

Dear Families-

As we end our first trimester and ready ourselves for our upcoming trimester, I would like to take a moment to ask for your assistance. Sundahl has been experiencing many, many tardy/late students. Our first bell rings at 8:22 allowing students to begin instruction at 8:25 am. And believe me, our teachers begin instruction promptly at 8:25 and they do not stop until the final bell rings to dismiss students. That is one of the many amazing things about Sundahl. Teachers strive to fill each moment of your child's day with essential instruction. When a child is late, even by 5 minutes, they are a few steps off for the rest of the morning and wind up trying to catch up with the rest of the class as well as themselves.

What Sundahl has done to help you---We have opened our campus for students at 8:10 am and have supervisors to watch, care, and guide your children to class on time.

What you can do to help- Take advantage of the campus being open at 8:10 am and deliver your children to us well before the first bell. Trust me, the streets around Sundahl are open and there are no lines in the drop off area from 8:10- 8:20 am.

Unfortunately because of the overwhelming amount of tardies and lates that many students are amassing, we will be holding detention this trimester for those students whose tardies/lates are excessive. Thank you for your assistance and support in this area. I know that together we can make sure your children are at school on time and ready to learn.

Research is clear that students learn and mature most successfully when there is a close relationship and clear communication between the student, parent and teacher. Parent conferences at the end of the first trimester are one of the most important components of a strong communication plan. Teachers are expected to conduct these conferences in the fall of each year to inform parents of progress toward mastery of grade level content standards, performance expectations, and to clarify the latest standardized test results. Teachers also share information about general work habits, socialization, and behavior. Special needs and concerns specific to the individual student are discussed. If a student is at risk of retention, policies are explained and a remediation plan developed.

Parent conferences should be conducted within the two weeks before and one week after the end of the first trimester grading period which is November 9, 2007. Individual parent conferences should usually take about twenty minutes. Generally, parent conferences are one on one with a parent(s) and the teacher. Students are often included in the conference. Group conferences are sometimes held with several sets of parents and students for the students who are at or above grade level and not having the specific needs for a private conference. Group conferences are frequently student led conferences.

Occasionally, a modified and brief conference can be used for parents who are regularly in the classroom and have been in regular communication with the teacher. A recent SST or IEP meeting where the parent attended can be used in lieu of a regular parent conference if it has been conducted near the parent conference time. Finally, a phone call conference may be used as the very last resort to meet the unique scheduling needs of a parent or guardian.

Parents are asked to make every effort to attend scheduled conferences. Your input and insight is not only important but critical to our efforts to meet your child's needs. You know your child better than we ever will. We need you to share any information you have that will help us make your child successful in school.

Remember that Monday, November 12, 2007 is Veteran's Day and school will not be in session. School is also closed the week of Nov. 19-23 for Thanksgiving Break. Here is wishing you the happiest and most restful of holiday seasons.

Donna Chulos Hays