

January 23, 2014

Parents:

At the beginning of the school year, you were introduced to a new grading policy for Providence Spring students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. This policy, which is a draft of a CMS grading policy under consideration, encouraged students to work to mastery of content in that they were given the opportunity to re-take or correct formal assessments on which they were not successful. With the corrections or retakes, a student could earn up to a grade of 80 on a retest of a test failed.

Teachers have observed how this new process inflates grades and in doing so, gives an inaccurate picture of student academic performance to parents. In addition, in some cases, the new procedures are actually encouraging poor study habits among our students, who rather than prepare for a test the first time, choose instead to make corrections and settle for a grade of 80. We certainly do not want any grading policy to encourage manipulation and game playing with grades when our primary focus is helping students to learn and apply the material while providing parents with the information to support them in their efforts.

With this in mind, the PSE Grading Policy Committee has developed a good compromise where there will be consistency across grade levels yet there will be some flexibility for teacher discretion. The following are the guidelines for grading which we will implement immediately for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester in grades 3, 4 and 5:

1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade's guidelines will be a little different from those in grades 4 and 5 as we recognize that grading using numeric percentages and letter grades are new to these students. A modified PSE grading plan will allow teachers

to work with students as the students become accustomed to grades and as they mature such that they can plan their study schedules according to their academic needs.

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teachers will continue to offer re-test or correction opportunities for students who do not pass a formal assessment. However, the highest score a child can receive once the corrections or re-takes occur will be a **70%**.

2. Students in Grades 4 and 5 will continue to be assessed on content, but will **not** receive correction/retake opportunities if they fail the formal test. Students will need to utilize future assessment opportunities to offset low performance on any individual assessment.

We feel that parents, teachers, and students will agree that these changes are appropriate and will result in a fairer assessment of a student's academic progress. Throughout 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, we will continue to study the grading policy at PSE. If you, as a parent, would like to make comments or offer feedback, we welcome and encourage your sharing. Feel free to forward such to your child's teacher or to our Literacy Facilitator, Wendy Ikoku ([wendy.ikoku@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:wendy.ikoku@cms.k12.nc.us)).

Thank you for your continued support as we look for the best ways in which to prepare your child for today and for the future and to keep you informed about the progress your child is making toward mastery.

Respectfully,

Diane Adams, Principal