

# Community Unit School District 200

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Administration and School Service Center

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November 2002

Dear District 200 Parent:

The School Report Card that you are accustomed to receiving each fall by mail if you have a middle school or high school student or hand delivered if you have an elementary student will this year come to you via the Internet. The report cards for each school will be posted on District 200's web site at [www.cusd200.org](http://www.cusd200.org) beginning November 8. Once you reach the home page, you can click on the Teacher/Parent Resource section to access the report cards. Parents who don't have Internet access at home are encouraged to visit their child's school library, the public libraries serving District 200, or the School Service Center, 130 W. Park Avenue, Wheaton, where computers are available for you to use. Parents may also request a paper copy of their child's report card by calling the District office at 630/682-2000.

Posting the report card on line is a new service offered by the state and the District to make the report cards available to parents more quickly and to save the printing and postage costs incurred by distributing a paper copy to all families.

There are several additions to the 2001-02 report card, some required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and others by amendments to the state's Better Schools Accountability law. Here is the information that is included in the report card for the first time this year:

- Student achievement data on the ISAT and PSAE is broken down by student characteristics.
- The most recent two-year trend in achievement is reported.
- Graduation rates are broken down by student characteristics.
- The percentage of teachers who have emergency or provisional credentials and the classes not taught by 'highly qualified' teachers. Highly qualified means that they meet all certification requirements and teach the subject(s) for which that certification is valid.
- The amount of money the District receives from various sources, including property taxes, general state aid, and other state and federal funding.
- A letter from the school principal describing school improvement efforts, including areas of success and targets for improvement.

An outgrowth of school improvement planning in our schools is the development of a District Improvement Plan that focuses district-wide efforts on improving achievement in reading, math and writing. Here is the work that will be occurring in those three areas on a district-wide basis this year:

## **Reading**

- The elementary reading support program was standardized this year across the District with common entry and exit criteria and materials.
- A new kindergarten reading program was introduced this year.
- The finishing touches are being put on a new reading program for first through eighth grades to be implemented in 2003-04.
- Tests that aligned to the District's curriculum (local assessments) are being developed and will be introduced in the elementary and middle schools in 2002-04.

### **Writing**

- Teachers in second through eighth grades are giving writing tests patterned after the ISAT exams twice during the year. This gives teachers information on how to adjust their instruction to be sure students are developing the kind of writing skills required by the state.
- Writing expectations in the elementary and middle schools will be developed separately, but in coordination with the reading program, for implementation in the 2003-04 school year.

### **Mathematics**

- This is the first year of review of the elementary math curriculum which will result in a revised program with new materials for the 2004-05 school year.
- A newly revised middle school math curriculum will be implemented in 2003-04.
- More middle school students are encouraged to take higher levels of math, which includes giving all eighth graders the opportunity to take algebra.

To assist both school and district improvement efforts, a variety of training opportunities are being provided for teachers in reading, writing and math throughout the year and over the summer.

As you review the school report card and the test data, you should be aware that this year's results show:

- Fifth grade math scores improving 6 percent in the meets/exceeds category over the last four years.
- Eighth grade math scores improving 11 percent in the meets/exceeds category over the last four years.
- Fifth grade writing scores dropping 17 percent in the meets/exceeds category over the last four years, comparable to the 16 percent decline in scores statewide.
- Eighth grade writing scores increasing 10 percent in the meets/exceeds category this year, following a 10 percent decline last year.
- No significant changes in reading, science and social studies scores at any grade tested.

While District 200 scores are high, well above state averages in all areas, and competitive with comparable districts, we have in the past three years stepped up our efforts to improve student achievement. These efforts come in a variety of formats, including our systematic curriculum development process, school improvement planning, data driven decisions, enhanced teacher training, the use of technology to break data apart by student characteristics, and the focus on District-wide improvement as described above.

With the help of our very dedicated teaching and administrative staff, we are making progress. Our schools are working hard to improve instruction so that all students can meet or exceed the state standards and our own expectations for learning. I know the principals will be happy to share their specific plans for improvement with you. Call for an appointment. We value your involvement in our schools.

Sincerely,

Gary T. Catalani, Ed.D.  
Superintendent