

# **Changes for Elementary in 2016-17 for Livonia Public Schools**

## ***Trimesters Report Card and October Conferences***

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### **Q. What are trimesters?**

A. Trimesters divide the school year into three terms each about 12-13 weeks long. Previously, the school year was divided into quarters or four terms each about 9-10 weeks in length. The following are the lengths of each trimester and dates report cards will be available for the 2016-17 school year:

1<sup>st</sup> Trimester: September 6 - December 2; report cards sent home on December 9

2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester: December 5 - March 10; report cards sent home on March 17

3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester: March 13 - June 16; report cards mailed home on June 21

#### **Q. Why are elementary schools moving to trimesters?**

A. Currently, LPS divides the school year into four quarters of approximately 45 days each. By dividing the year into thirds, or trimesters, teachers would formally report on student progress after 60 days of instruction. Moving to trimesters increases time for teaching and learning between reporting periods. In a trimester plan, there would be twelve weeks of instruction rather than nine. Additional time for teaching and learning skills, knowledge and practices facilitates higher levels of student growth and mastery. Also, there will be more time at the beginning of the year to build classroom community and routines. Classroom and special area teachers will use this additional time to get to know their students better as learners and to differentiate their instruction based on individual strengths and needs. With twelve weeks of instruction, a student's grades will more comprehensively reflect instruction, and the teacher would be able to provide a deeper understanding of what students know and are able to do at the end of each reporting period.

#### **Q. What other districts use a trimester schedule?**

A. Many districts in our area have made the change from quarters to trimesters: Armada Area Schools, Chippewa Valley Schools, Crestwood, Dearborn Heights District 7, Farmington Public Schools, Fraser Public Schools, Lakeview, L'Anse Cruese, Plymouth-Canton, Anchor Bay, Romeo Community Schools, Roseville Community Schools, South Redford, Taylor, Troy School District Van Dyke Public Schools, Warren Consolidated Schools, Warren Woods and others. These districts have found that in a trimester plan, there is a reduced emphasis on testing and a greater focus on student learning.

#### **Q. Will trimesters mean less communication from my child's teacher?**

A. No. Although there would be one less formal report card, there would not be less communication. Technology enables teachers and parents to communicate quickly and easily in a wide variety of ways: email, website postings, blogs, classroom newsletters, Twitter, and text alerts. Teachers also communicate using traditional methods such as phone calls and notes home. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher at any time for information about their child's progress.

#### **Q. Will the number of parent-teacher conferences change?**

A. No. Parent-Teacher Conferences will continue to be scheduled in the fall. These conferences are scheduled on October 26-27, 2016 for the teacher and parents/guardians to review assessment data and set goals for their student before the trimester ends in December. At the Fall conferences parents and teachers will work to establish a strong foundation for a successful year in school. Conferences are also scheduled upon request. We are committed to maintaining high levels of accessibility and ongoing communication.

**Q. Will the report card remain the same?**

A. Yes. We will use the current report card for the 2016-2017 school year. However, we will continue to pilot new report cards as we make changes to our reporting to reflect the Michigan Standards in our teaching and reporting.

**Q. Will report card distribution change?**

A. Yes. Report cards will be available in December, March, and June.

**Q. What will teachers share at conferences if the report card isn't available until after parents and teachers meet?**

A. Teachers will share data collected using district and classroom assessments and set possible goals for the student to achieve during the course of the year along with observations of the student as a learner. The teacher can also update you on how your child is acclimating to the new school year and on grade expectations.

**Q. Will a change to trimesters impact reporting for children with special needs?**

A. Yes. Students with special needs will receive progress reports three times a year rather than four (in December, March, and June.) Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teachers for current information about their child's progress at any time.

**Q. Are the middle and high school moving to trimesters?**

A. No. Middle and high school will remain on a semester schedule with report cards issued every quarter.