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District 301 Partners with Toys for Tots

Thanks to all who participated in our first Toys for Tots collection campaign! Students and staff in each of our buildings donated toys for needy children. On Friday, December 7th, CHS student leaders boarded a decorated bus and traveled to each building to collect the donations. In total we collected over a thousand toys! It was wonderful to see our students so excited about this project. A special thank you goes out to the District Leadership Team, Zandra McGuire, and all of the student leaders who made this a huge success.



Changes to Illinois School Report Card

The Illinois School Report Card has been a tool used by the Illinois State Board of Education to share with the public information about each Illinois school and district. This information includes how much each district spends per student, how many students are in the district or school, what the demographics are for each building and district, as well as how each school (and district as a whole) performs on standardized tests such as SAT and PARCC. Schools use this information to compare their performance with other districts and look for areas of success and areas where they need to grow. Additionally, many families look to the School Report Card when planning to move to a new school district. We all want our students to have an excellent education, and our positive School Report Card is part of what brings families to District 301.

This year the Illinois School Report Card went through some changes in order to better align with the Every Student Succeeds Act (which replaced No Child Left Behind) and the new Evidence-Based Funding formula now being used by the state of Illinois. It is important for our community to understand these changes and what it means for them.

Beginning this year, each school will be given one of four ratings - Exemplary, Commendable, Underperforming, or Lowest Performing. At the elementary and middle school level, these ratings are based on a formula that looks at six different factors, which include English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency, math proficiency, climate survey, EL progress to proficiency, student growth, and chronic absenteeism.

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Dr. Todd Stirn
Superintendent

Dr. Esther Mongan
Assistant Superintendent

District Contact Information

District Office
847.464.6005

Central High School
847.464.6030

Central Middle School
847.464.6000

Prairie Knolls Middle School
847.717.8100

Country Trails Elementary School
847.717.8000

Howard B. Thomas Grade School
847.464.6008

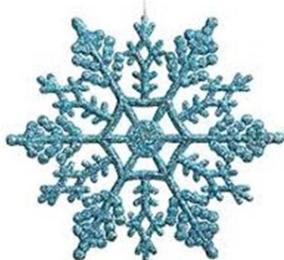
Lily Lake Grade School
847.464.6011

Prairie View Grade School
847.464.6014

Transportation Office
847.464.6052

Food Services
847.464.6043

Athletic Department
847.464.6038



5Essentials Survey—We Need Your Help!

Each year the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) conducts a survey of learning conditions in public schools. The 5Essentials Survey was developed by researchers at the University of Chicago and provides schools with data on five leading indicators for school improvement: effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environment, and ambitious instruction. The survey is open to teachers, parents, and students in 4th through 12th grade. Survey results will be released to principals and superintendents in June, and a summary of the results are reported on the Illinois School Report Card website at <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com>.

This year, the window for taking the 5Essentials Survey is December 11th through December 21st. We are asking all parents and guardians to visit <https://survey.5-essentials.org/illinois/survey/parent> to take the brief survey during this window. This is a great opportunity for our families to communicate with the District what they feel are our strengths as well as areas where we can improve. The results are carefully considered each year and changes are made in each building based upon the feedback we receive.

Thank you for taking the time to help us improve the educational experience for our students, teachers, and families!



Wake Up Call Parent Presentation

Central District 301, in partnership with the Kane County Juvenile Justice Council, will be hosting Wake Up Call, a powerful presentation for parents about substance abuse. This presentation is geared towards middle and high school parents and guardians and offers information about the signs and symptoms of teen drug and/or alcohol abuse and strategies for intervention. Included is a life-size exhibit of a teen's bedroom with more than 20 "red flags" that can signal drug or alcohol use and locations where teens may hide drugs.

Wake Up Call is presented by Your Choice To Live, Inc., a non-profit organization founded by individuals touched by teen substance abuse. You can learn more about Your Choice To Live, Inc. by visiting www.yourchoice-live.org.

