November 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our school year is off to a great start! We are excited about \_\_, \_\_, and \_\_. As a learning community, we are continually looking to improve \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (school/district). One source we use to reflect on our strengths and areas for improvement is the School Report Card.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) creates a School Report Card and District Report Card for every publicly funded school and district in the state. These report cards can be accessed online here: <http://dpi.wi.gov/accountability/report-cards>. The Report Cards are intended to help all schools and districts utilize data on specific measures to target improvement efforts to ensure students are ready for the next educational step – including the next grade level, graduation, college, and careers.

The current **School Report Card, based on the 2015-16 school year,** looks a bit different than in the past due to changes required by the legislature. The overall idea for how report cards work is the same. At the foundation of the report cards are four priority areas. Schools and districts receive a score for each priority area:

* **Student Achievement** proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics on state assessments
* **Student Growth** measured by year-to-year improvements in achievement
  + **Closing Gaps** in performance between specific student groups (comparing English language learners, low-income students, students with disabilities, and members of a racial or an ethnic group with their peers)
  + **On-Track and Postsecondary Readiness** is a measurement using reliable predictors of high school graduation and potential post high school success

The priority area scores are then aggregated into an overall accountability score, from 0 to 100. This score is displayed in the top left corner of the School or District Report Cards. It is important to note that the 0 to 100 accountability score is not a “percent correct” measurement. The score is primarily based on our performance last year, the 2015-16 school year, across the four priority areas.

Schools and districts are also evaluated on their level of student engagement – test participation rates, chronic absenteeism rates, and dropout rates when applicable. Based on its score, a school or district receives one of five rating categories, from *Fails to Meet Expectations* to *Significantly Exceeds Expectations*, as well as one to five stars.

Here’s some information we’d like to share from our school/district report card:

*[DPI recommends sharing priority area or student engagement indicator results before overall scores.]*

Given the changes required by the legislature, many school and district scores changed as compared to the last report card. The changes include a weighting formula to account for poverty when priority area scores are combined into the overall score; a new method of calculating student growth; and the use of Forward Exam data, the third state test in three years. These changes impacted all schools and districts in the state.

DPI has produced two versions of each Report Card: a quick one-pager labeled “School Report Card” and lengthier, detailed version labeled, “School Report Card Detail.” Both versions can be accessed online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/accountability/report-cards> along with resources that explain the report cards. I have included the one page School Report Card for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (school/district) here as well.

Again, as DPI stresses, these report cards are just one source of information about our school. Given that, I want to share some other data that helps illuminate some of the successes and areas for future work in our school/district.

[INSERT LOCAL DATA HERE.]

Please let me know your thoughts and questions as they arise. I look forward to working with you to make 2016-17 a successful school year for your child!

Sincerely,

(name and contact information of principal/administrator)