

Highland Middle School

Weld Re-9

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September 21, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Recently, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) released their School Performance Frameworks; the media got ahold of these ratings and chose to portray our kids in a negative light. I am angry about this; I am here to tell you that your kids are indeed growing and achieving. I am proud of what we accomplished last year; I am proud of our kids, our teachers, and you should be too. CDE releasing some of the ratings they did this year, which I will clearly show you is based on a sliver of data, is really nothing more than an attempt to justify their existence when the data isn't there to support it.

The CDE bases their ratings of a combination of growth and achievement. Achievement is worth 40% of the overall score, growth is worth 60%. To start with, 49% of our eligible students participated in CMAS testing. Of the students who took the test, we were above the state average in math with our data falling into the 53rd percentile. Our ELA data was not as positive; we finished in the 21st percentile. This achievement data was at least based on 49% of our student body. For the growth portion of the rating, students had to have taken the same assessment for consecutive years. We had total of 35 students take the reading assessment each of the last two years; we had less than 20 take the math test the two previous years. You have to have more than 20 participants for consecutive years to have the data included. On a test, where we were above the state average (math), none of our data was included in the growth calculations. On the other hand, the reading data of 35 students, which makes up 14.7% of our student body was responsible for the entire growth portion which is 60% of the overall rating. Going further, the assessment is designed to have 12 different growth measures. Again, you have to have at least 20 participants in each disaggregated group for the data to be included. We only had twenty students in one of the twelve measures. As a result, that single measure was valued at 60% of our overall rating. Looking at this, simple calculations show you that 60% of our overall rating was based off the data of 14.7% of our student body, on a growth measure that was intended to be worth 17% of the overall rating. Those releasing the ratings to the media can calculate this as easy as I can; it is unimaginable to think anyone at the state level could look themselves in the mirror if they thought this was an accurate portrayal of your kids and our school. For what it is worth, if our math growth data was included, our median growth percentile was the 68th percentile, which is well above state expectations.

Now let's look at how we are really doing. In the Weld RE9 school district we administer the NWEA MAPS assessment three times a year. This test is a nationwide assessment, that has been around for over 25 years, with national norms, developed based on the data of millions and millions of students. There are schools in all fifty states that use the Maps assessment; it is widely regarded as one of, if not

the best, measure of student growth and achievement. Let's look at our comprehensive data and let the numbers speak for themselves. After the fall assessment, each student is given a projected end of the year score. The national average is 50% of all students will reach their projected score. Here is our kids actually did...

Assessment	Math	Reading	Science
% of students who met or exceeded their projected growth score:	60.5%	68.0%	77.5%

As you can see, we exceeded the national average in all three assessed areas; honestly, we exceeded it by quite a bit. This data comes from 100% of our student body who was enrolled all year.

To further demonstrate that our kids are growing, we can look at the spring 2021 to spring 2022 growth data. The sample size is slightly smaller as kids not enrolled in our school district during the 2020-21 school year are not included. With that being said, the sample size is well over 200 students and once again, the data doesn't lie, your kids are growing. We have exceeded the national average in all three areas.

Assessment	Math	Reading	Science
% of students who met or exceeded their projected growth score:	52.7%	57.5%	66.4%

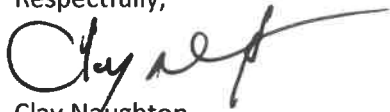
When it comes to achievement, the Maps assessment shows we are doing well there too. The chart below shows where are data falls in terms of national achievement percentile rankings:

Assessment	Math	Reading	Science
Median National Percentile Ranking:	49.5 th Percentile	54 th Percentile	63 rd Percentile

As you can see, we are right at the national average in math, and clearly above in both reading and science.

I'm here to stand up and tell anyone who will listen that Highland Middle School had a very good academic year last year. Please don't be deceived by CDE press releases. The numbers don't lie; our kids are achieving, and our kids are growing. I am proud of our students, I am proud of our staff, and I am proud of the learning that is obviously happening at Highland Middle School.

Respectfully,



Clay Naughton
Principal
Highland Middle School