

February 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Despite school closings due to a very snowy January and February, Unity East continues to *Quest for the Best in 2010*. Please make it part of your routine to send students with boots and extra socks as we will go outside as often as we are able. Snow pants are also encouraged as we will most likely have snow on the ground for quite awhile.

Unity East is preparing for the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT) which will take place the first week of March beginning March 2nd. ISAT tests are given at third, fourth, and fifth grades. The ISAT primarily measures achievement in mathematics, reading, and sometimes writing and/or science depending upon the grade level. The assessments are snapshots of how children perform as both individuals and as a group when compared to other children in the state. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a federal law which requires districts and individual schools to meet a benchmark in mathematics and reading each year which is called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The State of Illinois uses the ISAT as the sole indicator of AYP for public schools attended by students in third through eighth grades. While Unity East has enjoyed a history of meeting AYP, each year the percentage of students required to meet the AYP benchmark raises as per the federal guideline. **This year AYP is set at 77.5%**. Failure to meet AYP can result in negative consequences for schools and districts. Scores for both individual schools and the district as a whole are reported on the Illinois School Report Card.

Unity East has been preparing for ISAT testing throughout the year by providing your child with a quality education that addresses Illinois State Learning Standards. Additionally, the work doesn't begin at third grade but rather is more of a scaffold throughout a child's learning experiences beginning with the primary grades. What can parents do to help?

- Encourage your child's learning and participation in the classroom.
- Ensure that your child arrives to school on time.
- Avoid unnecessary absences.

This semester our Parent Communication Night is scheduled for Thursday, March 18, 2010. This evening offers a special opportunity for parents to view their child's growth and accomplishments. Teachers have collected work throughout the year and will showcase the progress of each child with an individual portfolio. Your child will come with you to the event and will have the opportunity to share his/or her portfolio with you in the classroom. Your child's teacher will be available to answer questions and share in your child's success with you! **Our Portfolio Celebration will be from 5:30-7:30 PM.**

If you would prefer to have a traditional conference, we also have time set aside for those meetings too.

Traditional conferences can be scheduled with your child's teacher from 3:00-5:30 and from 7:30-8:30 PM. If you do not request a traditional conference we plan for you and your child to come to Unity East for portfolio sharing from 5:30-7:30 PM.

A few calendar reminders: Casimir Pulaski Day – March 1st – No School; Early dismissal at 11:15 AM on March 18th; No school for students on Friday, March 19th.

Thank you to parents and students for all of the delightful Valentine cards and yummy treats. You made my day very sweet!

Best regards,

Laura Fitzgerald
Principal