

Wildwood Elementary School



71 Strong Street
Amherst, MA 01002

Phone 413-362-1400
FAX 413-549-9519

Nick Yaffe, Principal

Linda Ganesin, Assistant Principal

September 23, 2011

Dear Wildwood families,

This letter is to give you updated information about Wildwood School's MCAS test results. Last year was a year of tremendous change at Wildwood. As part of the Amherst School's redistricting plan Wildwood welcomed almost 200 new students to our community. Therefore comparing our MCAS results from last year to previous years is not really a valid measure of our improvement as a school. We did not make what is called Adequate Yearly Progress in our aggregate and for our subgroups in both Language Arts and Math. However, the MCAS data will certainly help us address the needs of our students. Students in grades 4-6 will be receiving their individual results this week. Please know that our teachers have already started to look at this data and will be using it along with our other assessments to design instruction for their students.

Wildwood School, in conjunction with all of the Amherst Elementary Schools, is taking actions to improve student performance while working to maintain the richness of the curriculum and instruction for which our school is known. The details of these actions are outlined in our School Improvement Plan which was presented to the Amherst School Committee this week. While the complete School Improvement Plan will be posted on our website and blog and sent home in a newsletter, I wanted to describe some of the changes that we have made to improve student learning. We have established curriculum leaders in math and language arts to assist with best instructional practices and curricular alignment. We are utilizing evidence-based interventions in math for the first time and have added to the number of evidenced-based interventions being used in reading. We are implementing the "Enhancement Block", a dedicated, daily half-hour period for interventions and extensions for students. Our teaching teams are developing their capacity to examine data more frequently and with greater focus, especially with the MAP assessments occurring multiple times a year to track student growth. We are focusing on "shared practices" and building professional learning communities in an effort to ensure that best practices do not simply occur in one classroom, but are transferred to other classrooms at similar grade levels based on sustained collaboration. Lastly, we continue to work on building a safe learning environment throughout the school as we establish a vibrant, joyful Wildwood culture which will be the foundation for students to do their best learning at school.

According to the federal NCLB Act of 2001 Wildwood's status is in Improvement Year 1 for subgroups in English Language Arts and Improvement Year 2 in subgroups for Math.

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions about the MCAS results or how to improve the students' learning in our school. You can reach me at 362 1400 or by email at yaffen@arps.org. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to consider joining our School Governance Council which is looking for more members. Please let me know if you are interested in becoming a member of the School Governance Council.

Sincerely,
Nick Yaffe