

November 29, 2011

Dear Parents of Cranston Public Schools,

As you may know, all school districts in Rhode Island are implementing new teacher evaluation systems. In Cranston, we are part of a six district consortium which has collaborated with the American Federation of Teachers to create a new evaluation model –Rhode Island Innovation Consortium Evaluation Model–for our teachers. This is a process created over the past two years, with an extensive investment of time and effort on the part of administrators and teachers alike to develop a rigorous system of accountability in our schools.

Since last year, all principals, directors and central office staff have taken part in over forty hours of intense training on this new model. Teachers, too, have had many hours of professional development on the Rhode Island Innovation Consortium Evaluation Model. Starting this September, we are in the first year of gradual implementation of this new model. This means that all of our classroom and itinerant (art, music, PE, etc.) teachers will be evaluated under the new system this year, and support staff will be included next year.

The new approach requires many hours of focused work on the part of the building administrators, much of which must be accomplished during the school day when teachers are teaching. Unlike other districts in the state, our teachers will be evaluated by our current administrators only. By using **Race To The Top** funding, we are able to expand our staff temporarily to assist with the changes to the evaluation system. We are hiring some retired administrators and allowing some of our current teachers who are certified administrators to act in an administrative capacity. *They will assist with the day-to-day business of the buildings, while principals spend uninterrupted time in classrooms with teachers.* Therefore, in the coming months, you may be seeing familiar faces of retired principals, or unfamiliar faces of teachers who are certified administrators, working in the schools. Our main concern is keeping the buildings safe and productive places for students and staff at all times. By using these additional administrators, the principals can focus solely on the high quality educators and their instruction in our classrooms.

The retirees and certified administrators will be in buildings only once or twice per week from December to May to support the principals in this first year of implementation. Your building principals will still be available to you when they are not doing evaluations, but we ask that when you have a “substitute” administrator, you focus your questions and concerns to them. It is important that our entire school community work collaboratively to give our new evaluation system a positive start.

You will be receiving additional information from your building principals when this program begins. Please extend a warm welcome to our substitute administrators and rest assured they are playing an integral part in the improvement of teaching and learning in all of our schools. As always, we are grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Jeannine Nota-Masse, Executive Director of Educational Programs