

On the following pages you will find information regarding the annual assessments given students at Burgess Elementary School. Please feel free to contact the school at anytime if you have questions regarding this information. Thank you.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment and evaluation are important pieces of the teaching and learning process. The main purpose of any assessment measure is to continually make informed teaching decisions and focus on effective instructional practices. Multiple assessments are preferred as they provide an accurate portrait of the academic achievement of all students. Union 61 Schools have implemented a menu of common assessments aimed at providing a variety of information about student achievement and school performance; each of these assessments provide information from a unique perspective.

DRA Developmental Reading Assessment

The DRA is a performance based assessment, designed for classroom teacher use. It is a method for assessing and documenting primary students' development as readers over time within a literature based instructional reading program. This assessment is conducted as a one-on-one reading conference as children read from specifically selected assessment texts. These conferences allow teachers to observe and interact with students by recording their responses and behaviors as they read and respond to the texts read. The information gathered enables teachers to determine a child's independent reading level, redirect on-going instruction, group children for instruction, set levels of expectations and identify children who are functioning at low levels with the possible need for further testing. The DRA is used with students in grades Kindergarten-2 and administered two to three times a year.

STAR Reading and Math

Renaissance Learning STAR is a normed-referenced, computer-adaptive assessment. Tests are used in schools nationwide as a way to assess student progress in a timely, informative manner. These Web-based assessments instantly provide vital information needed to monitor progress, differentiate instruction and accelerate learning. STAR Reading and Math are nationally-normed snapshot assessments that show "How are our students performing relative to counterparts across the nation?" Scores of these tests can be compared over time and across grade levels. These tests meet the requirements for selecting and evaluating Title I students. Testing technology provides teachers with accurate reading and math scores for students in grades 3-6.

STAR Reading

Uses vocabulary in-context test items. STAR Reading requires students to understand context clues, apply vocabulary knowledge and use active strategies to construct meaning.

STAR Math

A reliable, valid and efficient achievement-level progress-monitoring assessment of general math achievement.

IPA

Integrated Performance Assessment

The IPA, a district developed assessment, assesses a student's strength, weakness and knowledge in the core curriculum areas of literature, math, science and social studies. IPAs are intended to serve as common formative assessments. These assessments are scored by teachers. Review of student work gives teachers' information that can help them improve and optimize their standards-based instruction. Students have a "dress rehearsal" of tasks similar to the MCAS, yet much shorter in length. District model papers help illustrate what grade level proficiency looks like for students, parent and teachers. Data from these assessments is immediate and timely so that classroom instruction can be aligned with school, district and state standards.

Number Sense and Operations Assessment

An excerpt from the Strand Overview of Massachusetts Curriculum Guide states, "The study of numbers and operations is the cornerstone of the mathematics curriculum. Learning what numbers mean, how they are represented, relationships among them and computations with them is central to developing number sense."

A pretest determining a student's competency in Number Sense and Operations is given at the beginning of the year to students in grades 3-8. This beginning-of-the-year assessment will assist the classroom teacher in adjusting their curriculum and instruction to meet the individual needs of those students. A posttest will be given prior to the first week in May and will be used to provide additional instruction and/or remediation in preparation for MCAS tests scheduled to be given later in May.

MCAS

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

MCAS is a criterion referenced, high stakes test. These tests are an important part of our state's effort to improve the achievement of student learning in Massachusetts. Tests are designed to measure important skills and knowledge in core academic subjects. Normed annually at specific grade levels, it aims to answer the question of "How are our students (or my child) doing relative to the Curriculum Frameworks and relative to classmates across the state?" Scores are not intended to be compared over time or across grade levels as the relative weight of standards and specific questions change from year to year. Scores can be disaggregated and analyzed for a variety of subgroups thus meeting expectations of NCLB. (No Child Left Behind) The MCAS tests use a variety of question formats to measure student learning including multiple-choice, open response and short answer questions and ELA writing prompts. The total raw score is the number of points your child earns on the test and determines your child's performance level. MCAS score results are reported according to four performance levels: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Warning. Student scores are reported as scaled scores ranging from 200-280. (Adv. 260-280, Prof. 240-258, NI 220-238, W 200-218)

Early Literacy Assessments

The Early Literacy Action Plan is a new initiative for the district this year. This plan intends to improve the teaching of reading and accurately assess reading proficiency in the early grades. Early language and literacy skills lay a critical foundation for children's success in reading. The key early literacy components are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The objectives of the Early Literacy Action Plan are:

- To provide knowledge and information to K-3 teachers specific to the common assessment of this Plan
- Implementation and utilization of all early assessments as an effective tool for improved literacy instruction
- To use analyzed data to make informed teaching decisions
- To better meet the needs of all students and increase student achievement levels in reading