



Richmond Community Schools

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September 4, 2019

Dear Parents and Stakeholders of the Richmond Community,

Today the Indiana Department of Education will release the scores from the state's latest version of a standardized test called ILEARN. The results of ILEARN indicated lower achievement levels across the state and for Richmond Community Schools in both English/language arts and math. ILEARN measures student achievement and growth, however the scores released do not include student growth data. A dip in scores can be expected when transitioning from one assessment to another, but it is still frustrating as the scores do not reflect the hard work of our teachers and students. As a district we believe in continuous quality growth and achievement for our students. Richmond Community Schools uses the NWEA assessment to measure how much students grow academically from fall to winter and finally to spring. Responsive accountability data is valuable and useful for educators. Our teachers can adjust instruction throughout the year and focus on students' needs at multiple times throughout the year, not several months after a student has left a grade level. The ILEARN assessment and the predecessor ISTEP do not offer information timely enough to help guide instruction and make instructional decisions during the time period the assessment is administered. The state of Indiana continues to allocate millions of dollars annually for an assessment that does not provide an accurate assessment of our students' academic achievement or of the performance of our teachers and administrators. While we will continue to disaggregate ILEARN data and look to improve, Richmond Community Schools will continue to focus on overall student growth.

As the Superintendent of Richmond Community Schools, I am pleased that Governor Holcomb and many of our legislators are recommending and supporting a "one-year pause" to prevent these scores from impacting school grades and teacher evaluations. I am also going a step further and joining other Indiana Superintendents calling on our legislators and our governor to review the practice of evaluating schools and teachers based on standardized tests. This pause should empower our state to look at the value of this current practice. There are better ways to evaluate the effectiveness of our schools. We should utilize data that reflects educating the whole child. It is time, as a state, that we have conversations about more efficient ways to collect data so our teachers can use the information to impact their approach to teaching our students. These conversations must include educators. We, Richmond Community Schools, do not shy away from accountability, but we do oppose a system that is broken and has never assessed what it was intended to assess. We can do better and we must do better!

Sincerely,

Dr. Todd Terrill
Superintendent of Schools
Richmond Community Schools