

Carbondale Attendance Center Parent Informer – January 2018

A Message from Mr. Flax – Well, here it is – 2018 has arrived. I hope this finds all of our CAC / SFTJH families well and ready for a fresh calendar. I send wishes for a wonderful 2018 for you and your families. I made sure that I stayed inside throughout most of the break. I am not a fan of frigid weather, and this break sure had its share of that. I will say that the three days I spent out here at the office during the vacation were very quiet, and I stayed warm. It appears the weather is going to warm up a bit by the time you read this. As a precaution, please make sure the children are dressed for winter when they head out for school each morning. I generally believe that students will experience the consequences of not dressing for the weather. However, it isn't safe for students to be on buses or traveling to and from activities in sub-freezing wind chills wearing shorts and t-shirts. I know it may sound absurd, but already this week I have seen students walk into school in shorts and t-shirts with no jackets.

Activities Update – We begin 2018 with first-day back basketball games at Iola. I sent an alert as a reminder on Wednesday. We have 40+ boys out for basketball this year, and they have been working hard preparing for competition. An unexpected scheduling change has us going on the road three of the first four games of the season. We go to Iola, Burlington, and Osawatomie with a home game vs. Prairie View in a two-week span. I personally am always glad to get the far-away travel done at the beginning of a season. I want to ask parents, and I apologize if I am overstepping any boundaries, to please make sure the boys have either a lunch and snack packed for the basketball trips or send money for concessions. The students eat lunch between 11:00-12:00, and when they go away for activities they don't return until (sometimes) between 8:00-10:00 p.m. That is such a long time for them to be without food and drink. Just something to consider. In addition to basketball, we will be getting ready to kick off the Scholar's Bowl season in early February. Be looking for information coming home about that in the next month or so.

Parent-Teacher Conferences – I know this is a long ways off, but I wanted to get you the information about parent-teacher conferences so you can plan in advance. We will be having a rather unique approach to the scheduling, and this may seem confusing to some of you. In my head it makes complete sense, so it probably isn't clear to most others. The teachers in grades 4-6 will be scheduling conferences with you individually sometime during the week of March 12-15. There will be lots of flexibility in that schedule, so as to meet the time frame that works for both the teacher and the parents. The teachers of the junior high students (grades 7-8) will be available for drop-in conferences on Monday and Thursday, March 12 and 15 between the hours of 4:00-7:00. While the drop-in time is available, if you want to plan a specific time to meet with one of the teachers, please just make that contact with them to set that up. Additionally, Mrs. Maggie Mead, Mrs. Kristy Hamit and I will be holding individual conferences with all 8th grade students and parents sometime in late winter/early spring. This is a conference to visit about the transition to the high school, along with information about the ACT Aspire Tests that the students took in the

fall. The three of us will make individual contact with each of you to schedule meetings that will work in your schedules.

Grade Cards – We are sending the second quarter report cards home today. Please be looking for them or ask your child about them. In order for us to be sure you have seen them, please either sign them and send them back to school or send an email or other notice to the teacher that you have indeed received the grades. With first semester over, we will now begin to look at students who struggled and make some adjustments or implement some strategies to address problems they may have experienced. Thanks for communicating with the teachers about this.

LONG LECTURE AHEAD! Speaking of Grades... - I am not quite sure how this will go, but I am giving it a shot anyway. I can sense the eye-rolls from parents and teachers already. ☺ We are having lots of discussions about teaching and learning with our school improvement efforts. I have addressed the staff about making sure that assignments and homework are designed to measure what we are teaching, and that they have increased expectations on themselves to make the lessons rigorous and relevant. I know that we are responsible for that side of the equation in our school. I have also told the students that they are going to be held accountable for their behavior and their part of the learning process. I read a great article about not lowering our expectations on students in regards to what is important for them to learn, and that sometimes that is a hard lesson for students. But every one of us (staff and parents alike) knows that without struggle there is very little real progress and growth. It isn't failure to not master something right away. And true success is being persistent and to keep trying until you have learned whatever lesson is in front of us. All students are going to have to face some struggles as they go through school and life, and even the most able learners need to be challenged at a higher level. I know very few people who don't have struggle in their lives. It is important that we all just keep working to learn and grow.

Spelling Bee – We will be making specific plans for the building spelling bees in the next few days. I will send a note out via School Messenger as soon as dates are scheduled for the classroom preliminaries and the building final contests. Two students from the building will represent us at the Osage County Spelling Bee in Lyndon. I do not have the date for that yet. Be looking for this information coming out to you soon.

PTO Meeting – The district PTO will be meeting next Tuesday, January 9 here at CAC beginning at 6:30 p.m. The PTO has been very flexible in meeting at the different buildings for the convenience of the parents from all three communities. Please give some consideration to attending the meeting and becoming active with the PTO. I know it is difficult to do one more thing, but PTO makes some great contributions to our children and staff throughout each year. Just some food for thought.

Items for your Calendars: (I am always worried that I will leave a bunch off since we don't have the paper calendar anymore. I am sure I did so in this list.☺ Please check the district website for a more complete list.)

- 1/4 Basketball at Iola 4:00
- 1/8 Basketball at Burlington 4:00
- 1/9 PTO Meeting at CAC 6:30
- 1/10 Basketball Pictures at CAC 3:45 – All Practice at CAC
- 1/10 BOE Meeting at DAC 6:00
- 1/11 Basketball vs. Prairie View at CAC 4:15
- 1/12 No School – Staff Development Day
- 1/15 No School – Martin Luther King Holiday
- 1/18 Basketball at Osawatomie 4:00
- 1/19 Well-Child Screening at SAC
- 1/22 Basketball vs. Wellsville at CAC 4:15
- 1/25 Basketball at Prairie View 4:00
- 1/27 7th Grade A-Team Basketball Classic at Alma 9:00
- 1/27 8th Grade A-Team Basketball Classic at SFTHS 9:00
- 1/29 Basketball at Anderson County 4:00
- 1/31 FBLA District VII Conference at ESU

Have you read to your child today? Have you read with your child today?

Something the children hear me say almost every day: Be kinder than you need to be; everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.