

2012-2013

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK




Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

P.O. Box 30035 • Charlotte, NC 28230 • www.cms.k12.nc.us

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS ZONES

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Chairperson At-Large
Ericka Ellis-Stewart

Vice-Chairperson At-Large
Mary McCray

At-Large
Timothy S. Morgan

District 1
Rhonda Lennon

District 2
Richard Allen McElrath, Sr.

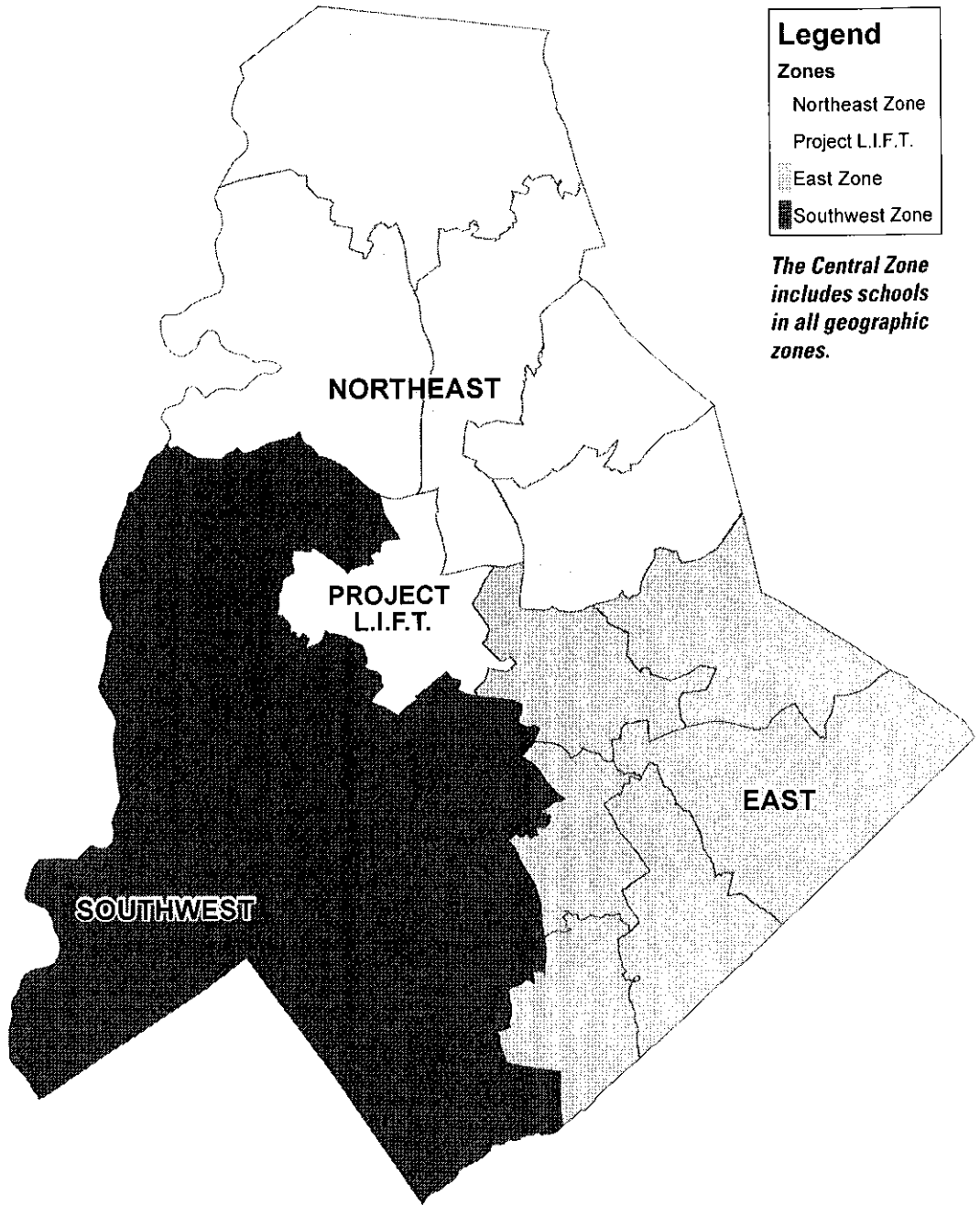
District 3
Dr. Joyce Davis Waddell

District 4
Tom Tate

District 5
Eric C. Davis

District 6
Amelia Stinson-Wesley

For More Information
(980) 343-5139 (Phone)
(980) 343-7128 (Fax)



Vision

CMS provides all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life.

