Dear Parents,

As you receive these results on your individual child's achievement we would like you to view them in a larger context.

Successes TCGIS results show a mix of extraordinary success tempered by some clear indicators of areas for improvement. We can be extremely proud of our reading results across the board and particularly in 4th, 5th and 6th grade where our kids scored 96%, 95% and 94% respectively. Another celebration is found in our 4th grade math scores. Ninety-five percent of our kids passed. This is a tribute to both our students and their teachers. It is also an affirmation of the strengths of immersion education.

Areas for Growth Our math scores in 3rd, 5th and 6th grade are a wake up call . At 56%, 55% and 56% they are significantly lower than our goal. There are several important factors to keep in mind in interpreting these scores.

New Math Test/ No Baseline for Comparison The tests that students took in 2010 were NOT the same tests that were given in 2009. "Minnesota students in grades 3-8 took new, more rigorous math assessments aligned to higher standards designed to prepare all kids to be career and college ready. " Mathematics results for all assessments cannot be compared across years Grades 3-8 Math assessments align to standards with increased rigor. Minnesota Department of Education information release. Scores across the state dropped as part of the transition from the MCA-11 to the MCA-111.

Digging Deeper in the Data Math scores are collected in four mathematical substrands: Number and Operations, Algebra, Geometry and Measurement, and Data Analysis. In both third and fifth grade the weakest areas for TCGIS students were in Geometry and Measurement and in Data Analysis. This could be an issue of lack of familiarity with English vocabulary as well as an underemphasis on these skills in our German math curriculum. These concerns are being addressed.

Silver Linings Scores are messengers. They tell us what we need to know in order to more closely align our teaching with state standards. A few pieces of information found in this year's scores.

1. We do not have a gender gap in mathematical scores. Boys and girls had equivalent average scores in the tests.
2. We have clear models of what to do to improve our scores. Last year's 4th grade students passed the Math tests at 95% with 45% exceeding the standards. Their teachers Nicole Halvorson and Carolyn Breithaupt are clear on the steps they took to ensure this success and are working with current teachers to share strategies and resources.

Steps TCGIS is taking to meet goal of raising math MCA scores in the 2011-2012 school year.

1. Nicole Halvorson has conducted an in-service for all staff on her strategies for teaching math and helping students achieve success in the MCAs.
2. Assistant to the Director, Amy Davis and Math teacher, Melissa Morrissey are conducting pre-assessments to identify students in need of support in targeted math areas. Small group pull-outs on targeted topics are scheduled in addition to regular math classes.
3. Materials in English aligned with the Minnesota standard have been ordered for use in grades 3 – 7. These are being used in small increments daily to help students become familiar with the format and type of questions asked.
4. Math teacher Melissa Morrissey will be providing afterschool math help classes addressing topics in which TCGIS students showed weaknesses last year. Students who tested low in these areas are being invited to participate in these afterschool classes free of charge.
5. Calculators are allowed in some portions of the test and will be a more familiar tool for students this year. Calculators are ordered for each classroom with students having the opportunity to practice using them in appropriate contexts well in advance of the testing season.
6. Director, Annika Fjelstad is visiting math classes and observing teaching pedagogy to give feedback to teachers on their math instruction.

We are taking active steps to improve our math instruction and align it with the tested standards. We will continue to focus on building deep learning and conceptual understanding of Math concepts. We will prepare students to ensure they know English Math vocabulary, appropriate test taking skills and adequate background in the topics on which they are tested. We will not become a school which teaches to tests alone. Instead we are committed to improving our excellence in math instruction and building on the strengths of our curriculum."

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