

**Germantown Elementary School
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**Learning Comes from
Everything and Everyone
Around Us**

germantownbulldogs.org

December 1, 2011

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

Over the next few years you will notice some changes to instruction and testing in our school that will directly impact our students. It is essential that you know about these changes and what resources are available to help you support the community youth.

In June of 2010, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which are a national set of learning expectations for college and career success that were developed by teachers, parents, school administrators, and education experts. Illinois is one of forty five states that have adopted the CCSS. The standards were developed out of partnership between the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association and are not an initiative of the federal government. These newly adopted standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in K-12 math and language. While there are many similarities between the existing Illinois state standards and the CCSS, you might notice changes in what content is emphasized and the grade in which the content is taught. The standards incorporate increased expectations for our students and focus on higher level thinking, thus the students will be increasingly challenged through the incorporation of the Common Core Standards in the curriculum.

The purpose of adopting the CCSS is not simply to align with other states, but rather to raise the bar in all grades to ensure that our students are receiving a relevant and rigorous education. The adoption of the CCSS means that your child will be better prepared to meet the demands of college and/or the work place in the 21st century. Today's global economy means that our students need to possess academic standards by the completion of twelfth grade to ensure their success in college and/or the workforce.

This school year, one of our school improvement initiatives is to align the curriculum at each grade level with the Common Core Standards. During School Improvement Days and Teacher Institute Days, we have been busy focusing on this initiative. With this in mind, you may start to see a difference in the type of homework being sent home with your student or the types of questions being asked on quizzes and tests. The new format is a direct reflection of the expectations outlined in the Common Core Standards. If you ever have any questions or concerns about the new format of questioning on homework, quizzes, and/or tests, please contact the classroom teacher. He/She will be happy to clarify any questions you have.

Implementation of the Common Core Standards will be a gradual process that will take place over the course of the next few years. The culmination will be a new assessment that will be administered to students in 2014. This assessment is still in the process of being developed by national experts in education and will eventually take the place of the ISAT test. We will keep families informed of any details surrounding the new assessment as those details are made available to schools.

Please go to www.education.nh.gov/spotlight/ccss/index.htm for additional information on the Common Core Standards. In addition, the National PTA has organized resources to help parents support their child. Information can be found at www.pta.org/common_core_state_standards.asp.

As a school district, we are committed to making this transition to the Common Core Standards a smooth one for everyone. We are excited about the potential impact it will have on student learning. Again, please feel free to bring your questions, comments, or concerns to our attention.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

Sincerely,

Robin Becker, Superintendent GES #60