

October 21, 2011

Dear Olmsted North Parents,

I need to share some news with you and attempt to put it in perspective. Today it was announced that Olmsted North is on the list of persistently low achieving schools in the state. This list is determined by averaging the percent of students scoring proficient and distinguished in math and reading and ranking all of the schools in the state by those numbers. Then, many schools are removed from the list, even though they scored lower than us, either because they have already been identified as persistently low achieving in the last two years or because they are considered exempt from this status due to changes in student enrollment. So, while we are not among the lowest achieving schools in the state overall, we are in the next group that is eligible for this classification.

This label is only determined by two factors – math and reading scores – and does not take into consideration our improvements in four out of the five content areas. Nor does it account for all of the other important things we are doing to provide a positive educational experience for your student. This label, imposed on us by the state, does not change anything about the gains in test scores and improvements in student involvement and performance we are seeing. It is unfortunate that we will be characterized as low achieving in the news media when we know that we are only in year three of restructuring and have already accomplished important improvements in school culture, student performance, and community perception. We remain committed to our vision of Every Child Proficient.

Our teachers have developed a climate in their classrooms where hard work is expected and students are treated with patience and kindness. This culture has resulted in our school achieving the highest gains in attendance in JCPS over the past three years, a reduction in suspensions, and improved academic performance. This is what defines our work at Olmsted North. Because of our dedicated teachers and supportive families we will continue to see gains on our test scores, but more importantly we will produce high achieving, involved, and talented students who are ready for high school and beyond.

Bill Perkins
Principal