

# The Smyser Sentinel

Main & Annex Buildings- 4310 N. Melvina

Primary Center- 6200 W. Patterson

"An O'Hare Network School"

## Non-Attendance is Not an Option

Attendance throughout the school year is a key component of academic success. Attendance enables academic improvement and enhancement. Each school day offers an opportunity for students to make academic progress and to interact with teachers and classmates. Frequent absences can cause students to fall behind in their studies, and miss out on valuable opportunities to connect with teachers and classmates.

It is important that **all students are in school every day**. The CPS Attendance and Truancy unit encourages students and parents to adhere to its motto: *Non-Attendance is Not an Option (N.A.N.O)*. "Attendance is not an option, it is a necessity for students to succeed in today's society," said James Deanes, Director of the Attendance and Truancy unit at CPS. He added that parents are role models in their child's life, which is why their commitment to ensuring their child maintains a strong attendance record is extremely important.

Parents are reminded to closely monitor their child's school attendance. Remember that absences can be excused for the following reasons: Student illness; Family emergency; Observation of a religious holiday; Death in the immediate family; Circumstances related to a student's health or safety. Any other absence is an unexcused, truant absence. Also remember that every absence, whether excused or unexcused, counts on a student's attendance record.

Recognizing the strong correlation between attendance and academic achievement, CPS rewards students who have excellent attendance records. Each spring, CPS sponsors a citywide perfect attendance banquet, which honors 8th and 12th grade graduates who have had four to 12 consecutive years of perfect attendance. In recent years, 8th grade graduates with eight years of perfect attendance and high school graduates with 12 years of perfect attendance have been recognized for their achievements with rewards (such as laptop computers). Also, Smyser has developed a local attendance award program to recognize and reward students who excel at attending school.

During the month of November, Ms. Lofton, Mr. Travlos, Mr. Beiza, and Ms. Portera will be contacting/visiting the families of chronically truant students to develop attendance improvement contracts. There is no question that attendance has a positive impact on the academic performance of students. If you have any questions regarding school attendance, please contact the [CPS Attendance and Truancy unit](#) at (773) 553-2180.

Smyser Accelerated School

Chicago, IL 60634

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[www.smyser.org](http://www.smyser.org)

Mr. Travlos, Principal

Mr. Beiza, Assistant Principal

Ms. Portera, Assistant Principal

## REPORT CARD PICK-UP

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16th

12-3 PM & 4-6 PM

## PARENT/GUARDIAN ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY

Parents and guardians are invited to visit our wonderful school and meet our superior staff. Report Card Pick-Up is a great way to review your child's progress and support classroom instruction. Also, the office will be collecting any outstanding workbook fees. This year, I expect 100% of our parents/families to participate.

*Wishing You a Wonderful and Peaceful Thanksgiving Holiday!*

## Helping Your Child Succeed in School

### Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.

- ◆ Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.

### Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary are available.

- ◆ Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.

### Help your child with time management.

- ◆ Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.

### Be positive about homework.

- ◆ Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.

### When your child does homework, you do homework.

- ◆ Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.

### When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.

- ◆ Giving answers means that your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.

### When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.

- ◆ Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.

### If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.

- ◆ Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.

### Stay informed. Talk with your child's teacher.

- ◆ Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.

### Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.

- ◆ Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.

### Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.

- ◆ Let your child take a short break if he is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.

### Reward progress in homework.

- ◆ If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.

Source: US Department of Education

## Support Our Wonderful PTO

This year we hope to have 100% of our faculty and families join the Smyser Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). This hard working group composed of parents, teachers, and the principal is all about working together to provide the BEST educational environment for our children and to promote open communication between parents, teachers, and administration. Join our team and help us make a difference! PTO membership dues are \$3.00 minimum per family (other monetary donations are always welcome).

In October our Smyser PTO sponsored many events: Halloween Monster Bash; Pumpkin Carving Contest; and Smyser Spirit Day gear. Your support and dedication are remarkable. Your hard work and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated. You're the best!

## \$100 Materials Fee

Children in grades K-8 are required to pay a \$100 work book fee. The money is used to purchase consumable materials in language arts, math, social studies and science. Workbooks are the sole possession of the child. Information regarding payment has been sent home. Please submit your child's payment as soon as possible. Our funding has been reduced and this fee is necessary for us to continue to provide our children with high quality educational services and materials.



## **In the 2011-12 school year, Chicago Public Schools will be launching a multi-year initiative aimed at establishing a coherent curriculum and assessment system based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).**

In order to better aid teachers and teacher teams in making decisions about instruction and planning, an assessment aligned to the Common Core Standards will be delivered to all 2nd-8th graders this year. This assessment will provide a yardstick to help teachers gauge proficiency towards CCSS over time, for a subset of reading and math standards.

