



August 1, 2012

Dear Parent, Guardian, or Community Member:

Allendale Public Schools is taking a proactive approach this school year as we work to communicate with parents and the community recent changes to our schools' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and report card grades.

Each year, Michigan public school students in grades 3 through 9 are required to take the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), and 11<sup>th</sup> graders are required to take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). The state of Michigan uses the scores from these tests to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a measure of year-to-year student achievement on the MEAP and the MME.

Last fall, the Michigan State Board of Education approved new MEAP and MME "cut scores." Cut scores separate test takers into various proficiency categories such as advanced, proficient, partially proficient and not proficient. These new cut scores are higher and "raise the bar" for our students. The new cut scores are designed to indicate a path to college and career readiness at graduation.

As anticipated, MEAP and MME scores in this inaugural year of the new, higher cut scores reduced the number of students who were previously listed as advanced or proficient. Consequently, district/building report card grades are also lower. We are confident this change is temporary due to ongoing school improvement efforts and student support.

When looking at AYP and report card grades, it's important to note that our district uses several other measures throughout the year to ensure that students are making academic progress. We maintain high standards for our schools, and our standardized test scores and graduation rates are consistently above state and national norms. We anticipate this trend will continue even with the changes in the grading system.

We will be examining our curriculum to respond to the state's higher achievement expectations. In addition, our staff will focus our professional development efforts on enhancing our abilities to rise to the challenge presented to us by these recent changes. If you would like additional information about changes to the MEAP, MME or AYP, please contact your building principal.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Jonker, Superintendent  
Allendale Public Schools