

March 14, 2016

Dear Studio Parents,

Thank you for being our partner in education and supporting your unique child! Recently, I have had a number of questions from parents about the upcoming state assessments. My hope is, that the paragraphs below will provide you with a better sense of what CMAS is, and how we use the assessment data to analyze our school's achievement and growth data to make instructional adjustments to support each and every Studio student. I also want to assure you that the Studio staff will do everything possible to make the administration of assessments a comfortable learning experience by taking breaks and providing snacks before or after the test. Studio teachers will also be making appropriate adjustments to the instructional day and homework assignments during the testing window.

Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) are the new state assessments, which measure students' progress at the end of the school year in English language arts, math, science and social studies. CMAS features two new tests: tests developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to assess language arts and math, and Colorado-developed tests, which assess science and social studies. Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, House Bill 15-1323 added the requirement of a College Preparatory Exam for the 10th grade and the College Entrance Exam for the 11th grade. These tests are a part of CMAS. In the past, the College Entrance Exam was known as the ACT.

Adams 12 Superintendent Chris Gdowski (2015, para. 1 & 2) stated: Monitoring student learning through a variety of assessments is essential to ensuring your student's success. Throughout the course of the school year, our teachers closely monitor what our students are learning and where they need additional support or enrichment opportunities. This is done through observation, asking questions and classroom assessments. Teachers make meaningful adjustments to instruction based on the knowledge that comes from these in-classroom, formative assessments.

Similarly, we rely on results from state assessments to make sure our students are making yearly progress to be college and career ready upon graduation. This annual data comes to us through the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS). This information allows each of us – students, parents and teachers – to see the progress kids are making over time. It also allows our schools to see how they are doing in meeting the needs of our students, especially as compared to other schools. Finally, these assessment results help us monitor our district's ability to raise the bar for all students and close the achievement gap for groups of students who have historically underperformed their peers. <http://www.adams12.org/node/6416>

On a personal note, this is a great opportunity for our students to demonstrate their learning! Our leadership team and School Accountability Committee (SAC) look forward to analyzing the data, and making appropriate instructional adjustments to support our entire student body. Please keep in mind during past state mandated administrations, if a school didn't have 95% participation or higher, the school would drop one performance level, and that could be devastating to a school's sustainability. Also, it is important to point out that parent websites use school's data to grade school's performance. It is critical to help support the school's data and increase enrollment of interested families at The Studio School. A low grade on a parent website could hinder a parent from checking out our amazing school, and decrease the viability of our school's programming.

If you have any questions or concerns about the testing, please feel free to call me at 720-972-3623. I would love to discuss your concerns with you and support your child's instructional as well as social/emotional needs during the CMAS Assessment Window.

Thank you again for your continued trust and support!

Best,

Sharla Kaczar, Principal