This presentation will be held at Central High School on Wednesday, January 23rd at 6:30 p.m. In conjunction with this presentation, we will host a resource fair beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Central High School commons. Representatives from area agencies will be available to answer questions and offer resources relating to substance abuse and social-emotional issues.

This event is open to the community, and we encourage you to bring friends and family who may benefit from this presentation. Seats are limited and registration is required. Register for your free tickets by visiting <https://wakeupcallcentralhs.eventbrite.com>.



The winter break begins after school on Friday, December 21st, and continues through Friday, January 4th. School will resume on Monday, January 7th. Have a safe and enjoyable break!

Did You Know?

District 301 staff is always striving to improve the district website and other modes of communication with our families and community. Here are a few new pages we've added to our website this year:

- [Digital Bulletin Board](#) - Find flyers for community events and programs all in one location.
- [District 301 Podcasts](#) - Listen to podcasts produced by our Instructional Coaches and learn more about the great things happening in our district.
- [Parent Resources](#) - Find a number of resources you can access, from D301 resources, community resources, mental health resources, and School Shelf.

did you know ...

If you don't already, we encourage you to follow Central District 301 on social media. Search for Central School District 301 on Facebook and @Central301 on Twitter.

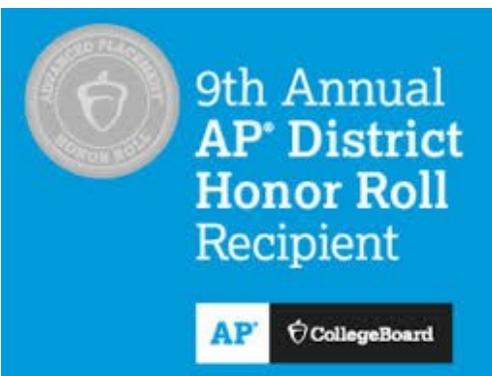
Do you have the District 301 mobile app? It's available for free in the App Store and Google Play. The app puts school and district calendars, news, contact information and more in the palm of your hands. It's even customizable so you get the information for the schools you want!

School Board Candidates Forum

Central District 301 is fortunate to have an involved and supportive community that provides support to our schools, staff and students. As the April 2, 2019 election nears, the Central 301 Parent Leadership Group, comprised of leaders from each district school, is pleased to host a School Board Candidates Forum. The forum will be held on Thursday, March 7, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Central High School. The current seven-member Board of Education has five open seats. Four of the seats are for a four-year term and one seat is for a two-year term. Additional information regarding the event will be shared on the district website as it becomes available. Please mark your calendar and join us at this valuable event.

Important DATE!

AP District Honor Roll



District 301 has been named to the 9th Annual AP District Honor Roll! Click [here](#) to read more about this honor on our district website.

The complete 9th Annual AP District Honor Roll can be found by clicking [here](#).

Changes to Illinois School Report Card

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At the high school level, this formula looks at ELA proficiency, math proficiency, EL progress to proficiency, climate survey, college and career readiness, graduation rate, 9th grade on track, and chronic absenteeism. Two of those factors, climate survey and college and career readiness, were not included for this year's School Report Card, but will be next year.

In the past, the Illinois School Report Card focused primarily on student achievement, or how well students performed on standardized tests. With the changes this year, however, proficiency, (measured by how many students reached a "Meets" or "Exceeds" on PARCC or the SAT), only accounts for 20% of the school's overall rating. At the elementary and middle school levels, student growth (how much a student has grown over the past year) accounts for 50%, or half, of a school's final rating. (At the high school level, graduation rates make up 50% of the school's rating as currently there is no way to measure student growth at that level.) That means that it is important that a student is not only meeting academic expectations, but is continuing to grow at all levels. What's more, the state is looking at proficiency and growth not just for the school as a whole, but by each subgroup, like special education students and English learners, and by race. If one subgroup is not performing as expected, the entire school's rating can be impacted.

