

March 2016

Dear Walker Families,

As spring offers us a natural opportunity for renewal, I hope you are enjoying the recent sunshine and soon...the mild weather!

At Walker School, we are now firmly in the third trimester. Our teachers have been collaborating and working hard to be responsive to our students' learning needs. We are so thankful for your partnership in your child's education at Walker!

Report Cards

As you probably have seen in the *Walker Wednesday News* for the past few weeks, we will continue to share student report cards through your access to the [Parent Portal](#). Report Cards are available beginning Thursday, March 3rd, 2016, at 12:30pm. If you are having difficulty accessing your child's report card through the Parent Portal, please contact [Stephanie Gardner](#). Any other important end-of-trimester information will be sent home in your child's Friday Folder by March 3. As always, contact your child's teachers if you have questions about your child's progress and let me know how I might assist further.

Planning for Next Year

When we return from spring break (April 4), we will begin the process for getting ready for next school year, meeting together to assign students for next year's class lists. Please know that our instructional team works very hard to consider many variables in creating class lists that set up our students for a positive learning environment. You are always welcome to write a letter about your child's class assignment, but please do not name a specific teacher; rather feel free to describe your child's learning style and include things that might benefit him/her as a learner.

Teaching and Learning

Across the district, each school met over the last couple of weeks to focus on the school improvement process. Walker School teachers have been reviewing growth data during our benchmark data sessions last month in an effort to identify trends and adjust instructional planning so that it is responsive to the needs of our students. I am happy to report our students across the school have made gains in both reading and math when considering fall to winter MAP data, classroom assessments, and other various measures teachers apply to help us meet students where they are academically.

On Friday, March 4, all district teachers participated in an Institute Day. Our elementary teachers focused our instructional planning on best practices in areas of Math Standards Literacy and Word Study. Through ongoing collaboration, we have identified these areas as focal points for improved practices. Teachers will continue to work in district grade level teams to examine our current practices in these areas and explore strategies for improving our instructional planning and delivery for our students.

Spring Garden Project

This spring you might notice some landscaping and construction work around the Walker playground area. As you may have heard, the Walker PTO has partnered with Whole Foods to install an herb garden live wall—which we hope our teachers and students will come to use to extend our environmental science learning. Two areas have been identified for this work.

1. The sidewalk area near the swings, extending the current retention wall — will host the herb garden live wall.
2. The mulched area that currently hosts prairie grass directly in front of the playground — will host concrete pavers, new landscaping, and new bench/table seating. We are looking forward to utilizing these areas for our Walker students, staff, and families to enjoy!

PARCC Testing Schedule for Walker School April 13th through May 6th, 2016

PARCC testing, computer-based assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards, will be administered in third, fourth and fifth grades beginning in April. Each grade level will take a total of seven units of testing, which will include four units of math and three units of English Language Arts (ELA) tests. To accommodate the best testing experience possible, utilizing our staff and taking into consideration the

schedule of school events, we have created a testing schedule that allows each grade level to take one PARCC assessment per day with alternating weeks of math and ELA assessments spread out over the four week testing window. Please refer to the testing schedule below and contact your child's teacher if you have further questions.

As a parent, please help support your child for PARCC testing by making sure he/she gets a good night's sleep, eats a healthy breakfast, and comes prepared for the testing. Our teachers will take a comfortable approach to the testing so as to not create any undue stress on our students. As parents, please simply remind your child to do his/her best. If possible, please avoid any scheduling and doctors appointments, etc. during the scheduled testing. Students not present during scheduled testing times will need to be pulled from class to make up the PARCC testing before the window closes in May.

Like last year, our third, fourth and fifth grade students will be allowed to have gum and water during the testing window. Once again, our Student Leadership Club has assembled PARCC Power Packs (1 water bottle, 1 pack of gum, 1 inspirational quote) for students to purchase prior to the testing window. Soon, the SLC will sell PARCC Power Packs during lunches to raise money to help support a community service project later this spring. Last year, students looked forward to their water and gum allowances during testing blocks...and the PARCC Power Packs were a big hit!

Thanks for supporting your child to take a positive and easy-going approach to this testing.

See the PARCC Testing Schedule below:

Week 1 (4/13 to 4/15)

Math: No testing
Grade 4 — ELA: 1:30-3:00pm (4/13-4/15)

Week 2 (4/18 to 4/22)

Grade 5 (No testing on 4/19) — Math: 9:45-11:15am
Grade 3 (4/20-4/22) — ELA: 12:20-2:20pm

Week 3 (4/25 to 4/29)

Grade 4 — Math: 9:45-11:15am (4/25, 4/27-4/29)
Grade 5 — ELA: 1:00 - 3:00 PM (4/25, 4/27, 4/28)

Week 4 (5/2 - 5/6)

ELA: No testing
Grade 3 — Math: 8:45-10:15am (5/2, 5/4-5/6)
Makeups in the afternoon

If you have questions about the PARCC assessments or your child's progress at Walker, please contact your child's teacher and let me know if I might assist further. As always, thank you for your investment in your child's education!

Eric Chisausky
Principal

Look Who's Tweeting!

Walker now has a Twitter Handle and Facebook Page. We are hoping to connect with Walker community as we get ready to celebration Walker School's 10 Year Anniversary .

Follow us on Twitter: *@walkerschool181*

Find us on Facebook: *Walker School 10 Year Building Anniversary*