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# The Smyser Sentinel

An ISBE Honor Roll/Spotlight School  
An Autonomous Management Performance School

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## The ISAT Countdown Begins

From March 1-12th, Illinois children in grades 3-8 will be administered the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). Academic areas assessed are reading, math, science (grades 4 and 7 only), and writing (grades 3, 5, 6, and 8 only). The purpose of the test is to measure student learning relative to Illinois academic goals, standards, and indicators.

The ISAT is a complex test requiring takers to utilize multiple strategies rooted in high-order thinking. The reading test is composed of comprehension, short answer, and extended response components. Students are expected to read lengthy passages (usually non-fiction), answer several multiple choice questions, and express their ideas/thoughts in words. The short answer and extended response components are assessed using a rubric.

In math, students are expected to solve multiple step word problems and complete extended response problems that require a strategy, solution, and explanation. Students in grade 3-8 are expected to use a ruler. In grades 4-8, calculators are to be used. Also, formula cards will be made available for children in grades 7 and 8.

Smyser teachers are working extremely hard addressing Illinois and CPS learning standards. Through daily instruction and Benchmark assessment data, we are constantly seeking ways to make sure 100% of our student meet/exceed state standards. Please support us by monitoring your child's daily homework. Also, practice ISAT questions and booklets can be downloaded from the Illinois State Board of Education website at [www.isbe.state.il.us](http://www.isbe.state.il.us).

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Box Tops for Education Top Ten Room Semester 1 Leaders	
214	1288
206	1275
208	971
101	890
300	827
204	701
409	609
202	499
504	491
302	485

## Hearing and Vision Screening: February 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>

Vision and hearing screenings are vital components of the learning process for students. These screenings help identify vision and hearing problems that may negatively impact learning. Effective January 1, 2008, a new law mandates that all children enrolling in kindergarten in a public, private or parochial school and any student enrolling for the first time in a public, private or parochial school shall have an eye examination. A vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo the vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous twelve months. This documentation must be provided to the school by October 15th or upon the student's enrollment. The State of Illinois mandates screenings in the following grades:

- Hearing: Pre-k, kindergarten, first, second, and third grades; students new to CPS; teacher referrals; and students receiving special education services.
- Vision: Pre-K, kindergarten, second, and eighth grades; teacher referrals; and students receiving special education services. Note: Kindergarten students providing proof of eye examination do not require a screening.

You will be notified only if your child fails this screening. However, even though your child may pass this vision screening, it does not evaluate the health of the eye nor the necessary visual skills essential for successful academic achievement. There, we recommend that you make an appointment for a comprehensive eye examination with an eye doctor for your child in addition to this required screening.

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## 11 Ways to Help Your Child Prepare for Tests

To help children prepare adequately for tests (whether teacher-made or standardized), you can do several things to provide support and create a positive test-taking experience.

1. The best way to prepare for tests is to study, know the work, and take the right classes.
2. If your child is nervous at test time, ask his/her teacher for tips on helping his/her relax.
3. Make sure that your child is in school during the testing sessions. Do not plan any doctor or dental appointments on test dates.
4. Make sure that you are aware of your child's performance and that you can help interpret the results when they become available.
5. Remember to keep well-informed about your child's tests. Know how test results are used, and how they will affect your child's placement in school.
6. If there are major differences between standardized test scores and school grades, find out why.
7. Encourage your child to study over a period of time rather than "cram" the night before.
8. Encourage your child to listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and to ask questions about any directions that are unclear.
9. See that your child gets his/her regular amount of sleep before the tests and is well-rested.
10. Make sure that your child eats his/her usual breakfast on the day of the test. Hunger can detract from a good test performance.
11. Encourage your child to do his/her best.

## CPS Local School Council Elections

LSC Elections: LSC Election Nomination forms are available on-line via the CPS/Smyser website or by visiting the school. Elections are held on the second semester Report Card Pick-Up Day in April of every even-numbered year. Parents and Community Representatives are elected, while Teacher Representatives are appointed by the Board of Education. A non-binding advisory poll of faculty and staff is also held on the second semester Report Card Pick-Up Day in April of every even-numbered year to determine the preferences of faculty and staff regarding the appointment of teachers to the LSC. The results are sent to the Board, which will appoint two teacher representatives to each LSC.

Term of Office: Parent, community, and teacher representatives serve a two-year term beginning July 1 after each election and ending June 30, two years later. Student representatives serve a one-year term beginning July 1 and ending June 30 the following year.

Candidate Nomination Form: Important Note: This form and its accompanying documents must be submitted to the office of the principal (or designee) of the school in which the candidate is running no later than 3:00 p.m., March 11, 2010.

## CPS Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements

Parents are reminded that physical examination and immunization requirements for Chicago public school students are as follows: Students entering kindergarten, sixth, and ninth grade are required to submit proof of physical examination and current immunizations to their local school by October 15th of each year. If you have already submitted a completed Certificate of Child Health Examination Form please accept our appreciation. If you have not met this requirement please submit a completed Certificate of Child Health Examination Form immediately to avoid exclusion. In addition, kindergarteners, and any student enrolling for the first time in any grade, are now required to have a full version examination or their report card may be withheld.

