November 3, 2006

Dear Parents,

Enclosed in your child's report card you will find results from your child's ECRA and MAP Assessments. As of this date, we have not received ISAT results from the state.

In September, students in grades 3 through 8 took the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in reading and mathematics. We have received the official results and teachers will use that data to improve instruction for each student. As we gather the scores of all students over time, these same results help us design and implement better teaching across the district.

MAP tests are unique in that they are adaptive tests your child took on a computer. The test became more difficult the more questions your child answered correctly. When your child incorrectly answered a question, the test became easier. Therefore, your child took a test specifically created for his or her learning level. Please note, as you examine the test report, that it is not unusual to see a drop in score from spring to fall; it is the overall direction of scores over time that are the truest indicators of progress.

Students in grades 1 - 8 participated in ECRA Writing Assessments last spring. These assessments are important because they are our standardized test for student writing. ECRA scores papers for Integration, which provides a general evaluation of how clearly the paper achieves the assigned task. The other scores are: Focus, which is the ability to maintain central purpose throughout the paper; Support, which includes quality of detail, illustration or explanation; Organization, which is clear and logical structure; and Convention, which is mastery of grammar and spelling. On this report, your student is compared to district and national norms for progress.

The MAP and ECRA tests are excellent indicators of academic achievement, but are not the only measure of your child’s progress. When thinking about how well your student is doing in school, please consider the other measures we employ including class work, homework, projects, assessments and other standard measures of academic progress like the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT).

Sincerely,

M. Lynn Barkley
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning and Assessment