



Newton Public Schools  
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Brenda Keegan, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
of Schools

January 28, 2008

Dear Parents and Guardians of Elementary Students:

The Long Composition portion of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is being administered to all fourth grade students in the Commonwealth on Tuesday, March 25, 2008. Newton's dismissal time on Tuesday is normally 12:30 p.m. In order to administer the test at the same time as all of the other schools in Massachusetts, we must **extend school hours to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, 2008, for all students in grades K through 5. On Wednesday, March 26 school will be dismissed at 12:30 p.m.** Newton after-school programs have been informed of this change. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this change may cause your family. The Food Service Department will take responsibility for adjusting student lunch choices based on this schedule change. Please note: Kindergarten students who are in group A and usually stay in school until 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday will stay until 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25. On Wednesday, March 26, they will be dismissed at 12:30 p.m.

Students across the Commonwealth are required to take the English Language Arts Long Composition test that must be administered in two sessions on Tuesday, March 25. It is recommended by the Department of Education (DOE) that students have 45 minutes to complete each session. However, due to the "untimed" nature of the MCAS tests, the DOE recommends scheduling 2-hour blocks for each test session. Extending the school day on March 25 will give our students the same opportunity as other Massachusetts students to take the test in a reasonable time frame. The remainder of the English Language Arts portion of the MCAS is being administered to fourth grade students over several days during a two-week time frame beginning March 26 and ending April 4. Math will be administered in May.

Please contact your building principal if you have questions. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Brenda Keegan  
Deputy Superintendent

BK:mm

cc: Elementary Principals  
Carolyn D. Wyatt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Ken Temkin, Coordinator of Transportation  
Rob Clickstein, Director of Food Services  
Lisa Reed, Director of Newton METCO  
Traffic Bureau, Newton Police Department