

The Learning Curve

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Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

One Million Minute Reading Challenge Porter Elementary tells students it takes only a little bit everyday



Students came to school dressed up as their favorite characters to celebrate the One Million Minute Reading Challenge.

very own Million Minute Challenge.

"This is something we decided to challenge the kids to do," says Jones. "We hope to spark in the kids a passion for reading."

Throughout the year, students will keep a log of how much they are reading, which they

will turn in to their teachers. Prizes will be handed out for a variety of milestones, like monthly contests, most read by a student, and most read by a class.

To encourage them to keep reading, various activities are planned throughout the

year. They recently held the school's book fair, giving them the chance to get a good, new book to start. There will be 'celebrity' readers, where members of the community will come in and read to a class. Family Nights will bring the parents in to read with them; which will encourage students to discuss with them what they are reading. "We want to get the families up here reading with the kids," says Jackson.

As part of the kick-off assembly, teachers, students, and PTA members came to school dressed as some of their favorite characters, like Cat in the Hat, Raggedy Anne, Pipi Longstocking, Snow White, Batman, Little Red Riding Hood, and Darth Vader. They were also introduced to the Challenge's mascot, a dog which the students will vote what to name it. On the way out of the assembly, students were given a bookmark with the phrase "Dig up a good book."

"Just read a little everyday," Jackson told them. "We can do it if we all work together."

According to her, a pig has not been found yet for the kiss at the end of the year, "but with my luck, it won't prove hard to find one."

Barden Elementary celebrates students' outstanding scores on Criterion Referenced Competency Tests



Teachers were inducted into the newly formed 90-90-90 Club for having their entire class perform exceptionally well on the tests.

"We have come to celebrate the achievement of our school and students," Barden Elementary Principal David Dillard told a gymnasium full of smiling people.

Three years ago, Dillard set a goal for 85 % of his students to meet or exceed standards on the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (math and reading sections) by scoring a 350 or better. When the scores for last year came in, they exceeded that goal by having 87% (126 students) reach that goal in reading, and the school met the No Child Left Behind requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

"We are working to give students greater ownership of their learning," says Dillard. "They must be involved in the learning process as well as their assessment for learning."

In celebration, he gathered the school in the gymnasium and invited School Board Members, Central Office Administrators, family members, and the local media to not only honor those who met the goal but to show the stu-

dents "that excellence should be and will be rewarded in school as well as in life, that meeting and exceeding the standards is important for the staff and faculty, and to send a lasting message throughout the building that setting and reaching the goal of meeting the CRCT standards is important."

Many awards were handed out that day for students who scored at a certain level as well as to teachers whose classes did exceptionally well. Students scoring between 350 and 399 in reading, math, or both received a certificate and t-shirt; those scoring between 400 and 450 in one area (either reading or math) received a certificate, t-shirt, and a scholar's pin; and students who scored 400 to 450 in *both* received a certificate, t-shirt, scholar's pin, and a trophy. The three highest scorers in the school were pulled out separately to be awarded merchandise like software and a globe. All students scoring higher than 400 were inducted into the newly formed 400 Club, and will serve as ambassadors for the school as well as tutors in the school's morning tutorial program.

"I love the spirit and enthusiasm of all the students at Barden," Superintendent Sharon Patterson told them. "We want each of you to be successful in your learning."

Also newly formed was the 90-90-90 Club for teachers who have classes consisting of 90% minority students, 90% students on free or reduced lunch, and 90% meeting the standards set by the state. This year's inductees were 1st grade teachers Jeanele Parker and Tina Walker, 3rd grade teacher Randy London, and 5th grade teachers Jimmy Redus and Tony Howard.

To achieve this goal, Dillard credits his school staff, "who is committed to school improvement and not afraid to grab hold of the many changes education is presently going through," as well as "having high expectations [for students, teachers, and staff] and setting goals to meet those expectations."

Even with this tremendous success, Dillard says they are not done yet. He wants all the students to exceed the state standards, and he wants to continue making AYP.

Lessons are becoming more activity oriented, and they are constantly encouraging parents to take an active role in the school and their children's live. "We must continue to do more of the same, it's working! The faculty must be involved in a continuous self-improvement mode. We must continue to learn what work's in school and the best practices based upon the research."

After the ceremony, the celebrated students, family members, and special guests were treated to a reception in the school's Narthex Art Gallery, while the rest of the student body had an ice cream party on the playground. "It will encourage them to always try and know that they are important to the success of the school."

Before he dismissed everyone though, he told the students they could put their new t-shirts on, and as a special treat - greeted with laughter, a standing ovation from the audience, and cheers from the students - he told them, "you may even have your shirt tails out!"



Students donned their new shirts after being honored for meeting or exceeding scores on last year's CRCT's.