

Ron Thiele, Superintendent

November 2013

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Your teacher-parent conference brings the opportunity for families to meet with teachers regarding the academic and social goals for your child. This year, parents may notice some changes in the academic goals, and the purpose of this letter is to introduce you to those changes.

Common Core State Standards: The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) outline grade level goals in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) for all K-12 students. The standards are designed to prepare students for the advanced mathematics and literacy skills needed for college, career success and to compete in the global economy. The CCSS have been adopted for use in 45 states across the country, including Washington. These standards help teachers know exactly what core understandings, skills, and procedures students need in order to be successful.

The Elementary Report Card: When the standards change, our report cards change so that parents have a snapshot of how students are progressing toward these new standards. We have revised the reading and math sections to align with the CCSS, and the remaining areas of the report card will be changed for the 2014-15 school year.

New Writing Curriculum: The CCSS highlight the significant role that writing plays in student success in all curriculum areas. Additionally, writing is often the vehicle through which many other subject areas are assessed. Therefore, CCSS include comprehensive goals in writing. This link to our district CCSS webpage provides additional detail.

<http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/academics/commoncore.aspx>

To ensure that our students meet the high standards in writing, the Issaquah School District has adopted a new, rigorous writing curriculum called Units of Study. Since writing instruction and expectations have risen, you may find that your child's writing score on the report card is lower than experienced in previous grades. However, as the year progresses and your child continues to receive writing instruction in Units of Study, we have high expectations that all students in the Issaquah School District will make considerable growth in the area of writing. In fact, the sophistication of student writing we observed during the pilot last spring (in which ISD teachers implemented lessons from several programs we were considering) of this material was one of the most compelling reasons teachers on the Writing Adoption Committee selected this curriculum.

We hope your child is enjoying his/her writing experience this year as we prepare students to succeed in their school career and beyond. If you have additional questions you may contact your child's teacher, Emilie Hard, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning harde@issaquah.wednet.edu or Susie Smith, Elementary Literacy Specialist smiths@issaquah.wednet.edu.

We value your partnership and appreciate the many ways in which you support your child's education.

Sincerely,



Executive Director
Teaching and Learning Services
Issaquah School District

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