

Manitou Springs Elementary School

MANITOU SPRINGS DISTRICT 14

At the Foot of Pikes Peak

"Every Child is a Gift"

RUSS VOGEL, PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents and Guardians,

February 15, 2011

As you read about in our February newsletter, we are introducing a new report card this quarter that aligns with District 14's Essential Learning (EL) targets. This letter offers some more details and a link to samples of each grade level's report card. To view the samples, please go to our website, <http://www.mssd14.org/mSES.html>, and then click on "EL Report Card Templates."

As you know, we have been working over the past couple of years on a new curriculum system, resulting in Essential Learning targets that define grade-level proficiency for key skills in every subject. Because EL's track actual proficiency levels on specific skills, our reporting of students' progress on EL's will look different than our previous grading system.

On our old report cards, a student's scores from all assignments and tests in a subject were added together, whether the assignments were for related skills or completely different skills. That sum was compared to the total points possible for those assignments and the resulting percentage was placed on a grade scale—90 to 100% an A, 80 to 89% a B, 70 to 79% a C, etc. This was traditionally a very generalized system that reported on overall subject performance, but not on specific skill areas.

The new report card lists each EL for each subject and reports your child's specific proficiency level on a scale from 1 to 4. *On the new scale, 4 indicates that your child exceeds EL proficiency expectations; 3 means he/she meets grade level expectations on the EL; 2 means your child is progressing toward expectations; and 1 indicates he/she is not progressing adequately (and we'll all be working together for better success!)* These proficiency levels are based on your child's performance on EL unit assignments and on district assessments written specifically for our EL's. (It is important to remember that in a proficiency reporting system, a 3 equates to full proficiency and indicates that your child is right where he/she needs to be in his/her grade. It does not equate to a 'B' or a second-level grade.)

Because we are in transition from the old system to the new this quarter, many MSES teachers have begun explaining the new system to students and marking their assignments with specific proficiency ratings instead of percentages or letter grades. We know this is a change from the traditional report card 'language' of A-B-C-D-F, but *we are convinced that proficiency-based reporting is a better way to share you child's academic growth with them and with you.* We think you will find it is just as simple as the old system and much more informative of your child's actual academic progress.

We will offer a parent night at 6 p.m., March 10, in the MSES auditorium to present this new report card again and to answer your questions. Best of all, your child's teacher will walk you through his/her proficiency report in person at third-quarter conferences on March 28 and 29.

Please look over the samples and feel free to ask your child's teacher or Mr. Vogel about any questions you might have in the meantime!

Sincerely,

Russ Vogel, Principal, and Your MSES Teachers and Staff