Mission

The mission of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school.

GENERAL INFORMATION

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Strong Parent and Community Connections | 4-8 |
| – Overview | 4 |
| – Parent University | 4-5 |
| – Parent Resources | 5 |
| – Volunteering at School | 5 |
| – Public Schools Foundation | 6 |
| – School Leadership Teams | 6 |
| – Zones | 6 |
| – Parent-Teacher Conferences | 6 |
| – Parent Concerns | 6 |
| – Parent Assistant | 7-8 |
| Communications | 9 |
| – CMS website | 9 |
| – Severe Weather | 9 |
| Registration of New Students | 10 |
| – Smith Family Center | 10 |
| – School-Entry Requirements / Immunizations | 10 |
| Character Education | 11 |
| – Honor Code | 11 |
| After-School Enrichment Program (ASEP) | 12 |
| Attendance | 13-14 |
| – Overview | 13 |
| – High School Guidelines | 14 |
| – Tardies | 14 |
| – Truancy | 14 |
| Behavior | 15-16 |
| – In-School Suspension (Middle School) | 15 |
| – Out-of-School Suspension | 15 |
| – State Laws Impacting Discipline | 16 |
| – Educational Options for High School Dropouts | 16 |
| Exceptional Children | 17 |
| – Purpose of Programs | 17 |
| – Content Sequence and Learning Outcomes | 17 |
| – Where to Get Assistance | 17 |
| – Parents’ Rights | 17 |
| – Non-Discrimination Policy | 17 |
| Americans With Disabilities Act – Title II | 18 |
| Extended Day Programs | 19 |
| Federal Law (Section 504) | 20 |
| Grading Scale | 20 |
| ESL Student Education | 21 |
| Elementary and Secondary Education Act | 22 |
| Coordinated School Health | 23 |
| Health Education and Physical Education | 24 |
| – Health Education | 24 |
| – Physical Education | 24 |
| – Healthy Active Children Policy | 24 |
| – Medical Information | 24 |
| School Food Service | 25-28 |
| – Breakfast and Lunch Program | 25 |
| – Special Nutritional Needs | 25 |
| – Free and Reduced Meal Applications | 25 |
| – Student Meal Account Information | 26 |
| – Meal Payment Options | 26 |
| – Foods in the Classroom | 26 |
| – Policy JLCG: Students with Food Allergies | 27-28 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Housing Emergencies | 29 |
| Internet Acceptable Use | 30-35 |
| CMS Accountability Standards | 36 |
| Student Costs (Optional) | 37 |
| – Insurance | 37 |
| – School Pictures | 37 |
| – Meal Prices | 37 |
| Student Records | 38-40 |
| – Notification Of Rights Under FERPA | 38 |
| – Directory Information | 39 |
| – Notice Of Rights Under PPRA | 40 |
| Title IX | 41 |
| Permissible Use Of Seclusion And Restraint | 42-43 |
| Annual EPA Mandatory Asbestos Awareness Letter | 44 |
| – Integrated Pest Management | 44 |
| – Environmental Stewardship Initiative | 44 |
| Student Discipline | 45 |
| Talent Development & Advanced Studies Program | 46 |
| Textbooks | 47 |
| Transportation | 48-50 |
| – School Bus Stops and Bus Schedules | 48 |
| – School Bus Safety and Conduct | 49-50 |
| Dress Code | 51 |
| Uniforms | 51 |

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INFORMATION

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Bright Beginnings Pre-Kindergarten Program | 52 |
| Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First-Grade Entry Requirements | 52 |
| Health Assessments | 52 |
| School Health Services | 52 |
| Student Support Programs | 53 |

MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Middle School Philosophy | 54 |
| Interdisciplinary Teaming | 54 |
| Homework Philosophy | 54 |
| Course Offerings | 54-55 |
| Student Support Programs | 55-56 |
| Glossary of Middle School Terms | 57 |
| Middle School Athletics | 58 |
| Student Locker Assignment | 59 |

HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Student Support Services | 60-61 |
| Substance Abuse Intervention | 61 |
| Graduation Requirements | 62-63 |
| Driving to School | 64-65 |
| – Student Vehicle Parking | 64 |
| – Driver Education | 64 |
| – Driver’s License Guidelines | 64-65 |
| Student Locker Assignment | 66 |
| High School Athletics | 67-68 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| A-Day/B-Day SCHEDULE | 69 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2012-2013 STUDENT CALENDAR | 70 |
|---|-----------|

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is committed to student achievement and recognizes the important connection between home and school. Parents are a child's first and most important teachers.

The National PTA recommends parent involvement because many years of experience and study have shown that when parents participate in their children's education, students are more successful in school. Parent involvement is more important for student achievement than income, social standing or a parent's education level. We know that all families can help their children learn by doing several things:

- Creating a home environment that encourages learning
- Sharing high but reasonable expectations for learning and careers
- Getting involved with their children's education through school and community programs. Parent involvement helps schools, too.

(Compiled from Building Successful Partnerships, a publication of the National PTA, 2000)

The support for education works both ways: from school to home and home to school. We know that when parents are welcome partners in education, the quality of our schools increases greatly.

The **Family and Community Services/Parent University Department of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools** is pleased to welcome you as an equal partner in your child's education. We are responsible for coordinating family support and participation in the schools and look forward to your suggestions and ideas. We hope you will call **(980) 343-6256** anytime you have questions or recommendations regarding family involvement.

There are many ways that families can become involved in elementary, middle and high schools. Parents can learn more by contacting their child's principal or parent leadership group (PTA/PTSA/PTO/Booster) at your school. Parents are also a critical part of the School Leadership Team, a committee which sets the school's mission and goals. Here are just a few ways parents can provide meaningful support to their children and build stronger school communities:

Visit the School Regularly – Don't wait for a special occasion! Get to know your child's teacher and principal. Come by for lunch. Visit the classroom and media center. We want to get to know you. Quality learning requires meaningful two-way communication. Please contact your school principal to arrange a visit.

Create Learning Opportunities at Home – Did you know that the home can be a classroom, too? Many wonderful opportunities abound in the home and community, as well as at school. Offer your child different kinds of reading material—magazines, newspapers and books. Take time to read with your child every day. Talk to your child often as you work around the house, run errands and shop. This will build vocabulary and develop critical thinking skills. Be sure to set aside time each day for your child to do his/her homework. Take time to talk about what your child is learning in school and review his/her work.

Advocate for Your Child – You know your child better than anyone. Make sure the teacher, principal and staff know of any special needs your child may have. Contact school staff by telephone, in person or through a note, anytime you have a question or concern.

Keep the school informed of any changes at home.

Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences – This gives parents and teachers a chance to discuss how children can do their best work. Parents are invited at the end of the first quarter for an annual conference with the classroom teacher. Parents may request a conference at other times, as well. **For example:**

- ▼ Anytime you would like to share information about your child.
- ▼ When you have a concern or want information about your child's progress
- ▼ When family needs may be having an impact on your child's progress

During a parent conference, parents may want to discuss:

- ▼ Information about your child such as hobbies, talents and study habits
- ▼ Ways you can work with the teacher to help the child be successful
- ▼ An outline of subjects covered in the course or grade
- ▼ How the child will be evaluated or graded

The first round of parent/teacher conferences will be held in October. Please contact your child's teacher(s) for more information.

Some schools provide student-led conferences to enhance student participation and achievement. Whenever you have a concern or a question, schedule a conference or a telephone conversation as soon as possible.

Access Parent Assistant – Parent Assistant is an Internet-based program that helps parents track their child's progress in school. For most grade levels, parents can see attendance, assignments, grades, disciplinary information and other data from any computer with Internet access. Parents must have a username and password to access this information. Parents may request a login name/password or password reset from the school. The CMS website has more information on how to use Parent Assistant.