Students entering kindergarten, second, and sixth grade must have their dental examination completed by May 15th of each school year or their report card may be withheld.

If your child has not received the required examination and your family does not have health care insurance, places contact the Chicago Public School Children and Family Benefit Unit (CFBU). You may be eligible for Allkids or Family Care. Contact CFBU at 773-553-1809.

**Once again, Smyser will be participating in the BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION PROGRAM. The symbol for BOX TOPS can easily be found on many name brand household items. The students are asked to collect the BOX TOPS and donate the tops to their teacher or classroom collection box. The website provides a list of hundreds of products that have the symbol, as well as coupons for their sponsored products. Look for announcements from our PTO.**

# Study Island- A Great Way to Prepare for ISAT

*Are you working with you child at home?*

*Do you want your child to score higher on ISAT?*

*Is your child meeting his/her Study Island classroom goals?*

Since September, our school has been using a great resource for preparing our students for ISAT. If you have Internet access, your child can access Study Island from home as well as school to prepare for ISAT. Since the Study Island state assessment program is completely web-based, students can access it from any computer with an Internet connection and a standard web browser. Results from student study sessions are recorded and made available to the teachers. This includes results from sessions completed at home. The program is divided into sections based on subject (math, reading, etc.). Each section is made up of 10 to 25 topics, which contain about 20 to 25 questions each. Most topics are accompanied by a lesson, which includes some brief information about the material covered by the questions in the topics. It is helpful to view the lesson before answering the questions in the topic.

## Class of 2010 Picture Day

Attention 8th Grade Students! Van Gogh School Photographers will be at Smyser on Friday, February 5th. Students should dress as follows:

### BOYS

Should wear a shirt and tie. Sport coat, suit or sweater is optional.

### GIRLS

Have your hair neatly arranged. Please avoid excessive make-up and unusual or new hairstyles. Turtleneck sweaters or high neck dresses should not be worn.

### ALL STUDENTS

All students will take both cap & gown and dress-up pictures. Be aware that slacks and skirts will show in some posing.

### PLEASE NOTE:

There will be a \$10 charge for picture retakes for any reason other than photographic errors. Retakes will be scheduled at the discretion of the school. Proofs will be sent home for your approval. You will cherish these portraits for many years to come. Please make the extra effort to prepare.

## CPS/Smyser Parent Portal

*Can't wait until progress reports come out? Do you want to regularly check your child's academic progress? Do you want to set-up text message "triggers"? Set-up your parent account today!*

The Parent Portal is a unique web-based tool that allows you to securely view your child's grades and attendance online. You can register to receive e-mail or text notifications when your child is absent or when his or her grades drop below a point you identify. Additionally, you will be able to communicate directly with your child's teachers, enhancing the opportunity for parent-teacher interaction. You will need your child's CPS ID number as well as your unique school-issued personal identification number (PIN) prior to creating an account. Please contact Mrs. Luczak or Mr. Beiza to learn how to obtain your PIN. To ensure the security of your child's records, PINs will not be issued over the phone or via email under any circumstance. A direct link to the Parent Connection login page has been added. Please go to the "web links" section on the lower right portion of the Smyser homepage.

## CPS/Smyser Culture of Caring: Haiti Relief

At the Chicago Public Schools, we seek to promote a culture of caring. We want to equip our students to be global citizens who know the value of helping others. In response to the crisis facing Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquakes there, we are offering the CPS/Smyser community an opportunity to lend a hand to people affected by the disaster. Smyser students, parents, family, friend, staff, and faculty are invited to contribute whatever they can- even quarter add up. Funds will be donated to the American Red Cross to support relief in Haiti so the people there can receive food, water, and medical care. Please join us in this effort to engage our students in an act of service to those in need by sending a donation with you student to school.



# February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6th Grade Fieldtrip	2 Election Day. 5/6 BB & GB vs. Reinberg.	3 Report Cards to be distributed.	4 7/8 GB vs. Sauganash. 7/8 BB vs. Haugan. 5/6 BB & GB at Reinberg.	5 Graduation pictures. NCLB Nutrition Workshop.	6
7	8 2nd grade fieldtrip. 7/8 BB vs. Edgebrook.	9 Grade 4 NAEP Testing. 5/6 BB & GB @ Garvy. Student Council pizza sale.	10 Spirit Day.	11 Development Day. No School. NCLB Nutrition Workshop.	12 Lincoln's Birthday. No School.	13
14	15 Presidents' Day. No School.	16 7/8 GB vs. Onahan.	17	18 5/6 GB & BB @ Norwood Park. 7/8 BB @ Sauganash.	19 No PreK classes.	20 5/6 GB & 7/8 BB @ Edgebrook. 7/8 GB @ Sauganash.
21	22 7/8 BB @ Haugan.	23 5/6 BB & GB vs. Canty.	24 LSC meeting 6:15 PM. PTO meeting 7:15 PM.	25	26 CPS Blitz Inspection.	27
28						



Visit [www.smyser.org](http://www.smyser.org) for the latest updates, cafeteria menu, and school information.