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# High scores mean bald head

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BELLEVUE - At Grandview Elementary School there's a buzz hanging over principal Candice Simpkins' head.

It's the sound of 35 sixth graders holding hair clippers. They'll be shaving her head on Nov. 1 in the school's gym.

It's the fulfillment of a promise Simpkins made to them as fourth-graders. At that time, only two of the approximately 60 students ranked an proficient in the state's CATS testing. She promised that if half of them become proficient the next year, they could take her hair.

ADVERTISEMENT The results came in earlier this year: 29 proficient with six ranking distinguished.

"Do I want to do it? No," said Simpkins. "But I can't look at those kids and say 'I'm not going to do this.' They did this for me and I have to follow through."

"I truly feel that trust is what builds a school system and keeps it together."

The school's biennium goal on the CATS testing for the 2007-08 school year was 81.9. This year's testing has put them at 85.5.

"So we have already exceeded our goal for next year," she said.

Simpkins said the scores are a result of several changes brought about during her six years at the school.

The first is high expectations for students and teachers.

"I really, really want to see a tie in to core content," she said. "I want the kids that go through there to get the best education that they can get."

Simpkins also said the school has a team philosophy. They don't look at the scores of the CATS tested third through fifth graders, but begin in kindergarten to discover what their weak spots are.

Another component is setting and monitoring the curriculum.

Simpkins said she and the school's curriculum instructor Bob Seiter monitor lesson plans rigorously.

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