



From the Superintendent's Desk
Proctor Public Schools, ISD 704
John Engelking – Superintendent of Schools
Friday April 9, 2010

This is my weekly update on the state of the district which focuses on a variety of issues relating to facilities, curriculum, activities, and programs occurring throughout our district. There may be weeks in which I only focus on one or two topics, but I do want to keep you informed. I welcome comments and feedback regarding this update or any of your concerns regarding our district.

Caribou Lake and Pike Lake Elementary Schools Getting Ready for the Move to One K-5 Campus at Pike Lake:

The staff and faculty of Pike Lake and Caribou Lake Elementary Schools have a big task ahead of them as they plan for the transition to one K-5 elementary school on the Pike Lake Campus. Of course, it's an exciting time for them and everyone at Proctor Public Schools because by next fall, we will have six new classrooms and a new gym at Pike Lake Elementary.

Because the District has sold the Caribou Lake Elementary School, we will need to make some special arrangements this year to vacate the Caribou Lake School and move our K-2 classroom supplies and equipment to Pike Lake Elementary. Additionally, our classroom assignments at Pike Lake will also be changing. Although all of this is exciting, the only way to accomplish this move is to provide some additional time for our staff. Because of these special circumstances, I have recommended to the School Board that we end our school year with students at Caribou Lake Elementary and Pike Lake Elementary on May 28, 2010. Our faculty has had input into this recommendation and are in favor of an early student release. Although this may lead to some inconvenience for parents who have students attending Bay View Elementary, Jedlicka Middle School or Proctor High School, I'm confident this is the best course of action and that parents will embrace our plan and help with the transition. Construction at Pike Lake should start sometime next week.

MCA II Assessments:

We have made many efforts to help our students perform to their full potential on this year's MCA II Assessments. In addition to our AYP Plan for Improvement, we have initiated quite a few other strategies. I thought I would share with you a partial list of some of the measures we have put into action to help our students do well on their MCA II Tests.

MCA II Assessment Prep Activities **Proctor Public Schools**

Pike Lake Elementary

- We have sent a letter home to all parents with the MDE/Pearson web address so that parents and students could practice for these tests while at home. This web address was also published in the PIE minutes.
- Our fifth grade students have been practicing with Study Island math and science since September.
- All of our third, fourth, and fifth grade students have been practicing for some time now using downloaded and printed copies of the practice tests provided by MDE.
- Teachers are aware of another website that can be used for practice that came to us from Steve and Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative.
- We have had ongoing discussions with our students about strategies and the importance of giving the tests an honest effort.
- Most of our teachers have attended Northeast Service Cooperative provided training opportunities on such things as math vocabulary. These sessions are designed to increase student achievement on the MCA's.

Bay View Elementary

- PLC group focused on math...had a math/science family night
Title I---3 Family Nights
- All grades take practice tests
- Vocabulary words posted in classrooms and hallways
- Special Ed--focus on test taking strategies
- Quiet rooms and small groups available for Title I and Special Ed. students for testing
- PLC group focused on RTI--response to intervention---reading strategies
- High school students will be visiting classrooms this Friday to talk to students about the importance of MCA's...doing your best...pep talk, etc
- Students were identified that were "bubble" students....scores that were on the edge of being proficient/not proficient

Jedlicka Middle School

6th Grade Reading:

- Identified students who partially met, did not meet, and were on the bubble of partially meeting standards. (35 students)
- Completed fall, winter, and spring NWEA testing.
- Researched reading strategies (ie: QAR, test taking tips, fluency, strategies for struggling readers, etc.)
- Created and taught from "desk plates" that generated "Problem Solving Steps" similar to those used by math teacher(s).
- Created and taught "SMARTER Way to Read" method/desk plate.
- Focused on strategies to aid students to "attack questions." (What is the question asking? What response is required? How do I find the answer?)
- Implemented aspects of Results Now: reading, deep thinking discussions, and note-taking while reading.
- Memorized/Identified Reading Standards and made sure every strand, each standard was taught and re-taught to a level of mastery. (Recordkeeping along these lines was created and implemented 2008-2009.)
- Discussed test taking strategies on a weekly basis.
- Aligned reading curriculum specifically to reading standards. (This was done some time ago.)
- Continually returned to "What is the question asking?" on every assignment, test, discussion, etc.

7th and 8th Grade:

- Tutoring Program on Mon. and Wed. from 3:15-5:00PM approx. 12-15 students have been attending.
- Asst. Principal and Senior Honor Students have presented a Power Point presentation to all grades 6-8, to get kids fired-up for the tests.
- Letter sent how explaining to parents how they can help get students prepared for the tests.
- School counselor explained how to effectively deal with test anxiety to 6th grade classes.
- A light breakfast will be served to students on test days.
- No homework the night before the tests and we are taking all the math in one day and all the reading in one day.
- Identified "bubble kids" (students close to a cut-off point on the MCAs)
- Math Enrichment for some students who partially or did not meet standards (worked on concept review, used the perspectives website, offered more one on one help)
- Aligned my curriculum to the standards and actually got through the material that I needed to before the test by basically sticking to my timeline
- Posted my standards and key vocab words on the wall and referred to them often.
- PLC work: created posters of the words that trip up at risk students and made more effort to incorporate them into our classes (analyze, evaluate, compare, explain, etc)
- tried to motivate our students to give their best effort on assessments such as the NWEA by offering individual incentives and doing group challenges
- Daily MCA prep questions during the four weeks prior to the test
- Many pep talks

- Here are our median (average) figures from 7th grade NWEA: Math increased 3% from 225 in the fall to 231 in the spring the NWEA norm is 230 Reading increased 2% from 218 in the fall to 222 in the spring the NWEA norm is 219

Proctor High School

- The Focus Group PLC is working with 20, 9th grade students who scored between 846-849 (850 meets requirements) on the MCA test. Each of the 5 teachers has been assigned four students to work with individually on reading they are doing a book study and increasing vocabulary.
- The math department is working with small groups of students who did meet or partially met the math standard in tutoring sessions and the students have been given practice questions.
- 9th grade Transitions PLC is working with 9th grade students to increase the number of passing grades in the core content by 5%
- Special Education is working on increasing content area vocabulary by 20%.
- Principal Nancy Olson has visited Algebra II classes and compared test school from regional high school. This was a motivational discussion to get students thinking about doing their best to represent themselves, their community and their school.
- Parent meetings were held
- Breakfast will be provided for our students
- PLC and ITs have discussed motivational ideas
- Practice tests are conducted

Closing Comments:

I hope you feel refreshed after our Spring Break. We are in the home stretch entering 4th quarter and I'd like to thank you for all of your efforts to make Proctor a great place to learn. Get out and attend a spring sport or extra-curricular activity and show your school spirit and pride. Have a nice weekend.