

ITASCA SCHOOL DISTRICT 10

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
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September 8, 2011

Dear Itasca School District Parents/Guardians:

Recently and effective beginning with this school year the Illinois Legislature enacted Public Act 97-0218 which has redefined a “habitual truant” as a student who has been absent without valid cause for 5% (9) of the previous 180 regular school days. This Public Act has changed the prior threshold for determining a habitual truant from 10% (18) of those 180 days.

Children can’t learn if they aren’t present in school and poor attendance can be prevented. National data on parent engagement and school dropout prevention suggests that chronic absence often begins as early as Kindergarten and by 6th grade, missing 20% (or two months of school) is a critical warning sign of becoming a school drop-out. By 9th grade, missing 20% of school can be a better predictor of drop-out than even 8th grade test scores.

Often, chronic absenteeism begins innocently and without much thought of the implications to a child’s learning. While in our district we have relatively few cases that are characterized as chronic, typical causes that exceed the truancy threshold include extended vacation time during the school year and mild illnesses that do not require a child be kept home. For a definition or list of symptoms or illnesses for which temporary exclusion is recommended, please call our school’s nurse.

Good school attendance is everyone’s responsibility. The benefits in positive attendance behaviors extend well into a child’s later life including future employment. Our goal in the district is to partner with our families in providing all of our children with the best possible educational opportunities possible through proactive measures wherever and whenever feasible.

Respectfully,

Dr. Dawn Turner, Principal, Benson Primary
Mr. Jeff Murphy, Principal Franzen Intermediate
Dr. Reinhard Nickisch, Principal Peacock Middle School



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