March 10, 2017

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2015-16 educational progress for the Lansing STEM Academy. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school’s report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Principal Ellen Beal for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website https://goo.gl/3TxXbz or you may review a copy in the main office at your child’s school.

For the 2016-17 year, no new Priority or Focus schools were named; some Priority or Focus schools did exit their status because they met the exit criteria. New Reward schools were identified using school rankings and Beating the Odds information. A Focus school is one that has a large achievement gap between the highest and lowest achieving 30% of schools. A Priority school is one whose achievement and growth is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. A Reward school is one that has achieved one or more of the following distinctions: top 5% of schools on the Top-to-Bottom School Rankings, top 5% of schools making the greatest gains in achievement (improvement metric), or “Beating the Odds” by outperforming the school’s predicted ranking and/or similar schools. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases no label is given. At this time, Lansing STEM Academy has not received any of these designations from the State of Michigan.

Lansing STEM Academy faces two major challenges that impact student enrollment and available resources. First, due to increased competition from district magnet and neighboring charter schools, our school has experienced a decline in enrollment every year since becoming a Pre – K – 8 building in 2011. This has resulted in a reduction in available funding from both general fund and at-risk sources. As a result, the administration and School Improvement Team has to spend available resources more efficiently and utilize staffing more effectively.
Second, our school is in a transition from a STEM focus to a performing arts academy. Voters approved a bond proposal in May of 2016 that will result in significant renovation to the building. Lansing STEM Academy will become Dwight Rich Academy in the fall of 2017 and will serve students in grades Pre-K – Sixth grade. Eventually, the current performing arts school (Pleasant View) in the district will combine with our school to become a visual and performing arts academy for the district.

At the same time, Lansing STEM Academy appeals to families with students at several grade levels who want the convenience of having all of their children in one school and as a “legacy” magnet, still provides district wide busing to all students regardless of their home district. We have a full time nurse that serves both our general education and special education students with a strong emphasis on physical fitness and nutrition programming.

At STEM we have maximized our resources to provide ongoing support to boost academic achievement and ensure that our students are at grade level in both reading and math. We have added a half time literacy teacher to focus on students in grades K- 2nd grade. Students in grades K- 3rd grade receive specialized literacy intervention three times a week. We have also implemented the Go Math series recently adopted by the Lansing School District that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

State law requires that we also report additional information:

1. As Lansing STEM Academy does not have a designated attendance area, parents may complete an application at PACE or enroll students at the building site. Most students are accepted based on availability of space at each grade level.

2. Lansing STEM Academy is currently rewriting the School Improvement Plan utilizing the new MDE template which will reflect changing proficiency goals as well as available financial resources.

3. Parents can access district pacing guides for Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies on the district website for each grade level. Each pacing guides is aligned with common core state standards.

4. Student progress is measured in Math and Reading three times a year using the AIMSWeb testing system. Students are tested in math concepts and computation and reading fluency and comprehension to determine if additional support is needed in grades K- 8. In addition, K – 3rd grade students are given the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) test to determine if students are reading at grade level. Based on the fall scores for both AIMS Web and DRA, our focus for literacy has been on our early elementary students, especially second grade. Both assessments revealed that only a third of students are proficient in reading. Identified students in grades 4 – 8 are
provided Read 180, a technology based literacy intervention, on a daily basis. This is in addition to the classroom curriculum and instruction. All students will be tested one more time in May to determine the students who have achieved benchmark or grade level for the school year.

5. We had 50% of parents/guardians attend our fall Parent/Teacher conferences.

Lansing STEM Academy is well positioned to meet the challenges ahead because of its committed veteran staff and the support of our families and their students. We have a rich, diverse school culture dedicated to mission of helping all of our students fulfill their academic potential. We welcome parents and guardians to visit our school to check out our programming and to see what we have to offer for their child.

Sincerely,

Ellen M. Beal, Principal
Lansing STEM Academy