Dear West Lab Parents/Guardians,

In 2011, West Lab’s administration and PTO collaborated to host a viewing of the award-winning documentary Race to Nowhere at the Cosford Cinema at the University of Miami. Last year, we invited teachers and parents to attend a screening of Beyond Measure (the follow up documentary to Race to Nowhere). Both films challenged West Lab’s stakeholders to analyze how we approach preparing our students for academic success and the value of traditional home learning assignments.

Our teachers, along with administration, have dedicated countless faculty meetings and professional learning community meetings to reflect on our current practices and how we can ensure that we are not only meeting the academic needs of our students but are also meeting their emotional and social needs.

West Lab offers a high-quality and rigorous curriculum and instructional program. Beyond that, our children work very hard during the school day. We are confident that what we do at school is preparing them to become life-long learners.

This school year, many of our teachers will be approaching home learning differently. Many of you will notice a significant decrease in the amount of work sent home for your child to complete. Your child’s teachers will individualize what is sent home to study and/or practice. When there are home learning assignments, they will be assigned after careful thought and have a specific purpose.

Here’s what we know:

- Every student is different and every lesson will produce different outcomes
- A one-size fits all approach to teaching and home learning does not address students’ specific needs
- Home learning assignments should be specific to what an individual child needs (review, remediation and/or enrichment)
- **Quality, unstructured family time will do more to support a child’s academic, social and emotional development than additional classwork at home**

We encourage you to read with your child(ren) every night. Remember that any home learning/review sent home should be completed by your child with your **support and encouragement**. Home learning should not infringe on much-needed family time and should not cause stress to the family.

We consider the parent/school partnership to play a pivotal role in developing healthy children. Please know that our teachers want you to remain involved and informed. A reduction in the amount of home learning will not change this.

Thank you in advance for your support as we go through this paradigm shift. And remember…childhood stress is real. There is a direct link between academic success and emotional health.

We look forward to another successful school year at West Lab.

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