



HARDIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Principal
Mr. Ed Gettemeier

Assistant Principal
Mr. Matthew Lenger

Dean of Students
Mr. Stephen Wilson

Superintendent
Mr. Randal D. Charles

1/5/2012

Dear Hardin Family,

It is my sincere hope that you enjoyed a restful and relaxing holiday. I can not believe we are already halfway through the year and 2012 is here! Our staff has been working extremely hard this past semester to ensure the best possible learning environment for your children. We are proud of the many accomplishments our students have realized and we are even more excited for what lies ahead. Check out the Hardin website for our awesome first semester accomplishments (far too many to list here).

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During our first semester we moved to a "tri-semester" marking period. Our progress reports were updated every 6 weeks verses the traditional 9 week quarter grading period with a 4.5 week progress report. We offered printed progress reports upon request for the 6 week reporting periods for those who did not have access to grades online and/or simply wanted their child to be given a printed report. Teachers were committed to updating student grades regularly with an emphasis on having all work graded and posted at the 6 week intervals. We will continue this practice second semester again offering printed progress reports upon request.

First Semester Grades Reports will be mailed home within the next 7 days.

Please mark your calendars for the following important dates:

Jefferson 6th grade Parent Meeting for incoming 7th graders next year - February 8 - 6:30pm - 8:00pm
Six Week Progress Reports Posted - February 13
Parent Teacher Conferences - February 15 (3:30-6:30pm) & February 16 (11:30am-3:00pm & 4:00-7:00pm)
Family Fun Night - February 24 5:00pm - 8:00pm
Spring Break March 26 - 30
Twelve Week Progress Reports Posted - April 2
7th Grade Parent Informational Meeting regarding next year's SBG - May 1 6:30pm - 8:00pm
Awards Night Program - May 14 - 7:00pm
Eighth Grade Celebration - Last day of school

Hardin is committed to providing a quality well rounded educational experience for all who attend. We understand that each child that passes through our doors is unique thus we strive to seek out available resources to best prepare our students for high school.

At Hardin we continue to explore new and innovative resources that help us focus on student achievement and ultimately school improvement. The St. Charles School District has committed time and resources to help us through our journey. Our teachers currently work together in teams and departments during collaboration time to prepare common assessments. These assessments provide ongoing information (monitor student progress) that ultimately drives or informs their future instruction.

Most recently our teachers have been working in collaboration with one another on writing grading scales or rubrics. These scales clearly define each intended learning outcome for each subject area. They provide a detailed explanation of the steps to individual mastery of each of the outcomes or standards.

The next phase of this systematic and strategic approach to instruction is the actual grading practices of the teacher and/or school. There is a great deal of research behind effective grading practices. Our district is fortunate to work with top educational researchers to guide us through our transition to the most effective research based grading practices.

Throughout this school year and particularly over the next semester our teachers will continue to focus on the following discussion points:

- Grades should reflect achievement of intended learning outcomes- whether the school is using a conventional, subject-based report card or a report card that represents these intended learning outcomes as standards.
- The primary audiences for the message conveyed in grades are students and their parents; grading policies should aim to give them useful, timely, actionable information.
- Grades should reflect a particular student's individual achievement. Group and cooperative skills are important, but they should be reflected elsewhere, not in an individual's academic grade. A separate grade will be issued for these important life skills.
- Grading policies should be set up to support student motivation to learn. A student should never reach a place where there is no point doing any more work because failure is inevitable.

Hardin will be following the lead of our elementary schools and Jefferson Intermediate in transitioning to a Standards Based Grading System for the 2012-2013 school year. The difference at Hardin compared to the lower grade levels is that Hardin students will still be receiving a cumulative letter grade for each subject area. The letter grade will be accompanied by a detailed learning outcome report. This Standard Based Report will be designed to better inform students and parents of actual academic achievement/progress.

An informational parent meeting for all 7th grade parents transitioning into 8th grade will be held on May 1 for the purpose of providing examples of the new report card and answering questions about the transition to our new grading practices.

We are excited to make a move that provides our students and parents with the most informative grade report ever distributed in the St. Charles School District. Thank you in advance for your continued support in providing the best possible educational experience for all children in our district.

Sincerely,



Ed Gettemeier

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