

Academic Achievement

Report of the Ellis School Principal

I am pleased to announce that Ellis School made AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) for the 2011-2012 school year in Reading according to the New Hampshire Department of Education. We are thrilled with this achievement. Also, our scores have dramatically improved in Math. We were slightly below our index scores to make it as a whole school in Math. The AYP results are broken down into categories. For Ellis our categories are; White population, Economically Disadvantaged and Educational Disability. We meet requirements in 2 out of 3 subgroups in Math.

The NECAP (New England Common Assessment) is the tool the State uses to determine Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind since 2005. Students in grades 3-8 are assessed in Reading, Math and Writing (grades 5 & 8 only) in October and Science (grades 4 & 8 only) in April.

Ellis School's performance on the test between 2005 and 2009 in reading leveled off and did not show significant growth. As a result Ellis became a School in Need of Improvement (SINI) in Reading. After a significant jump in math scores with the introduction of Everyday Math, our math scores leveled off and Ellis became a SINI in Math as well.

NECAP Testing

Here is the percentage of students scoring proficient/proficient with distinction for each grade level (regular education students):

READING Grade 3				Math Grade 3		
2010	2011	2012		2010	2011	2012
59%	70%	81%		55%	60%	78%

READING Grade 4				MATH Grade 4		
2010	2011	2012		2010	2011	2012
70%	65%	68%		52%	51%	53%

READING Grade 5				MATH Grade 5		
2010	2011	2012		2010	2011	2012
56%	75%	51%		58%	58%	51%

READING Grade 6				MATH Grade 6		
2010	2011	2012		2010	2011	2012
53%	55%	79%		72%	67%	78%

READING
Grade 7

2010	2011	2012		2010	2011	2012
78%	65%	67%		67%	63%	71%

MATH
Grade 7

READING
Grade 8

2010	2011	2012		2010	2011	2012
68%	76%	89%		63%	65%	69%

MATH
Grade 8

INDIVIDUAL CLASS GROWTH (over 3 years)

*Same students over 3 years	Reading '09-12	(+/-)	Math '09-12	(+/-)
Gr. 3-5	59%-51%	-8%	55%-51%	-4%
Gr. 4-6	70%-79%	+9%	52%-78%	+26%
Gr. 5-7	56%-67%	+11%	58%-67%	+9%
Gr. 6-8	53%-89%	+36%	72%-69%	-3%

Source: NH Department of Education

This past fall we received the results of our Science NECAP tests taken by Grade 4 and 8. During the 2012-2013 school year we placed a major focus on developing and mapping a school wide Science curriculum. There is definitely room for growth in our Science scores but I'm happy to report that proficiency rates for 4th graders beat the State average for the first time since we began taking the Science NECAP test.

Percentage of Students at Proficient or Proficient with Distinction

	8th Gr.				4th Gr.			
	State		Ellis		State		Ellis	
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3	Level 4
2008	26	0	18	0	49	2	47	0
2009	24	1	10	0	43	0	42	0
2010	27	<1	20	0	53	1	48	0
2011	27	1	12	0	54	1	37	0
2012	31	1	20	0	52	1	53	2
* Level 3 = Proficient *Level 4 = Proficient with distinction								

Common Core Alignment and Achievement

The K-12 Common Core State Standards for literacy and mathematics were developed through a joint project of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards at their July 8, 2010 meeting. Ellis School has been aligning its curriculum with the Common Core. The NECAP test will be replaced with new testing called Smarter Balanced.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is developing assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11. The system will use computer adaptive testing technologies to provide meaningful feedback and actionable data that teachers and other educators can use to help students succeed.

Ellis School is using a new reading program this year. The Treasures reading program will be used in grades K-6. We also purchased new teacher's editions of Everyday Math. The new editions align instruction with the Common Core State Standards. Student texts remain the same. There is information about Treasures and Everyday Math on our website www.sau83.org.

During the 2012-2013 school year, parents will receive assessment packets that contain report cards, district and state assessments and teacher created breakdown of which Common Core Standards will be taught in each trimester.

Discipline

A major factor to poor performance in achievement is the amount and severity of discipline incidents (referrals) that take place in a school. We have seen a drop over discipline issues in the school over the past few years. There has been a significant decrease in our discipline reports this year. I feel there are several reasons for this improvement in student behavior. The PBIS program has been in place for several years at Ellis School. This program came a long way in teaching our students the expectations at Ellis School. We strengthened that program and tailored it to fit middle school students as well as elementary students. We also introduced another discipline model along with our PBIS program called *Time To Teach*. We ran it in conjunction with PBIS. Like PBIS, it introduces rollouts (called *Teach-to's*) modeling student behavior and expectations. The discipline part of the program is called *Refocus*. It is basically a time out system with reflective components for students. Ellis instituted fair and consistent consequences for negative student behavior. Of course the introduction of Mr. Totten as the Assistant Principal has had a tremendous impact. Mr. Totten and I have the same philosophy when it comes to discipline. This consistency is key in student discipline. Mr. Totten has had a positive impact on students. He is fair and consistent in holding kids accountable and meeting their needs as learners and children.

A significant reason for the drop in discipline referrals is the increase in student achievement. The teachers have been working hard to help our students see greater achievement and they share these successes with students. Additionally our Guidance Counselors utilize the Second Step curriculum in classes to support teacher's efforts by teaching skills for learning, focusing attention, listening, staying on task, handling distractions and assertively asking for help when needed. Our Rtl program is meeting the needs of students at their level and strengthening their skills. Why do students misbehave in the first place? They act out not because they are bad, but they have a great need to feel successful. If they are not being successful academically they seek alternative means, i.e. being the class clown. Our students are becoming more and more proficient. Therefore, there isn't a need to act up.

Here is a breakdown of discipline incidents reported:

Total Referrals by School Year – K-8			
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	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
K-8	1002	930	895

Majors and Minors by month K-8

	2011-2012	2012-2013
September	70	21
October	93	18
November	140	15
December	101	14

I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff of Ellis School. There is no magic program or guide to increase achievement in schools. Ellis is fortunate to have a dedicated group of teachers and staff that are committed to making our school the best it can be and our students successful. The staff has great pride in our student achievement and so do the students. We see it on their faces everyday.

John Safina
Ellis School Principal