



August 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you know, Parker Middle School has been fortunate to offer four *core-support* classes to assist them with more time-on-task with their core classes of English, math, science and social studies. These courses are titled:

Middle School Core & Core-Support Classes

Core Classes

English Language Arts (ELA)
Math
Science
Social Studies

Core-Support Classes

Write On!
Math Power Hour
Deciphering Science
Reading Destinations

Every middle school student has three encore classes, and your child may be taking one or more of these *core-support* classes as an encore. In middle school, most students are scheduled for the *core-support* classes on a quarterly basis.

Each *core-support* class is intended to offer a child the opportunity to extend the grade-level curriculum through pre-teaching, re-teaching, practice and enrichment. Overall, the *core-support* classes should be a combination of extended learning time and practice/homework time. For example, the Math Power Hour class is designed to give additional learning and practice time on what the child learned in math class.

Last school year, we piloted a Pass/Fail in *core-support* classes, rather than issuing a letter grade. We purposefully worked to keep students motivated without the pressure of grades in *core-support*. The advantage to both students and teachers is the ability to put more focus on what's really important, the subject's curriculum. We will continue this practice in 2012-13.

A student's grades in the *core-support* class will mirror the grades in the core course. Therefore, to know how your child is doing in Math Power Hour, look at the weekly grades in the math course. Daily grades may or may not be seen in PowerSchool in a *core-support* class. As the Math Power Hour strengthens the child's math skills, the grades in the math class will reflect that learning. The Pass/Fail designation for the *core support* class will be entered in PowerSchool at the end of the quarter.

It is important that parents and students understand that the Pass/Fail "grade" will not have a negative or positive effect on the child's Grade Point Average (GPA), as it is not mathematically computed.

We wish your child the best for a successful 2012-13 school year!

Susan Muntz, Principal
Parker Middle School

Board of Education

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