January 29, 2013

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services along with the district's Special Education Parent Advisory Group, C.H.I.L.D., would like to bring to your attention some proposed changes to accommodations for state testing which you have an opportunity to comment on by **February 4, 2013**.

As you may be aware, the state of New Jersey recently adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as a foundation for instruction designed to establish common learning expectations across our nation. To align state testing to the Common Core State Standards, the NJ Department of Education will be changing standardized testing from the NJ ASK (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge) to the PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). At present, the PARCC is being written, and is expected to be in place for the 2013-2014 school year.

As a result of this transition, parents, and the community at large, have a unique opportunity to comment on two draft policies related to accommodations for students with disabilities. Currently, two accommodations, which will have specific eligibility criteria, and will be limited to students who meet this strict criterion, have been put forth for public comment:

- The proposed reading access accommodation will allow the passages, test items and answer choices on the English language arts/literacy assessment to be read to students who have a specific disability that severely limits or prevents them from accessing printed text or have not yet learned Braille.

- The proposed calculator policy will allow students who have a specific disability that severely limits or prevents them from calculating single digit numbers (0-9) without the use of a calculator to use one for all items on the math assessment that measure fluency (grades 3-6). Math fluency measures the specific mathematical skill of calculation without the use of a calculation device.

We urge you to take the time to read the draft for these accommodations at: http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-releases-draft-accommodations-policies-public-comment and to submit your opinion, as to whether these accommodations target the right population, via the survey, which can be found at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?fromEmail=true&formkey=dFByQ3dSbVN5aExiZ2R3M

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PARCC is accepting surveys through Monday, February 4, 2013. For more information about PARCC, please refer to PARCC's website: www.parcconline.org . Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact either Libby Skinner via lskinner@veronaschools.org or 973-572-2029, ext. 7512 or C.H.I.L.D. via info@veronachild.org

Sincerely,

Libby Skinner
Director of Special Services

Norma Francullo
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