



# The DTS Messenger

"A Quarterly Newsletter for Parents"

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*Check out the monthly calendar updates on our website!*

## NJASK Test Scoring Changes

Last spring, more than 400,000 students took the NJ ASK in grades 5, 6, 7 & 8. These tests, and those to be administered in May '09 in grades 3 & 4, represent a set of state assessments designed to better measure student achievement. The 2008 Gr 5-8 tests were redesigned with the goal of producing better information about mastery of the NJCCCS.

The change in these tests redefines the expectations for proficiency in each subject area. This year, the state raised the bar to require that students earn at least 50% of the possible test points to be proficient. This decision was made in collaboration with a cross-section of educational leaders, employ-

ers, national experts & teachers, whom the state consulted with in designing the tests & in establishing standards for proficiency. The State BOE formally adopted these standards on 7-20-08.

One result of raising the achievement standards is that more students fell into the partially proficient category. The state believes that elevating expectations for achievement is critical for preparing students for post-secondary education & the work force. Raising the standards means that fewer students are allowed to "slide by" during these critical years. Raising standards at these grades will increase the

assistance & intervention students receive before they enter 9th grade.

Assessment scores provide one important source of information about student achievement, but they are not the only source. The new NJ ASK scores should be considered along with other measures of achievement, such as grades, teacher and parent observation, student activities & homework. The NJASK scores should be the basis of conversation between home and school about your child's progress.

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*Excerpted from a letter from Commissioner Davy dated September 10, 2008.*

## Upcoming Events

- Jan 9—MS Activity Nite/ Dance (3:15-9)
- Jan 14—PTA, 7pm
- Jan 19—School Closed
- Jan 20—Gr 5 Theater Field trip
- Jan 21—Spirit Day "Heritage"
- Jan 23—Multicultural Assembly
- Jan 27—BOE Mtg, 7:00
- Jan 28—End Elem MP 2
- Jan 30—MS Interims mailed home

## Curriculum Committees to Begin: Volunteers Needed

February marks the onset of another wave of curriculum committees beginning as part of the DTS Five Year Curriculum Cycle. This year the committees will assemble to focus on Social Studies, Technology, Art, and Physical Education. DTS is looking for two to three parents with background or knowledge in the areas of focus to serve as committee participants.

Each curriculum committee is comprised of teachers representing all DTS grade levels and support areas. Also included will be administration,

board representation and two to three parents per committee.

The goal of each committee is to review current research and trends in the teaching methodologies associated with each curricular area and to draft a philosophical statement that will guide the creation of the draft document by faculty over the summer months.

The DTS Curriculum Cycle is in the third year of the five year cycle and can be found on the district website in its entirety.

**With Great  
Appreciation!!!**

*A special "Thank You" to our PTA for their consistent efforts in scheduling assemblies, book fairs and activities that enhance the students' educational lives at DTS!*

## **DTS BOE CORNER**

### BOE Meeting Dates

All meetings begin at 7:30pm and are held in the Performing Arts Room.

This year's meeting dates are:

- September 23—5 Year Curriculum Cycle Update
  - October 28—District Goals, Violence and Vandalism Report
  - November 25—Regular Meeting
  - December 16—Regular Meeting
  - January 27—Budget Input (7pm)
  - February 24—Budget Input (7pm)
  - March 24—Budget Presentation (7pm)
  - April 28—Reorganization Meeting
- Join us to learn about your school community.

## **DTS Kids Take Action**

The first part of the school year has been busy for DTS middle school students. Student Council has kicked off the school year with renewed spirit and attendance is up at school dances. The pending Activity Night scheduled for this Friday also promises to be jam-packed with activities, food and a dance.

The Council also has plans to plant flowers in the front entrance way this spring and to purchase an electronic sign for the front of the school. In addition, the Council has been working closely with advisors Mr. Baldwin and Ms. Smith to organize a new eighth grade privilege for the spring during lunch time. Principal Ryan recently gave approval for

the grade 8 students to alternate dining time in Chelsea's Court when the weather is warmer in April, May and June.

The DTS Student Council was also instrumental in surveying for middle school clubs last December. In addition to a new Cooking Club which made the top of the student list, there will be several others once BOE approval is given for the charters at the January Board meeting. Some the clubs and activities are presently in place under different names but without an actual club charter.

The DTS Student Council is on a roll!

### **Pending DTS Clubs**

- Learning Lab
- Band
- Student Council
- Drama Club
- Talent Show
- Yearbook
- Movie Club
- Literacy Journal
- Birding Club
- Cooking Club
- Sewing Club
- Chorus
- Robotics and Engineering