



Bloomington Public Schools

Deb Paquette
Superintendent

P. O. Box 217 • 203 N. Van Buren Street • Bloomington, MI 49026
Phone: (269) 521-3900 • Fax: (269) 521-3907

January 12, 2012

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members:

Each year, Bloomington Public Schools' students, along with all other Michigan public school students in grades 3-9, are required to take the MEAP and eleventh graders are required to take the MME. If you haven't already, you will soon begin hearing news reports about new cutoff scores, or "cut scores" that the Michigan State Board of Education adopted for these tests.

What are cut scores and why has the Michigan State Board of Education changed them? MEAP and MME cut scores separate test takers into various categories, such as advanced, proficient, partially proficient and not proficient. Under the new scoring system, students will have to correctly answer a much higher percentage of questions. Michigan is one of only three states in the nation (along with New York and Tennessee) to move to this top tier level of test scoring.

Like most school districts across the state Bloomington Public Schools' MEAP and MME proficiency results are expected to decline when publicly released this spring. While we anticipate an initial drop in the number of students reported as "proficient", we are confident this change will be temporary due to ongoing school improvement efforts and student support.

If a student is reported as "not proficient", it does not mean that he or she isn't gaining academic skills or knowledge expected for his or her grade level. It means that on the day of the test, this student was not yet proficient on the material being tested. Many students may require additional help and/or time to master these skills. Actually, by the time parents and the school receive the MEAP/MME results from the state, many students identified as "not proficient" will have closed the gap.

The MEAP and MME tests are only two of several measures used in our district throughout the year to insure that students are making academic progress. We maintain high standards for our students and use a variety of assessments to determine proficiency on state standards.

We are in the process of examining our curriculum to respond to this more challenging level of test scoring. At all levels we are implementing the National Common Core Curriculum which is a much more rigorous curriculum for our students. Math continues to be a focus area as are all core subjects as we move towards ensuring that all Bloomington Public Schools' students are graduating and are college bound or career ready.

(continued)

"Educating all students to maximize their potential."

Bloomington High School
629 East Kalamazoo Street
Bloomington, MI 49026
(269) 521-3910

Bloomington Middle School
311 East Willow Street
Bloomington, MI 49026
(269) 521-3950

Bloomington Elementary School
307 East Willow Street
Bloomington, MI 49026
(269) 521-3935

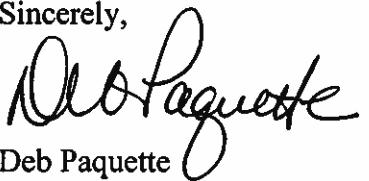
Pullman Elementary School
5582 South Avenue
Pullman, MI 49450
(269) 236-5235

Remember, it won't be uncommon for some schools to see a decline of students testing proficient by as much as 60 percent the first year the new cut scores are applied. For instance, if the new cut scores were in place in 2009, just 34 percent of third graders would pass the math exam, compared to 95 percent that passed under the old guidelines. These scores do not mean that students in our communities are failing. In fact, to gain a true picture of student progress, multiple aspects of the student's performance must be taken into consideration, classroom assignments, attendance, and classroom participation, to name a few.

Again, a lower score does not mean that a child isn't gaining academic skills or is falling behind, but it is a reflection of higher standards and a possible indication that the student may not have yet mastered the skills measured on the day of the test for his or her grade level.

If you have any questions, please free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Paquette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Deb Paquette