Join or Attend the School Leadership Team – Every school has a team charged with setting the school's mission and goals and monitoring student achievement. Call your school to find out how to become a part of the School Leadership Team. All teams meet once a month and these meetings are open to the public. The School Leadership Team is responsible for writing and monitoring the School Improvement Plan, which provides strategies for creating school and student success.

Volunteer – Share your talent, time and treasure with us! Serve as a tutor, a mentor or a lunch buddy. Visit your child's class to talk about your career or your hobbies. For specifics on volunteering, contact the school and ask for the family school advocate or volunteer coordinator.

Join the Parent Leadership Organization – You can support students through PTA/PTSA/PTO or Booster activities like curriculum nights, book fairs and fundraising events. For information, call your school or contact the **Mecklenburg PTA Council** at **(980) 343-6244** or **www.meckpta.org**.

Parent University

Attend Parent University Classes – Parent University is a community collaborative led by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to help parents become full partners in their children's education. CMS partners with community agencies and organizations to offer free courses, family events and activities that will equip families with new or additional skills, knowledge, resources and confidence. Parent University offers families – parents, grandparents and caretakers – a chance to learn about four areas or strands, which include:

Parenting Awareness – These topics provide parents with information about how they can support their children’s academic opportunities and today’s challenges.

Helping Your Child Learn in the 21st Century – These topics provide information that can empower parents to raise confident, educated children ready for the 21st Century.

Health and Wellness – These offerings support parents by providing information and activities to help families build healthy lifestyles – physically and emotionally.

Personal Growth and Development – These topics help parents to grow personally and professionally, so they can become the most effective advocates for their children.

The goal of Parent University is to increase parent involvement in the schools and empower parents to raise children who are successful in school, and in life. Workshops are held in schools, public libraries, YMCAs, houses of worship, businesses and other community locations. Workshops range from topics such as Helping Your Child Prepare for the End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests, to Preparing for Kindergarten, Middle and High School, to Surviving Adolescence. More than 60 course topics are available for families. To find out more about Parent University, call (980) 343-0318 or log on to the website for a full listing of classes at www.cmsparentuniversity.org. Classes are held in the fall from September through November and in the winter/spring from January through April. The Parent University website has online workshops and resources to help.

Have Family Fun! Spend a few minutes every day simply being together and enjoying each other’s company. Listen to your child. Let your child pick an activity to do with you, like playing a game or taking a walk. No one in the world can offer your child what you can. Remind your child that you belong to each other.

Parent Resources

Family and Community Services provides several tools to help families and community members participate in education. These publications are available to you through your school, on the CMS website (www.cms.k12.nc.us) or by calling **Family and Community Services/Parent University** at (980) 343-6256. Some of the resources include:

Family Curriculum Guides – These brochures describe the skills and subjects that students are studying in school. They are available by grade level from kindergarten through middle school.

Learning Compact – The learning compact is a friendly agreement between students, families, teachers and the school principal. The purpose is to help all the adults involved in a child’s learning be aware of each other’s roles and responsibilities in supporting student achievement. The compact is available this year for students in preschool through twelfth grade.

CMS Community Resource Quick Reference Guide – This publication offers an overview of community agencies that help families with child care, food, clothing, healthcare, mentoring, youth services and other needs.

School Staff – Your school is a community of experts that are available to you as you enhance the learning of your child. The most important person to know is the classroom teacher. You can contact your child’s teacher by writing a note, sending an e-mail, calling the school or visiting the classroom. In addition to the teacher, there are many other staff members who help families and students succeed in education.

The principal is the instructional leader of the school and is responsible for student grade-level placement and for overall school operations. The assistant principal coordinates school curriculum and testing. The psychologist provides testing and consultive services to help students with special needs. The social worker helps students and families connect with any community resources they may need. The school counselor provides leadership for the implementation of the North Carolina Guidance curriculum, counseling for students, and consultation for parents and staff.

