

August 29, 2016

Dear Upper Mississippi Academy (UMA) Families,

UMA is dedicated to providing all students with an authentic learning experience so that each child can be successful in school and have maximum opportunities in life. As a school, we continue to examine data and reflect on our teaching as we strive to improve our outcomes for each student.

In the Fall of 2015, UMA was designated as a Continuous Improvement School due to our lower than desired 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCA reading scores. As a school, we implemented measures to improve reading literacy by integrating reading across the school. Although we are not a test driven school, we were pleased to see that our middle school composite reading scores were higher than the State average in 2015-2016 and had grown by over 7 points in the past two years.

As we examined State data at the end of 2015-2016, we were less pleased with our math MCA scores. As a result we made several changes going into this school year including:

- Teaching math every day for 45 minutes instead of having math taught every other day for 90 minutes
- Forming a stronger and more cohesive math department and team by hiring three new math teachers and having additional math support provided by our SpEd staff.
- Improving the delivery of math by linking math skills and concepts to real life applications
- Increasing the use of math in other disciplines.
- Providing online PLATO math as an option to students/families to practice skills outside of school.

We believe our planned increased integration of our experiential learning pathways across all the curriculum will advance each student's math and reading literacy as well as develop their ability to discuss and problem solve complex problems.

We want to increase parent engagement as we move forward to make UMA a great school for all. We are planning several focus groups and events over the year where parents can learn and engage in this process. The initial topics in planning are:

- Connecting math outside of school
- PLATO math
- UMA Mission
- Pathways Planning

We know that not all parents can come to every event. You are always welcome to setup a private meeting with the Executive Director or Dean of Students as we strive to meet all students' needs.

Sincerely,

Harry Adler  
Executive Director