Currently, each state has a separate set of education standards, lists of skills that students are expected to do by the time they graduate each grade. However, in response to concerns about American student achievement and just how prepared students are for college and careers, education leaders in 48 states, along with the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), have written a set of standards for student across the U.S. The common core state standards were released in 2010. Now, 44 states are working to implement them by 2013-2014. Here's what you should know and how to help your child prepare for the common core:

### **The Common Core Standards are State-Driven**

- ◆ The common core state standards are a set of learning skills that all American students should achieve, not a federal curriculum. They set the benchmarks and guidelines for what each student should learn, not how or what teachers teach.
- ◆ In general, standards set a progression of skills that students learn as they move through school. Kindergartners work on phonics and letter sounds, while eighth graders work on building vocabulary and reading fluency.

### **Students will Delve Deeper into Core Concepts**

- ◆ One complaint about separate state standards was the concern from teachers that students were learning about too many topics in a year to fully understand them, says Carrie Phillip, CCSSO program director of common core standards implementation. The common core state standards, on the other hand, focus on the most important topics that students need to know. In math, that means that students focus on really understanding numbers in elementary school before they start to apply that understanding of numbers to data in middle school.

### **The Reading Standards will Get More Difficult**

- ◆ As the common core is implemented, students will be expected to read more difficult text sooner, and discuss what they read at a more complex level. For example, instead of pulling out individual text elements, such as characters, plot, and setting, students will be reading or listening to various stories, and will compare stories using their understanding of text elements.

### **Focus on Informational Text**

- ◆ To prepare students for college-level work, there will be more of a focus on informational and expository text. In middle school especially, students will be reading informational text, including original documents, from the Declaration of Independence to presidential speeches.

### **Assessments Will Change**

- ◆ Compared to current achievement tests, common core assessments will likely be more difficult. Ideally, instead of multiple choice tests, students will be analyzing and synthesizing information, writing essay responses, and answering in-depth questions to show how much they understand.
- ◆ The common core standards were designed with the workplace in mind. So, students will be working on taking the role of scientists, historians, researchers, and more. For example, says Bill McCallum, co-author of the standards and professor at the University of Arizona, the standards "describe what a mathematical practitioner does, make sense of problems, preserve and solve them, and critique the reasoning of others."
- ◆ Parent Tip: As your child works through his homework, ask him how someone might use what he's working on in "real life." Help connect thinking in school to thinking at work by explaining how you solve problems, or use math every day.

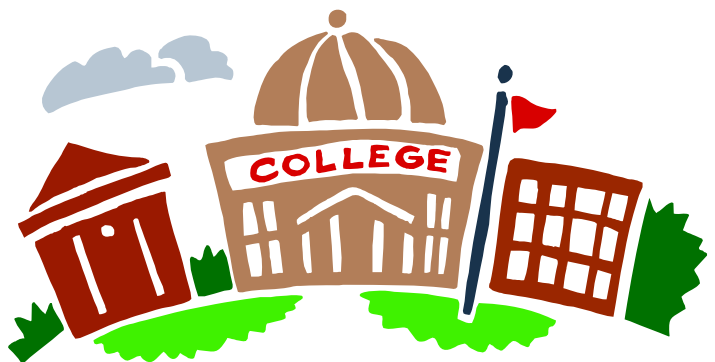
As the common core state standards start to be implemented in schools, there will be some changes, but many things will stay the same. The most important aspect, as always, is to stay in contact with your child's teacher/school to find out how you can support this latest educational advancement at home.

For more information, visit the website below:

[http://www.isbe.net/common\\_core/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/default.htm)

<http://www.corestandards.org>

<http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>



# November 2011

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

ASAS Elite programming begins  
October 31st.

1 Girls Volleyball @ Bridge.

2

3 Girls Volleyball vs. Belding.

4 No Prekindergarten.

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8 SES & Homework Clubs to begin.

9 Spirit Day. 5th grade fieldtrip to the North Shore Theater.

10 Professional Development Day. No school for students.

11 Veterans Day. No school for students.

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16 Report Card Pick-Up. No school for students.

17 Spirit Day. PreK 3rd shift parent conferences.

18 Professional Development Day. No school for students.

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21

22 301 field-trip to the Grove.

23 302 field-trip to the Grove. Spirit Day.

24 Thanksgiving Holiday.

25 Thanksgiving Holiday.

26

27

28 300 field-trip to the Grove.

29 306 field-trip to the Grove.

30

Smyser Music Department  
Poinsettia Fundraiser  
11/14-11/30