

Dear Granite Falls Families,

We are reaching out with some important news about how the Granite Falls School District, along with the entire state of Washington, is raising the bar to help all students receive a world-class education. Across the state we are implementing new academic standards in English language arts and math in grades K-12, called **Common Core State Standards** that will help your child have the academic knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, career, and life. The Standards will not only improve what your child learns, but *how* he or she learns by teaching critical-thinking, problem solving, and effective communication skills. With your support and our partnership, these Standards will better prepare your child to achieve in K-12 and beyond.

Why Do We Need New Standards?

The world has changed. Employers expect more today than they did in the past from their employees. They expect to hire staff with some type of education or advanced training beyond high school. In fact, 85% of high growth-high wage jobs in our state will require it by 2013. Employers are also expecting to hire employees who have the skills to help their companies compete in the global marketplace and keep up with rapidly changing technology. Today's employers need their staff to be able to acquire new skills quickly, work with less supervision and identify sophisticated problems and make crucial decisions.

Washington State Standards will help prepare your child to be successful with these skills. The new Standards are more relevant to the real world and reflect the academic knowledge and skills that your child will need to be successful in college and career.

How Were These Standards Developed?

College and career readiness is a part of a larger initiative, led by a coalition of states to raise the bar to ensure students are prepared for college and a career. States worked together to develop the Standards and to date, 46 states and the District of Columbia are working to implement them and develop assessments that will be consistent across states. A diverse group of teachers, subject matter experts, parents, and school administrators worked together to create the Standards that reflect both our aspirations for our children and the realities of the classroom. The Standards were also benchmarked against countries with top-notch education programs, to ensure our future generations are ready to compete in the global marketplace.

How Does this Impact You and How Can You Play a Role?

By having the same, consistent and rigorous standards and assessment across states, parents, schools, districts and states will be able to see how well a student is performing in a way that is not possible now. This will ensure our students successfully meet the

necessary goals and remain competitive. The Standards will smooth the transition of a family move by enabling your child's new school to assess a student's abilities and determine where they need support using the same set of common standards.

The Standards will also allow parents, students and teachers to be on the same page and set high expectations together for student learning. As a parent, this is a great opportunity for you to support your child's learning at home and in school. At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child's achievements in learning. At school, you can create a strong working relationship with your child's teacher by having ongoing conversations about your child's progress.

We are working hard implementing these Standards, and working hard to make sure our students transition successfully. Your support is critical.

Questions? Contact Debra Howell, NBCT
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