

Standardized Test Prep

*Ladysmith Elementary School
Ladysmith, Wisconsin*

The Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) is a state-mandated, standardized test, administered in the fall to all students in third and fourth grades. Although Ladysmith Elementary's students have traditionally scored above the state average on the WKCE, the school established a weekly test-preparation course to help improve its math scores by providing opportunities to practice math skills and concepts in school and at home. Ladysmith also found ways for parents to participate in test preparations and, therefore, in their children's achievement.

The district assessment coordinator proposed the test-preparation program to the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP). Once the ATP approved the proposal, the assessment coordinator began telling parents about the WKCE and resources that are available to them, including relevant websites such as the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS). Parents also received sample test questions, and the Title I math teacher prepared a parent guide on test-taking strategies.

Students were able to practice their math skills both during the information sessions and at home. The test-taking strategies they learned can help them on all examinations, not just the WKCE. Parents learned more about the implications of the No Child Left Behind Act and gained a better awareness of the state's academic expectations.

"I didn't realize all the federal and state laws that control this process," said one par-

ent. "The website allows us to compare school achievement within our state. That's amazing." This practice will continue each October before the testing period. The initiative prepares students, informs parents, and emphasizes academic goals for students at home and school. At Ladysmith, the staff is committed to letting parents know what the school's goals are and how parents can help the school meet them.

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