

Dear Parents and Community Members,

The Kinnikinnick Consolidated Community School District #131 strives to provide our students the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to continue on a path to college and career readiness. Forty-seven states in the nation including Illinois have adopted the Common Core Standards, which outline the skills and content our students must master at each grade level. Kinnikinnick schools have begun implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Math and English Language Arts. These higher, deeper, and clearer standards will ensure that our students leave high school equipped with the proper tools for success.

As we focus on preparing and providing a quality education aligned to these standards, the performance levels of the current assessment, the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) must be changed accordingly.

The state has determined that the current expectations for our students in grades 3-8 must be raised to give an accurate picture of a student's ability to succeed in college and the workforce. Therefore, the Illinois State Board of Education is raising the bar on the ISAT performance expectation in Math and English Language Arts for elementary and middle school students to bring them into line with the Common Core's more rigorous standards.

At Kinnikinnick, we are embracing and implementing the Common Core State Standards. It is our mission to provide the environment that enables all students to develop to their highest potential. We are always "reaching for new heights." We believe as educators that when high expectations are set that we will all succeed. However, this success will not come overnight.

I think back to high school when I ran Junior Varsity Cross Country until the day I placed third in a high stakes meet. My coach came to me and said that he would be placing me on the Varsity team. I had to work. I was not ready to be an all-star on the Varsity team by the expectation alone. My coach and I ran many miles, many sprints, and many hills to prepare me for the next race, in which I did not place third.

The new and higher Common Core expectations will cause a significant number of students who meet and exceed standards to drop dramatically. Some students who previously met or exceeded standards will be classified as needing improvement. These new expectations do not mean that our students know less

than they did before or are less capable than they were in previous years. Instead, the bar has been raised and we are challenged with improving our standards to help our students clear the bar.

The new expectations also pave the way for the state to replace the ISAT tests in Math and English language Arts with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. The PARCC exams will align to the Common Core State Standards and provide teachers, parents, and students a clearer more detailed picture of student strengths and areas that need improvement. The transition to the PARCC assessments is scheduled for the 2014-2015 school year.

Later this year, the state will provide us with information regarding how our students' 2012 performance levels compare to what is expected under the new performance levels. The ISAT data collected this spring will then be analyzed using the new expectations and released in the fall. Kinnikinnick staff will be using this information to align our educational programs and goals to ready our students for the challenges of high school, college, and careers.

We are committed to our students' success and moving forward to show their progress toward college and career readiness benchmarks. We are confident that afforded the time and hard work of our staff and students that the Kinnikinnick District will rise to the occasion. In return, we are asking the community at large to lend your support of public education and the District during this challenging transition.

If you would like to learn more about the Common Core State Standards, please go to our Curriculum and Instruction portion of our website,

<http://www.kinn131.org/parent-information-on-the-common-core-state-standards.html>

Please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or principal with any questions and concerns. Thank you for working with us to provide a brighter future for your children and our community.

Sincerely,

Keli Freedlund
Kinnikinnick CCSD #131

Superintendent