in the afternoon from 2:10 to 2:50. Science instruction occurs during the first and fourth marking periods with social studies focused on during the second and third marking periods. Spanish does occur on a rotating basis during this time, and occasionally math will carry into this time if extra practice is needed.

6. TYPING INSTRUCTION

QUERY: At what grade level is typing instruction introduced and how much time is spent on this?

Answer: We begin our keyboarding instruction mid second grade with a very gentle, developmental 12 lesson approach using the *Dance Mat Typing* program completed when students are in their related arts technology class. Beginning in third grade, our students use the *Typing Instructor Web for Kids* program. Students practice once a week in their classrooms and in their technology class. They are also asked to practice at home. Teachers report that their students enjoy this program. Provisions have been made for students who do not have a computer at home. In sixth grade, keyboarding is reinforced at an increasingly formal level using *All the Right Type* through our technology-media literacy class. We have seen positive growth with the addition of these programs. Although keyboarding instruction begins in second grade, kindergarten and first grade students practice identification of letters and numbers on the keyboard, the use of the shift key for capitalization, delete key, space bar, and return key.

7. PARCC OPT-OUT NUMBERS

QUERY: How many students opted out of the PARCC test in April?

Answer: We had 44 student refusals for the 2015 PARCC assessment. We continue to expect and encourage all our grade three to eight students to participate in testing. Students who did participate in the assessment responded in an overwhelmingly positive manner.

8. PARCC OPT-OUT ACTIVITIES

QUERY: Would the administration consider planning alternative educational activities for the students who opt out of the PARCC test this May, and next year?

Answer: We did not plan alternate educational activities for students refusing to take the PARCC assessment. These students were expected to read or complete quiet table top activities in the library while their grade level participated in testing. Following this, students returned to their classroom and resumed instruction with their peers. There are no plans to change this procedure next year.

9. CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

QUERY: What can be done to keep parents informed about changes to the curriculum and technology in the schools?

BACKGROUND: The school budget that was approved included a considerable amount of money for technology and curriculum training and materials.

Answer: We will continue to invite parents in for information sessions and workshops. This year, we hosted fall and spring workshop for parents focusing on implementation of the ELA and Math Common Core State Standards in the classroom and the PARCC assessment. We also encourage parents to reach out to their child's teachers for specific grade level information and expectations. Moving forward, as we update our curriculums, information will be placed on the district website following Board approval.