Resource teachers and literacy facilitators are trained in special strategies for teaching learning challenges. ESL teachers work with students and families whose native language is not English. The school nurse assists with health and medical needs, as well as immunizations. Speech therapists help children improve their written and spoken language communication.

In addition to these specialists, your school has a staff of experts in various fields, including music, art and physical education.

Volunteering at School

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has a strong commitment to community and family involvement in schools. The Office of Strategic Partnerships is responsible for coordinating volunteer programs throughout CMS. The CMS partnerships coordinator works with individual schools, principals and school volunteer coordinators to provide support and assistance in managing their volunteer program.

In order to encourage parents and community involvement while assuring the safety of students, CMS has a volunteer screening policy. All volunteers are required to register and complete a criminal background check. We have three kinds of volunteer approvals: Supervised, Unsupervised without driving and Unsupervised with driving. Supervised volunteers will work under the direction and in the presence of CMS staff. Unsupervised volunteers may work with children without CMS staff present. Volunteers approved as “Unsupervised with driving” are allowed to drive children as part of their volunteer activity. Please note that volunteers who drive children must provide proof of insurance and a copy of their driver’s license to CMS Police. The volunteer registration can be completed on the website.

How to Register

Go to: www.cmsvolunteers.com

Click *New Volunteer? Click Here to Register*

Each school is encouraged to provide quality volunteer experiences that will mutually benefit students and volunteers. Information on volunteering can be obtained by calling your school’s volunteer coordinator or the **CMS partnerships coordinator at (980) 343-6618**.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools Foundation

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was established in June 2004 to fund programs and services that ensure that all CMS students are provided the best education. The Foundation's mission is to leverage resources to fund programs that enhance student performance and support excellence in teaching. The Foundation also serves as a visible, effective entry point for increased involvement in CMS schools from a community already nationally recognized for its support of public education. The Foundation invites you to become involved. Please consider making a donation to the Foundation. For additional information, click on Departments on the CMS homepage and click Partnerships.

The School Leadership Teams

One of the most valuable opportunities for parent/family involvement is the School Leadership Team (SLT) at each school. Parents are selected by the school's parent body and are appointed to serve on the teams. The SLT has an advisory role, supporting the principal as the school's instructional leader and advising the principal in the areas of planning, management, communication and evaluation.

In addition, each school will have a number of committees for parents to help advise and support the school's educational process. The PTA/PTSA or PTO will have a number of committees and the principal may assign parents to committees.

Zones

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has six zones: Northeast, East, Southwest, Central Elementary, Central Secondary and Project L.I.F.T. The district's zone structure took effect in 2010. CMS restructured and reorganized its seven learning communities, first created in the 2007-2008 school year to decentralize the district, into zones in March 2010 as part of the 2010-2011 budget-reduction process. The district's Title I department was also reorganized to provide supplemental support to the district's Title I schools in alignment with the zones.

This change allows the district to effectively manage and deliver learning and instruction, and human and financial resources more strategically to schools. The zones place resources and administration closer to parents and other members of the public, and, at the same time, help to reduce overall district costs.

Project L.I.F.T.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education signed a five-year agreement with a local philanthropic coalition Jan. 24, 2012, that both sides hope will lead to dramatic reform of schools on the west side of Charlotte. The contract with Project Leadership and Investment For Transformation (L.I.F.T.) created a new zone within CMS that includes West Charlotte High and its eight feeder schools. Project L.I.F.T. aims to address the achievement gap in these nine schools by providing \$55 million in private funding to support additional services and enhancements for West Charlotte and its eight feeder schools.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

A parent-teacher conference is an opportunity for a child's parent(s)/guardian and teacher to meet to discuss how the child can best achieve in school. At the elementary and middle school levels, conference time is set aside at the end of the first grading period for parents to meet with their children's teacher(s). The two-way communication goes beyond the report card to bring out more facts and to create better understanding of the child's progress. The parents and teacher together form the ideal partnership to help the child. The school will communicate the dates for parent-teacher conferences. Parents can also request a conference any time during the year. Parents of students at all grade levels are encouraged to talk with their child's teachers throughout the year.

Parents are encouraged to ask for a conference:

- ▼ When they want to share information about their child.
- ▼ When they are concerned or just want information about their child's academic progress.
- ▼ When there are family concerns that may affect the child's progress.

