February 23, 2016

Dear Walled Lake Elementary Families,

I am pleased to share with you that Walled Lake Elementary School continues to score above the State averages on statewide assessments. Last year, the Michigan Department of Education transitioned to a new statewide assessment called the M-STEP, which tested student learning on Michigan's standards in mathematics, English language arts (ELA), science, and social studies. Overall, the M-STEP had fewer multiple choice questions and shifted towards more questions requiring problem solving and critical thinking skills than the previous MEAP assessment. Test components were much longer in length than the MEAP and contained several new components within each test: technology integration; written constructed response; classroom activities; and a performance task.

However, in 2014, we were identified as a “Focus School” due to an identified achievement gap between the top 30 percent of highest achieving students and the bottom 30 percent of our lowest achieving students as measured through state assessments. The Michigan Department of Education ranked schools based on the “top to bottom” listing to identify the “focus school” status. For additional information, please visit http://www.michigan.gov/focusschools.

As a result of the Focus School designation, Walled Lake Elementary is committed to closing this achievement gap. We maintain a rigorous and challenging curriculum for all students across all ability levels, while also supporting students who may need more time and support to achieve higher competency. In addition to classroom instruction provided by highly-qualified teachers, identified students are supported with services such as Reading Recovery, Literacy groups and/or Math intervention provided by our Title I Interventionists. This multi-tiered system of support also provides scaffolded instruction for students with disabilities and English Learners. We also provide opportunities such as Sunshine Academy, a summer program focused on improving Reading and Math.

The focus school process of improvement also includes dialogue opportunities for our instructional staff to review data and identify the Teaching and Learning Priorities for our students. Our district will continue to monitor students' achievement and evaluate our School Improvement Plan to ensure the highest level of success.

If you would like further information, please feel free to contact me at 248 956 4300 or cynthianickel@wlcsd.org

Sincerely,

Cynthia Nickel
Principal

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