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JP Kids: Match reaches high MCAS scores

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By Peter Shanley

A group of fourth-graders at the Match Community Day Elementary School in Jamaica Plain recently received noteworthy MCAS scores. Principal Kate Carpenter Bernier placed the credit on the school's structure and tutoring program.

The Match School teaches third and fourth grades at 215 Forest Hills St. and kindergarten through second grade at 86 Wachusetts St.

The group of students, 86 percent of whom are English Language Learners (ELL), took the MCAS test as third-graders last year, and 53 percent of them received proficient or advanced status in English. That ranked the school third in the state among schools with 25 percent or more ELL students. Bernier said that the group came to the school as second-graders with kindergarten or first-grade reading levels.

In math, 91 percent of the group achieved proficient or advanced status, which ranked the school 48th among 955 elementary schools statewide.

"We are very pleased with the scores," said Bernier.

She said the scores are the result of a long school day, the setting of high expectations, and a tutoring program.

Bernier said students at the Match School arrive at 7:30 a.m. and don't leave until 4:15 p.m., with teachers staying even longer, sometimes working 10-hour days. She said the school sets high expectations, from the staff on down, and has a "no excuse" culture.

But Bernier saved her strongest praise for the school's tutoring program. She said students receive at least two hours of tutoring a day—one hour in math and one hour in English. She said a lot of the tutors are recent graduates who are "high performers" and are taking a year or two off before they head to law or medical school. Bernier said the tutors give the students "individual attention" and work collaboratively with their families.

"Everyone gets tutoring and the tutors adapt to what the [students] need," said Bernier.



Meaghan Herliby tutoring children at the Match Community Day School. (Gazette Photo by Peter Shanley)