Another key element to the Illinois School Report Card this year is chronic absenteeism. In the past, the Illinois School Report Card reported truancy numbers, but it only reflected students with an excessive number of unexcused absences. Now, however, chronic absenteeism considers all students who have missed 10% or more of the school year regardless of reason. That means that if a student misses 18 days or more, whether due to illness, vacation, athletics, or any other reason, the school's rating will be affected. As chronic absenteeism makes up 20% of a school's rating at the elementary and middle school level, that means that absenteeism is just as important as academic proficiency on the School Report Card. A school that is performing well and has strong growth can still achieve a lower rating if its students aren't in school consistently.

Each year, District 301 asks parents, students (beginning in 5th grade), and teachers to complete the 5Essentials survey. Beginning with next year's Report Card, this will impact our schools' ratings. We don't know yet how the climate survey will be measured, but we do know that it will be increasingly important that parents and guardians participate in this survey.

So what does this mean for you? It is good for our community for our schools to earn strong ratings as that makes the district desirable for families which increases property values. Strong performing districts also attract and retain high-quality teachers. Parents have a critical role to play in order for this to happen. First, it is important that you do what you can to keep our students in school. Consider planning family trips for school breaks instead of when school is in session. Limit the days missed due to sports programs or other extra-curricular activities. That will help our students achieve greater proficiency, show increased growth, and reduce our chronic absenteeism rates. Also, be sure to have your student participate in state-mandated testing this spring. Participation rates are considered in performance scores and play a role in our schools' final ratings. In addition, please complete the 5Essentials survey each year. This feedback is highly valued by district administration and is used to implement changes in our schools, but will also impact next year's school ratings.

If you have additional questions about the Illinois School Report Card and what it means for you and your students, don't hesitate to contact your building principal. S/he will be happy to answer your questions.

Upcoming Dates

Dec. 24 - Jan. 4

Winter Break

Jan. 21

MLK Day - No School for Students

Jan. 22

BOE Meeting

Jan. 23

Wake Up Call

Feb. 15

Half Day for Students

Feb. 18

President's Day - No School for Students

Feb. 19

BOE Meeting

Feb. 28

Half Day for Students

Mar. 1

No School for Students

Mar. 4

Parent University

Mar. 7

Board Candidates Forum

Mar. 14

BOE Meeting

Mar. 25 - 29

Spring Break

Emergency School Closures

We have already experienced a weather-related closing for this school year, but wanted to remind parents of District 301's policies and procedures regarding emergency closings. It is the district's policy to operate school whenever possible, but there may be occasions when we need to close or implement a delayed start. A two hour delayed start would mean that all school start times and morning bus pick-up times would be delayed by two hours, and school would conclude at the regular dismissal time. Only school closures and delayed starts will be announced. If no announcement is made, you should assume that school is in session. We will use multiple avenues to relay weather-related closing information to our families and staff. When the decision to close is made, the announcement will be made via a phone call, e-blast, district website post, and social media post. The announcements happen very quickly and it is possible that a Facebook post could reach you before your phone call. Below is a list of ways you can learn of school closings:

- A phone message to families and staff
- An email message to families and staff
- The District 301 website: central301.net
- A District 301 mobile app alert
- The District 301 Facebook page: www.facebook.com/centralschooldistrict301
- Local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations
- The Emergency Closing Center website: www.emergencyclosings.com



Central schools provide students with a safe and effective learning environment. When severe weather occurs, Dr. Stirn consults with numerous people, including area school officials and the district's directors of transportation and facilities, to help make the decision to remain open or closed. The safety of our students and staff is of our utmost concern, but we understand that it is less disruptive for students, teachers, and parents if classes are held as normal. A decision will be made based on all these factors and what we feel is best for our students.

Season's Greetings!

At the close of another year, our thoughts turn gratefully to our wonderful community of parents and staff who have continuously supported our schools. We are thankful for the students who have been entrusted to our care and the district is honored to help prepare them for a bright future.

As a district, we wish you all the joys of the season and happiness throughout the coming year. Happy Holidays and warm wishes for 2019!

Dr. Todd Stirn, Superintendent

*Engage the
mind*

*Empower
the learner*

*Inspire
excellence*

*Influence
the world*