Parents should make a list of points to ask, share or discuss such as:

- ▼ The child's hobbies, talents, study habits and any sensitive issues (i.e. weight, health concerns, disabilities, shyness, etc.) that can help the teacher know and understand the child.
- ▼ An outline of topics to be covered in the subject area(s).
- ▼ Factors in grading the child's progress.
- ▼ How the child is performing - test scores, homework grades, behavior in class.
- ▼ Planning how parents and the teacher can help the child become more successful.

If your child is having difficulty and your school has contacted you about it, schedule a conference as soon as possible. Please do not wait until it is too late to address the concern. A timely conference is the best way to ensure your child's success in school. After the conference, talk with the child about the results and make follow-up contacts with the teacher. The school will also contact parents/guardians to schedule conferences.

Parent Concerns

Parents want the best for their children and so does Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. With that in mind, the school district encourages parents to call if they have concerns or suggestions. If a parent has a school-related concern, they should seek resolution at the individual school by contacting:

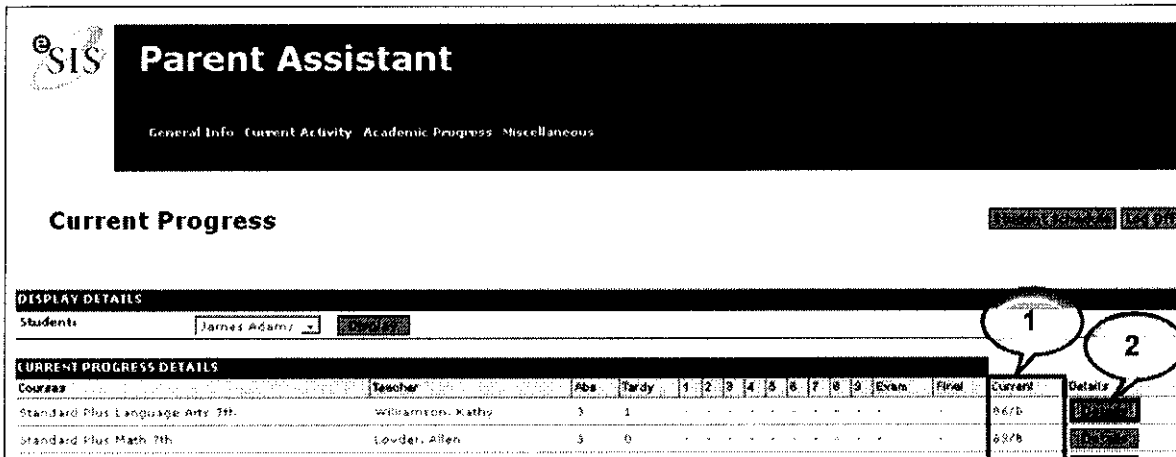
- First, the teacher;
- Second, the principal.
- If the issue remains unresolved, then the zone superintendent assigned to the school can be contacted.

Parent Assistant

CMS wants parents to be involved in their child's education and Parent Assistant can help you stay involved. Parents can check their child's homework assignments, attendance reports and grades from any computer with Internet access, any time. Parent Assistant is a computer-access program that helps parents track their child's progress in school. The program allows for easy communication between parents and teachers. It also allows parents to update their child's personal information and family contacts.

