



10/31/12

Dear Parents,

This letter is intended to provide you with information regarding recent changes in our student learning goals and our grading practices. We believe that these changes will help us to improve upon the instruction we provide your child while more effectively communicating your child's progress to you. If you have any questions after reading this letter, don't hesitate to contact one of us.

In October 2011 Montana's Board of Public Education chose to join a national movement to adopt common standards and assessments for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The K-12 Common Core State Standards were developed through a state-led effort to establish consistent and clear education standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The initiative was launched by and supported by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association.

Currently, standards for what students should know and be able to do vary among states, as does the difficulty of the assessments used to determine whether students are meeting those standards. Montana's adoption of these "Common Core" standards assures that our students are well prepared and allow for collaboration among states on best practices and professional development.

Benchmarked against international standards, these common learning standards provide a clear vision of what educators and parents in all states should aim for. They will also help ensure that students meet college and work expectations, are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society, and are provided with rigorous content and application of higher knowledge thinking skills.

The first round of state testing that will be based upon the newly adopted common core standards will be in the Spring of 2015. To prepare for this, our district is beginning immediately to implement the common core expectations into our curriculum and our instructional practice. Our teachers are receiving inservice on both the curricular and instructional changes and we are excited about the increased rigor of these new expectations.

We are working toward providing you with more specific, detailed information regarding your child's progress in meeting the new Mathematics and English/Language Arts standards. To do this, we have adjusted the trimester report card to reflect the Standards we are now covering. Through this more detailed reporting process we hope to provide you with better information regarding areas in which you can provide support to your child as he/she strives toward greater achievement levels. You will notice these changes in the report card you will receive at the end of the first trimester in early December. Additional information on the Montana Common Core Standards and our district's approach can be found on our website at:

<http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/Page/2838>. Additional information on Standards Based Learning can be found on our school website at: <http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/kms>.

This is a challenging and exciting time in our public education system and we look forward to working with you as we seek to continually improve upon what we believe to be an already excellent school system. This transition is certain to have its challenges so please let us know if you have any questions and concerns. Thank you so much for entrusting your child to our academic care. We consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to serve you and your child as we work towards providing a rigorous, meaningful, and always improving educational experience.

Respectfully,

Dan Zorn, Assistant Superintendent
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