

LaGrange Highlands District 106

Superintendent's Newsletter -- Dr. Patricia Viniard

"And now we welcome the new year,
full of things that have never been!"

Rainer Maria Rilke



New Way of Measuring Illinois Schools Coming!

Since 2002, U.S. schools have worked under the parameters of "NCLB," or the **No Child Left Behind Act**. In 2015, this act was replaced by the **Every Student Succeeds Act**, or "ESSA." Illinois' ESSA Plan was recently approved at the Federal level. *How will Illinois schools be evaluated under the new ESSA requirements?*

For K-8 schools/districts, there will be two types of evaluative indicators:

- **ACADEMIC INDICATORS**, including...
 - Student performance on state assessments (English Language Arts, Math, Science)
 - Student growth, from one year to the next, on those assessments
 - The proficiency of students who receive English Language services

- **STUDENT QUALITY INDICATORS**, including...
 - Climate Survey results (the "5Essentials Survey" or something similar)
 - Indicators still in development (e.g., Fine Arts)
 - *Chronic Absenteeism student data

* **What is "Chronic Absenteeism"?** You may be surprised to learn a student who misses an average of only two days per month throughout a school year—**including EXCUSED absences**—will be identified as having Chronic Absenteeism! Because student absenteeism is closely linked to school success, a student's comfort level and feeling connected to school, and high school failure/drop out rates, the U.S. Department of Education recently called chronic absenteeism a "hidden educational crisis." In addition to reporting student absenteeism data, Illinois' schools will be required to identify students who need "individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans."

At Highlands, we are monitoring student absences more closely than ever! We are alerting parents when a student's number of absences is high. Our goal is to work with parents to ensure **every** student has **excellent** school attendance. Regardless of the reason(s) for frequent non-valid absences—a family difficulty, student school refusal, and/or student frequently reporting a physical ailment (headache, stomachache)—caring Highlands' administrators will work to assist and problem solve solutions!

"Children who are not taken to school because of some family logistics or who meet little resistance from parents when they want to stay home not only are on record for achieving below their peers, but they also develop the lifelong habit of irregular attendance." Illinois Attendance Commission

January/February

"Quick Takes"

January 8

Welcome Back to School from Winter Break!

January 10

Late Start for Students (9:05 a.m.)

Educational Foundation Meeting (7:30 p.m.)

January 12

End of Second Quarter

January 13 – 6:00 p.m.

PTC Variety Show!

January 15

No School – Martin Luther King Day

January 16 – 7:00 p.m.

Board of Education Meeting

January 20 – 7:00 p.m.

Foundation's Trivia Night

January 23 – 9:00 a.m.

PTC Meeting

January 26

No School for Students– Teacher Institute Day

February 1 – 7:00 p.m.

Third Grade Music Concert

February 7

Late Start for Students (9:05 a.m.)

Educational Foundation Meeting (7:30 p.m.)

February 14 – 7:00 p.m.

7th and 8th Grade Chorus Concert

February 15 – 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

February 16

Early Dismissal for students – 11:45 a.m.

February 19

No School – Presidents' Day

February 22 -- 7:00 p.m.

First Grade Music Concert

One of the fundraisers sponsored by the Educational Foundation allows parents to purchase the right to use prime parking spots at Highlands.

PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THESE SPOTS!!

(They are easy to identify because each is marked with a sign like the one at right.)

Thank you for showing your respect to the Foundation and the parents who paid for the right to park in these spots.



HAVE YOU CONNECTED WITH HIGHLANDS YET ON SOCIAL MEDIA? STAY IN BETTER TOUCH (REMINDERS, SHOUT OUTS, CELEBRATIONS, SPECIAL MOMENTS, AND MORE) BY CONNECTING WITH US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!



2016 Illinois Science Assessment Results Received

In the spring of 2016, the Illinois State Board of Education administered a new science assessment to students in grades 5, 8, and high school. The assessment is based on the Illinois Science Standards, incorporating the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards). Because it was a new assessment, additional steps to validate scoring were required; however, state-funding issues delayed these from occurring. Illinois schools recently (finally) received the 2016 preliminary results, and Highlands' results were excellent:

Grade 5: 86% of students met standards! **Grade 8:** 91% of students met standards!

We anticipate receiving the 2017 results soon, and they will be shared as soon as they are available.

Concussion Reminder

Any concussion, even a mild one, is a brain injury that disrupts typical brain function. Even though many concussions are relatively mild and occur without loss of consciousness, if not recognized and managed appropriately, a concussion may result in serious, long-lasting complications. Following a concussion, an ongoing process of assessing and communication between school personnel and healthcare providers is critical. As required by law, the *Highlands' Concussion Oversight Team* has created "return to learn" and "return to play" protocols that are implemented on a customized basis to meet the needs of each child.

Winter activities (e.g., sledding, skiing, skating) can result in a blow to the head. If your child experiences a head injury over the winter break, in addition to seeking medical attention be sure to notify the Highlands School Nurse/Concussion Manager, Mrs. Karen Lippold. We are committed to working with parents to ensure every child's healthy brain functioning! (You can find the Highlands' Concussion Plan on the district's website.) Have a safe rest of the winter break!



Happy New Year, With Highlands' Pride,
Dr. Patricia Viniard