



Principal's Message – September 2016

For Parent/Teacher meetings we will have several breakout sessions, a ballot for those that have expressed interest in serving on the Land Trust Committee as well as being able to meet with the teachers. I want to remind everyone that we are a school-wide Title I school which is a federally funded program to help students achieve proficiency on state academic standards (primarily in Reading/Language and Mathematics). We reach the school-wide status when 35% of our students qualify for fee waivers or free/reduced lunch. Both the school and the students benefit if a family qualifies for the waiver. If you think you qualify, please apply. If you qualify and want to pay your students fees that is wonderful, but the benefit to our school in having all eligible students/families apply is quite large. We have been a high performing Title I school for many years and will continue to be in the future.

The results of the SAGE testing and the school accountability reports will be made public this month. We have performed well in the past and have been one of the highest performing schools in the state of Utah. We did experience a number of parents who opted out their student of the SAGE summative (year-end) testing last year. As a school receiving federal funding we needed 95% of our students to complete testing. We were at the 91% level which will be reflected in the accountability reports. Since the initiation of the letter grade system AMES has earned an "A". Many of our AMES teachers have their students performing at the very top of the state in terms of SAGE proficiency and Growth. Feel free to ask them or me about the SAGE data. Here is the language from the Utah State Board of Education regarding the change in how letter grades are assigned.

"In accordance with [state law](#), grades for Utah schools are scheduled to be released on September 15. One [provision](#) of that law states, however, that in a year in which at least 65 percent of schools receive an A or a B, that the endpoint range for grades be raised by 5 percent. That bill was part of a negotiated agreement between legislators and State Board of Education Members to avoid changing the grading scale every year.

Utah State Board of Education calculations show that 74 percent of elementary schools and 66 percent of high schools would receive either an A or B this year, triggering the 5 percent increase rule and effectively lowering the grade for several schools. The grade change, of course, does not alter the proficiency and growth of student performance over the course of the year. It only affects the letter grade associated with the performance."

Thank you,

Brett Wilson
Principal and CEO
Academy for Math, Engineering and Science
bwilson@ames-slc.org – 801.278.9460