

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back! Hopefully you took some time to connect with family and friends over the summer and enjoy some relaxation before heading back to school. As we start the new school year, I want to first reflect on last year and thank you for your tremendous dedication to the students in [insert district or school name]. I continue to be impressed by your passion and hard work.

I'm also proud of the work we've done as a [district/school] to implement the Common Core State Standards. The thought and planning that goes on behind the scenes as we transition to the new standards and rethink what and how we teach is no small feat! Our students are benefiting significantly from your efforts to stretch their learning in new and more challenging ways.

Gone are the days where students merely memorize and “do math” or read and recall facts. Our new standards require students to be able to explain the concepts behind the math and move beyond basic comprehension of text. Students must be able to deeply analyze text, weigh sources of information, and cite evidence. The knowledge and skills that are required in the standards and that your instruction is developing will prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow.

I have high hopes for what our students will be learning and accomplishing this year, but their success depends on your guidance and expertise. While we know that our new standards expect more of our students, the standards also require teachers to rethink how they teach and what they expect from their students.

As we continue to focus on the new standards, it is important that you communicate often with parents about how the standards are transforming your classrooms and the success you are seeing with their children. Our community of parents needs to learn about the changes in learning, the building of critical skills, and the deepening of knowledge that the standards require and that you are dedicated to advancing every day in your classes. Help parents understand that the standards are merely expectations, though rigorous expectations, of what students need to know and be able to do to be ready for the next step, the next grade, and ultimately, college or career.

[Add any district/school specific work happening around standards implementation, especially professional development.]

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions. As always, I am open to your feedback. Your involvement and continued dedication is critical to our success. Thanks again for all the dedication you put into this important work and to helping our students succeed.  
Sincerely,

**SUPERINTENDENT OR PRINCIPAL NAME**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT OR SCHOOL NAME**