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September 16, 2010

Dear Northeast, Northwest, and Rutland Intermediate School Parents and Families,

We have had a wonderful start to the school year and a great open house. Our buildings are much more alive when they are fully staffed and packed with our students. Thank you for making our start to the year an occasion that we always enjoy.

The purpose of this letter is to update you about a district-wide effort to improve our communication with parents about the progress of their children on the Vermont Standards.

In January of 2010 the Primary Schools, Northeast and Northwest, implemented a new progress report format that linked the report to the state standards and Grade Expectations (GE's). That document was the result of a year's worth of work and revisions. The updated progress report uses a scale of 1 to 3. A student receiving a 1 is "below proficient" when assessed against the year-end standards. A student with a 2 is "partially proficient," and a student with a 3 is "proficient". The students are not being compared with other students, only the standards. .

The levels on the progress report are defined as:

- 3 - Proficient:** Demonstrates strong understanding of concept/skill; extends learning to other areas. Uses concepts and skills independently.
- 2 - Partially Proficient:** Developing a deeper understanding of concept/skill; application of the skill and concepts reflects some understanding.
- 1 - Below Proficient:** Knowledge and application of the skill/concept is in the early stages and developing.

During the 2009-2010 school year Rutland Intermediate School spent the bulk of the year creating a progress report that would allow for consistency for our K-6 students and provide more accurate information to parents on their child's academic standing as measured by progress toward the end of year standards. This school year RIS will implement its updated progress report. The report will mark students on a scale of 1 to 3. The critical information parents receive at conferences and via their relationship with the teacher is always most important. We did feel the need to inform you all that you will see a new report when the first trimester ends.

As we discussed this implementation process, we thought of questions our parents might have. Here they are, with our responses.

***Will I know how my child is doing compared to what is expected of him/ her?***

Yes. The progress report is aligned with state and local standards and assessments.

***Will my child be “ranked” against his/her class mates?***

No. We do not assess children against each other or rank the children. We assess them against the standards. Our goal is to have all students reach those standards.

***Will my child still be able to get the help he/she needs?***

Yes. The progress report does not change our obligation to help all students in need. We will continue to use our local assessments and the related data to focus our supports on students who need assistance.

***Will opportunities for my child to access instruction beyond the standard still exist if he/she achieves the standards before the end of the year?***

Yes. Our approach to meeting students where they are instructionally will not change.

***Will I know if my child is working beyond the standard?***

Yes. Teacher comment on the progress report and at parent conferences will be the best source of information.

***Will I still be able to communicate with my child’s teacher about his/her progress?***

Yes. The relationship between the teacher and the parents is always at the forefront. Please do communicate with your child’s teacher early and often.

***How will this affect the ACE award and the Killington AEP program? Can my son daughter still earn a ski pass?***

Yes. Rutland City Public Schools intends to participate in Killington’s Academic Excellence Program again. In fact, last year’s marks are the ones that count for this year. The ACE/AEP awards program will be reconfigured so we can recognize that achievement next year. If the students do well, we want to recognize that.

***How is my child assigned a 1, 2, or 3? Are there factors other than testing?***

As always, progress of the students at RIS, and the reporting of that progress, is based on assessments in school. There are sections on the progress report which speak to effort.

***What if I still have questions?***

We have posted these, and other questions, on the school’s web site. Please go to: <http://ris.rutlandcitypublicschools.org/> for more information.

Also, you can contact building leadership or Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Rob Bliss.

Research Vermont’s standards at:

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pubs/framework.html#grade\\_expectations](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pubs/framework.html#grade_expectations)

Thank you again for a wonderful beginning to the new school year. We’ll see you at Parent conferences.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Bliss