



October 3, 2016

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Link Letter

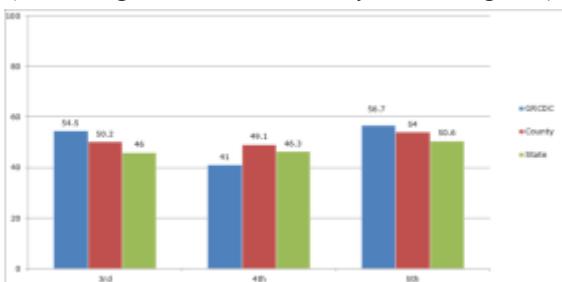
Principally Speaking

The Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) scores from 2015-2016 are now available. The M-STEP is a state assessment chosen to replace the MEAP test. Last spring was the second time this new test was given. It is administered online, contains fewer multiple choice questions and more questions requiring critical thinking skills. Students in grades 3-8 are assessed each spring in English language arts and mathematics. Additionally, science is assessed in 4th grade and Social Studies in 5th grade. For further information, you may be interested in the [Parent Guide to M-STEP](#).

The M-STEP's increased rigor reflects the changing demands in the workplace and expectations to be career- and college-ready. The state intends to be "Top 10 in 10," meaning a Top 10 education state within the next 10 years. In the short term, the higher bar may mean lower proficiency scores as evidenced by 2015-2016 scores across the state. Consider our results in blue below as they compare to the county and state averages. View larger results graphs and how we compare to other schools here: <http://bit.ly/2cGKYi3>

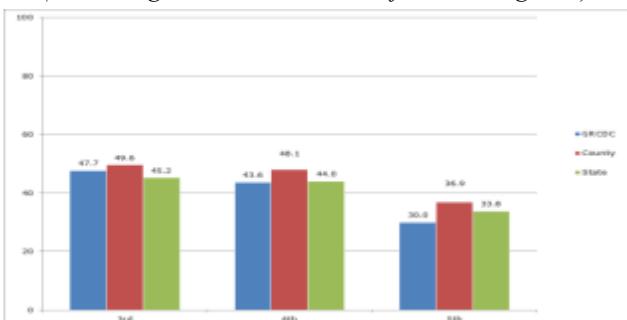
2015-16 GRCDC M-STEP Proficiency Levels for English Language Arts (ELA)

(% Scoring in Advanced and Proficient Categories)



2015-16 GRCDC M-STEP Proficiency Levels for Math

(% Scoring in Advanced and Proficient Categories)



GRCDC showed growth in 5 of 7 categories with increases ranging from 6- 14%. Following cohort groups, last year's 5th graders jumped 8% on the ELA test (48% to 56%) and dropped slightly on math (34% to 30%). Last year's 4th graders jumped 10% on the math test from 34% to 44% and stayed nearly even on ELA (43% to 41%).

Our plan includes more teacher coaching, an after school math club and new curriculum adoption in math, reading and writing. Our objective is to deliver individualized instruction and monitor growth to ensure increased literacy and math achievement for all students.

In considering the M-STEP results, please know it is a snapshot and only one data set. To truly know your child's progress, we consider multiple sources of data in conversation with teachers. If at any time you have questions, please do not hesitate to write, call or stop by the office to discuss.

John Robinson, Principal/Executive Director/Superintendent
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Family Team Corner

First Friday Food is October 7th, and the theme is Breakfast for Lunch. If you would like to participate, please use the link to sign up, and have your item(s) in the Resource Room by 10:45 on October 7. <http://signup.com/go/m3khTd>

Our October Family Team meeting is October 11 at 6:30, and will be held in the lunch room. ALL parents and guardians of children at GRCDC are always welcome at Family Team meetings, and although childcare is not provided, it is acceptable to bring children along.

Here is a link to September's meeting minutes: <http://bit.ly/2dapSKg>

Central Office Updates

- **Picture day** is Thursday, October 6. All students will be photographed for school records. You may also purchase pictures. Order envelopes were sent home today. Please return your child's envelope by Thursday morning, 10/6. You also have the option to order online: www.geskusphoto.com using the web code 283TPTVSUEKME. Pictures will be sent home about 3 weeks after picture day. If you choose to purchase a class picture, those will come home sometime in January or February.
- **E-Link** started last week—that means that most of you will be receiving this communication via email. If you have questions about this, please contact Mrs. Rachel.
- Our **Community Potluck** will be on Friday, October 28— save the date, more details coming soon!

Family Math Night

Tuesday, October 18
5:00—7:00 pm in the gym

Come learn about how math is taught at the GRCDC, play games with your family and pick up some strategies for addressing math concepts at home. Families are encouraged to pop in at anytime between 5-7pm.

Calendar

The calendar also available at grcdc.org

10/3 - 10/7	Discovery E @ IMMERSE Program at the Public Museum
10/5	Early Release Day, Dismissal at 1:10 PM
10/6	School Picture Day—order forms were sent home today, details are listed in the article above
10/7	First Friday Food: http://signup.com/go/m3khTd
10/7	Afternoon Meeting, 3:00—3:15 PM
10/9	GRCDC Outing: Dunneback Farm 3:30—6:00 PM
10/10	GRCDC Board Meeting, 6:00—8:00 PM
10/11	Family Team Meeting, 6:30—8:00 PM
10/18	Math Night, 5:00—7:00 PM
10/22	GRCDC Outing: "Holes" @ Civic Theater, 1:30—4:00 PM
10/28	Community Potluck, lunch time event
10/31 & 11/1	NO SCHOOL, Teacher Records/Conference Day

Please arrange for your child to **arrive at school between 7:45—8:00 am**. Please sign your child in at the office if arrival is after 8:05 am.

