



GALVIN MIDDLE SCHOOL
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Principal *Thomas LaLiberte*

Assistant Principal *Thomas Walsh*

The Canton Public Schools strives for excellence in achievement, promotes a love of learning, embraces individuality and diversity, and builds a foundation for life-long learning in the entire community.

December 5, 2008

Dear Parent:

This letter is designed to explain the performance of Galvin Middle School based on federal and state mandates for student achievement as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

Six years ago, the federal government enacted legislation commonly called *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). Among its many provisions are the requirements that all children reach a *proficient* level of performance, as measured on state tests, by the year 2013-2014. This mandate applies to the entire school population and specially designed sub-groups as defined by law. To measure accountability along the way, there are target scores that each school must meet on an annual basis to demonstrate progress. This is referred to as *Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP).

Galvin Middle School has consistently met AYP for the total school population. During the last five years, however, we have *not* met all of the target scores for some of our sub-groups in mathematics. Consequently, this means that GMS has been placed in “Restructuring” in mathematics for sub-groups which requires that specific improvement steps be taken in order to insure that students in the sub-groups achieve proficiency.

In 2006-2007 (2007 MCAS testing), Galvin Middle School achieved its target scores in mathematics for the total school population and for its subgroups. We attribute this success to some of the following improvement steps that had been taken:

- providing additional math instructional time (90 minutes) for identified students;
- use of *Plato* software, a technology-based program, to focus on math skill building;
- yearly analysis of MCAS data by teachers which results in curriculum improvement; and
- changes in math staffing and leadership to strengthen the instructional program.

Despite this success, during the 2007-2008 (2008 MCAS testing) school year, we did not meet our target growth for some sub-groups of students. While this was disappointing news, we continue to believe that many of the changes we have made are worthwhile. We also continue to examine ways to improve our instructional program to ensure successful performance on MCAS, as well as a smooth transition to high school. Our new Math Department Advisor, Ms. Brenda Olson, worked with teachers last year to align the Grade 6-8 curriculum with state standards and develop common assessments at each grade level based on those standards. An after school tutoring program was also instituted for at risk students. Regular meetings are being held between Middle School, High School, and Central Office leaders to monitor this improvement process.

Guidance : Paul DuCott; Adjustment Counselor, Jina Guimond; School Psychologist, Jennifer Mac Lea;
Department Coordinators: Joyce Stenmon-Art, Sarah Gardner-Performing Arts, Danette McGovern-Science,
Brenda Olson-Math, Elaine McCarthy-Social Studies, James Spillane-English, Laurie Moore-World Language,
Technology: Michael Barucci, **CET Chairs:** Christopher Cullinan and Jill Albanese; **Nurse:** Julie DuCott

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Despite our challenges with some of our sub-groups, when we examine our MCAS results as an entire school, Galvin Middle School has shown annual improvement in its MCAS results over the last 6 years, and we hope to repeat the successes of 2008 when the students take the 2009 MCAS tests in the spring. We are making every effort to ensure that all students are successful.

To put all this in a context, close to 75% of the middle schools across the state are in a similar situation. Additionally, in a recent presentation to the School Committee, our Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology, Ms. Robin Billing, indicated how middle schools typically have larger, more diverse enrollments than smaller elementary schools and consequently, are held more accountable for subgroup performance. This is the case because in order to be held accountable for subgroup scores, one has to have at least forty students within that subgroup. This technical detail contributes to the fact that across the state 45% of elementary schools, 25% of high schools, and **75% of middle schools** fail to make their AYP.

I am committed to working with our teachers to insure that we continue to strengthen our instruction, expand our curricular opportunities, and increase our support services so that all our students have the best chance to achieve and exceed our standards. I also know that our chances of succeeding will be greatly improved with your help. Some of the ways that you can support your child are:

- Make sure that your child comes to school *on time* each day.
- Be sure that your child regularly well rested and fed before coming to school.
- Check your child's assignments that should be written in the Agenda assignment notebook and frequently updated on the homework hotline to insure that homework is complete every night
- Encourage your child to seek out extra help before and/or after school.
- Talk about school subjects, especially math, at home, to show an interest in your child's studies.
- Contact your child's teacher periodically for updates on progress and ways to support improvements at home.

By working together, we can help each child experience success and achieve at high levels.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. LaLiberte

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