

September 28, 2009

Dear Families and Friends of PES,

On October 1-22, students in grades 3-8 and 11 will participate in the New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System. There are two assessment programs in this system: the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) based on grade-level achievement standards, and the NH Alternate Assessment Program (NH-Alt) based on alternate achievement standards.

NECAP Assessment: NECAP assessments of reading, mathematics and writing skills are conducted during the first three weeks of October 2009 with students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. During the last three weeks of May 2010 students in grades 4, 8 and grade 11 will participate in the NECAP-Science assessments.

NH-Alt: Also, each year, following IEP team meetings with parents, a small group of eligible students is identified to participate in the NH Alternate Assessment. Last May, our school submitted student portfolios in reading, mathematics and writing based on alternate achievement standards. Their results will be reported this fall. In late September, the NH-Alt portfolio process begins again for submission next May. This year, as in NECAP, science work will also be included for grades 4, 8, and 11.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an overview of the October NECAP assessment program. You can find the schedule for your child's grade level on the back of this letter.

I am hoping you will help us encourage your child to give these tests his or her very best effort.

The fall NECAP tests in reading, mathematics, and writing were designed to measure your child's progress in meeting New Hampshire's Grade Level Expectations, or GLEs. The GLEs define the knowledge and skills a student should have mastered by the end of each school year. The grade 3 test, for example, will measure what a student should know and be able to do after completing second grade. The reading test includes short and long reading passages with related multiple choice and constructed response questions. The mathematics test includes multiple choice, short answer, and constructed response questions. The writing test includes multiple choice and constructed response questions, and a single extended writing prompt. A constructed response question requires students to show their work and/or explain their reasoning. Test results in reading, mathematics, and writing for grades 3 through 8 and 11 will be available at the end of January 2009.

The New England Common Assessment Program is one of the important tools available to parents and educators to determine how well our schools are helping students meet standards and grade level expectations. In every assessment, scores are only as meaningful as the effort students put into the tests. Encourage your child to take the tests seriously and to give his or her best effort. You can best help your child prepare for the assessment by making sure that she or he is rested on the days the tests will be given. And, as with every day, it is critical that students have a good breakfast before heading off to school. Thank you for supporting your child and our school during the testing period. You can find the schedule for your child's grade level on the back of this letter.

Thank you. Please call me if have any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie J. Flynn
Principal

Following is the schedule for NECAP testing:

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|---------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| October 1- 9 | Grades 3, 5, 8 | Reading and Mathematics |
| October 9 &13 | Grade 5 and 8 | Writing |
| October 13-20 | Grade 6 | Reading and Mathematics |
| October 14-21 | Grades 4 and 7 | Reading and Mathematics |

Students will be taking one section of the test per day. Each section is designed for 45 minutes but the Department of Education recommends scheduling 90 minutes. Students will be working on the NECAP in the morning and having their regular schedule for the remainder of each day.