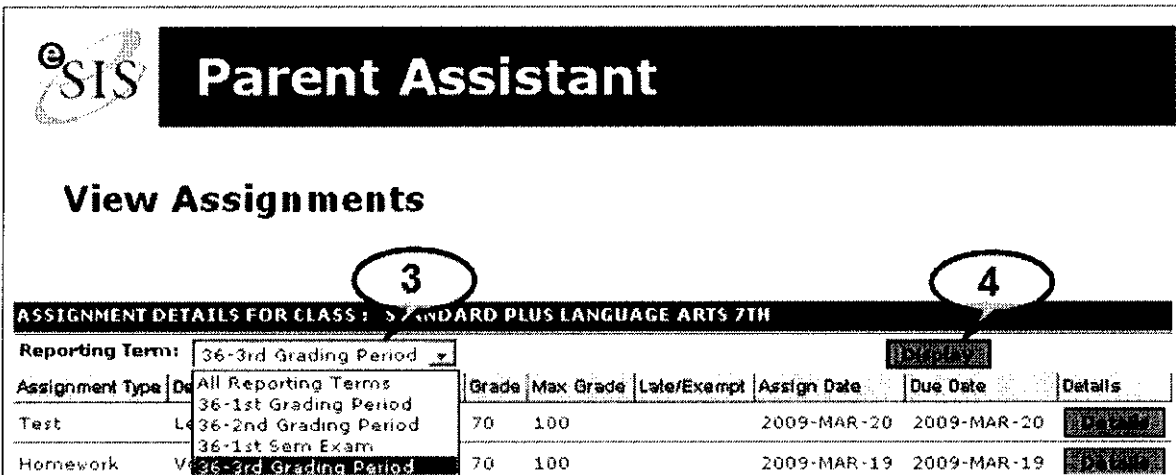
Current Progress in Parent Assistant Module

A common question from parents is the discrepancy between the current grade listed on the Current Progress screen in the Parent Assistant Module (PAM) and the actual average for a reporting term in the teacher's spreadsheet.



| Course | Teacher | Abs | Tardy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Exam | Final | Current | Details |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Standard Plus Language Arts 7th | Williamson, Kathy | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 86% | [Details] |
| Standard Plus Math 7th | Louden, Allen | 3 | 0 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 88% | [Details] |

1. The Current Progress screen in the PAM shows a **cumulative** average of the student's grades for all assignments of a course during the **entire** year.
2. To find the student's actual current average for a nine-week period, click on the **Details** button for the course.
3. Click the drop-down arrow to select a specific nine-week reporting term.
4. Then click the **Display** button to reveal the actual average for a student's grades in that grading period.



| Assignment Type | Grade | Max Grade | Late/Exempt | Assign Date | Due Date | Details |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Test | 70 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-20 | 2009-MAR-20 | [Details] |
| Homework | 70 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-19 | 2009-MAR-19 | [Details] |

5. The list of assignments for the selected reporting periods and the student's current average for that reporting period are shown on the following screen. The difference between the cumulative average grade shown on the first screen and the actual grading period average may be a few points or it may be significantly different.

Parent Assistant

View Assignments

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS FOR CLASS : STANDARD PLUS LANGUAGE ARTS 7TH

Reporting Term: 26-3rd Grading Period

| Assignment Type | Details / Description | Grade | Max Grade | Late/Exempt | Assign Date | Due Date | Details |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Test | Lesson 12 Test | 70 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-20 | 2009-MAR-20 | |
| Homework | Vocabulary 12 Homework | 70 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-19 | 2009-MAR-19 | |
| Assignment | Monetary on Maple Street | 80 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-17 | 2009-MAR-17 | |
| Homework | Vocabulary 11 Homework | 8 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-09 | 2009-MAR-09 | |
| Test | Lesson 11 Test | 100 | 100 | | 2009-MAR-05 | 2009-MAR-05 | |
| Assignment | Poetry Scavenger Hunt | 90 | 100 | | 2009-FEB-24 | 2009-FEB-24 | |
| Test | Lesson 10 Test | 100 | 100 | | 2009-FEB-20 | 2009-FEB-20 | |
| Project | Poetry Notebook | 82 | 100 | | 2009-FEB-17 | 2009-FEB-17 | |
| Quiz | Learning Check Quiz | 88 | 100 | | 2009-FEB-06 | 2009-FEB-06 | |
| Test | Lesson 9 Test | 90 | 100 | | 2009-FEB-02 | 2009-FEB-02 | |
| Assignment | The S... Diagram | 70 | 100 | | 2009-JAN-28 | 2009-JAN-28 | |
| Homework | Theme | 80 | 100 | | 2009-JAN-27 | 2009-JAN-27 | |

Current Average: 79%

Current: 80%

Parents should contact their child's teacher if they have questions regarding their child's assignments, grades or school-related information located within the Parent Assistant program.