



BRUNSWICK SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

In July 2010, The Maine State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which are a national set of learning expectations for college and career success that were developed by teachers, parents, school administrators and education experts. Maine is one of forty-six states that have adopted these. These adopted standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn K-12 in math and language arts.

The purpose of adopting the CCSS is not simply to align with other states, including all the New England states, but also to raise the bar in all grades to ensure that our students are receiving a relevant and rigorous education. Brunswick educators have been studying these standards since their adoption. Educators from all levels K-12 have attended Department of Education summer workshops, participated in on-line seminars and worked in content areas to review our current curricula and discuss what changes in teaching practices and content are needed to be sure our students can meet these outcomes. It is exciting work and the standards and assessments reflect many good teaching practices that are already in our schools.

Along with the adoption of the standards, the state of Maine has also changed the way it will assess our grade three-eleven students. They will no longer take the New England Common Assessment Program or NECAP which students have done historically in the fall. The state of Maine has selected the Smarter Balanced Assessment for its measure. This is an assessment that twenty-one other states are also going to use. We will officially give this test in the Spring of 2015. It is a computer generated assessment similar to the NWEA that your student has taken many times in Brunswick.

We recently were notified that our students in grades three through eight, and those in grade nine and eleven were selected to take the pilot or field test this Spring. This is an exciting opportunity for our schools. Students will be able to try out the new, online testing software and innovative test items that will be representative of items on future Smarter Balance Assessments (SBAC). Teachers will be able to monitor the tests and see how students do and also get impressions of the type of questions being asked. Our technology department will be able to assess the capabilities of our equipment and broadband access before the official test in the spring of 2015. Each school has a different testing window starting in March. Your child's principal will be notifying you just when your student will be assessed. We also would like to hear from you how

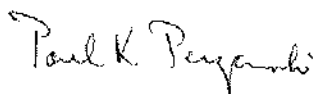
you think the testing experience affected your child. We will be designing a quick survey for you to complete after the assessment is complete.

We will not be receiving student or school scores from this assessment. Rather, it's a chance for our teachers and students to participate in a new experience that will guide us in future work regarding the Common Core State Standards. The Smarter Balance Consortium will be using the information they receive from our students' performance to identify areas for improvement for the spring 2015 implementation.

For information you may want to visit the Smarter Balanced website <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/> and the Common Core website <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>. We have included a small handout with this letter. Please also contact your school's principal or either of our district's curriculum coordinators: Cheryl White for grades three through five (cwhite@brunswick.k12.me.us.org) or John Paige for grades six through twelve (jpaige@brunswick.k12.me.us.org).

Thank you for continuing to work with us to make sure your child is successful.

Sincerely,



Paul K. Perzanoski
Superintendent of Schools