Dismissal is 3:15 pm M, T, Th, F and 1:10 pm on Wednesdays

The Philosophy by Sarah Cooper

Our Reggio Emilia inspired school strives to balance the Italian principles and our American public school expectations. Our Italian counterparts see this same duality when discussing assessment. In a 2013 publication, the Infant-toddler Centres within Reggio Emilia argue that assessment is part of a community’s educational and organizational process. It aims for **continuous improvement** and the identification of **society’s values**. If we borrow this way of thinking too, our approach to student achievement is more meaningful.

As an American public school, our students and staff are held to a set of expectations developed by the State of Michigan for the purpose of **continuous improvement**. These expectations state that:

- Schools participate in an annual, standardized test called the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress or M-STEP for all 3rd-5th grade children.
- Schools will administer the test each spring during specific timeframes.
- 3rd graders take tests covering math, reading and writing
- 4th graders take tests covering math, reading, writing and science
- 5th graders take tests covering math, reading, writing and social studies
- All students in grades 3-5 are expected to read, write and maneuver in a split-screen, online testing format. This expectation implies knowledge in keyboarding and a desktop computer.

Through our American standardized assessment process, we see great debate among educators, families and policymakers around **what we value**. The M-STEP expectations indicate that we value:

- What children learn each year
- Accountability around student learning for teachers and administrators
- The ability to use data to make instructional decisions
- Communication and transparency to the public regarding student performance.

As a school, we also know that M-STEP represents a snapshot and the GRCDC imbeds other measures to see the whole child. Many of these other assessments will be shared during conferences in early November. At any point in the year, you can ask your child’s teacher to discuss academic growth.

Recently the State of Michigan released student M-STEP scores from 2015-16. All parents and guardians of 2015-16 GRCDC students will receive a letter and individualized student reports at their home addresses. These parent reports do not share much context. To help you interpret you child’s report, please consider the averages for the county, state and our local schools. If you have questions about your child’s report, please do not hesitate to contact me or Brooke Haslacker, our Assessment Coordinator and Discovery E teacher, at haslack-erb@grcdc.org.

Please stay tuned for information regarding instructional and school-wide decisions being made to positively impact the assessment scores for all students at the GRCDC

Sarah Cooper, Pedagogista
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Grand Rapids Nutrition Center

The full menu is available on our website:

<http://childdiscoverycenter.org/be-connected/link-letters/>

Breakfast (\$1.50):	Lunch (\$2.75):
Milk: \$0.50	
T— Banana muffin, yogurt	Ultimate beef nachos
W— Cheesy omelet	Hot turkey, ham & cheese
Th— Sausage gravy breakfast	Chicken drumstick
F— Pancake wrap	Italian dunkers
M 10/10—Cereal	Chicken nuggets

GRCDC is pleased to introduce Carolyn Thompson!

My name is Carolyn Thompson and I am excited to be the new Interventionist and Math Club teacher at GRCDC! I will be working with students who can use a boost with basic math and reading skills.

I have B.S. degrees in Elementary Education and Health Sciences/Health Education, and started my teaching career as a 5th Grade Science Teacher. I then worked at the KISD setting up teacher workshops. When Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park (FMG&SP) developed their Lena Meijer Children’s Garden (LMCG), I joined the FMG&SP Education Staff to teach outdoor education as the Coordinator of the LMCG. After thirteen years, I challenged my mind in a different way and went back to school to study physical therapy at Baker College and complete graduate level Education courses at GVSU.

I am the mother of two awesome children, Cameron and Carly, and enjoy bicycling, hiking, weaving and traveling. My newest ambition is to learn how to juggle! Any tips are welcome !!

Math Club FAQ

What is Math Club?

Math Club is an after school group for students who need additional support in math skills. We will work at an appropriate pace for each student to reach mastery and feel confident. We practice using games, computer programs, manipulatives and more! Students who are invited to Math Club will work in small groups, individually and one-on-one with Ms. Carolyn

When is Math Club?

Math Club will be held after school four days a week, starting Monday, October 10. The 5th grade session is held each Monday from 3:15-4:30 p.m. and Wednesday from 1:10-2:30. The 4th grade session is 3:15-4:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Who attends Math Club?

Math Club is by invitation only at this point and is designed to offer extra support for 4th and 5th graders. Invitations will be sent to qualifying students on Monday, October 3 with the expectation that families return the RSVP by Wednesday, October 5.

At Home

There are many ways you can help your child’s progress at home and out in the community! Try spending 15-30 minutes a day practicing or talking about things related to math.

- Play a game
- Practice basic math facts
- Count change at a store
- Help with math homework
- Follow a recipe
- Go bowling and tally the score

If you need more ideas to help your child at home, I am available Monday through Thursday.

Please email me at: thompsonc@childdiscoverycenter.org