

Mokena Elementary School



September 2011 Newsletter

Mrs. Chris Clavenna
Principal

Mrs. Judy Splayt
Assistant Principal

School Office:

708/342-4850

Absentee Line:

708/478-4212

On the Web:

www.mokena159.org

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Welcome Back!

Welcome Back! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, my name is Chris Clavenna and I am the new Principal at Mokena Elementary School. It is good to be back at MES as this is where I first started 12 years ago when I began working for the district. I spent one year at MES as a fifth grade teacher and then moved to Mokena Intermediate School when it opened to continue teaching fifth grade for the next 10 years. Last year I was fortunate to become the Assistant Principal at Mokena Junior High and now I am looking forward to working with all of the dedicated staff and faculty at MES!

I am pleased to introduce the following new staff members for the 2011-2012 school year:

- Ms. Sue Shoemaker, Director of Student Services
- Mr. Mike Manns, PE
- Ms. Nicole Marx, Speech
- Mrs. Andrea Kinsella-Lacny, Special Education
- Mrs. Molly Janik, Nurse
- Ms. Michele Spencer, Early Childhood
- Ms. Heidi Glatz, OT
- Ms. Anna Ludvigsen, OT

We also have several new classroom aides at MES; they are: Ms. Evelyn Brown, Mrs. Megan High, Mrs. Joan Major, Ms. Margaret Stechley, and Ms. Michelle Rudd. In addition, a student teacher from Eastern Illinois University, Miss Alexandra Drown will be working with Mrs. Kate Griffith and Ms. Toni Strait. Please join me in welcoming these new staff members to MES!

The outline of our new arrival and dismissal procedures can be found on our website, www.mokena159.org under the Mokena Elementary tab. We appreciate your cooperation in following these procedures so all of our children will be safe as they are arriving and leaving our school. I ask for your patience these first few weeks as we all adjust to the new routine.

As the MES motto says, "All of us at MES, always try to do our best!"

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year!

Mrs. Clavenna

Daily Schedule



Please take note of the following times for a typical school day at MES:

First Bell	8:55 a.m.
Tardy Bell	9:00 a.m.
2nd grade/DK Lunch	11:30 a.m.
AM Kindergarten Dismissal	11:35 a.m.
1st Grade Lunch	12:00 p.m.
PM Kindergarten Start	12:30 p.m.
3rd Grade Lunch	12:30 p.m.
Walkers/Car Riders Dismissal	3:07 p.m.
Bus/Day Care Riders Dismissal	3:20 p.m.

Important District Phone Numbers

District 159 Administrative Offices	708/342-4900
Transportation Coordinator	708/342-4925
Mokena Elementary School	708/342-4850
MES Absentee Line	708/478-4212
Mokena Intermediate School	708/342-4860
MIS Absentee Line	708/479-9471
Mokena Junior High School	708/342-4870
MJHS Absentee Line	708/478-4210



Virtual Backpack

Please be sure to check in weekly at the Virtual Backpack located on the district website for the most up to date listings of local happenings.

No Cell Phones on School Grounds

Please note that there is a No Cell Phone on school grounds policy for our school district. Help us keep everyone's attention focused on our children's safety! Thank you!

Dismissal Information

Early Dismissal Dates:

Wednesday, September 14	11:40 a.m.
Wednesday, October 12	11:40 a.m.
Wednesday, December 7	11:40 a.m.
Wednesday, December 21	2:15 p.m.
Wednesday, February 8	11:40 a.m.
Thursday, April 5	2:15 p.m.
Wednesday, May 2	11:40 a.m.
Thursday, May 24	11:40 a.m.

Please note the following:

If a parent/guardian would like to pick up a child before the regular dismissal time **the student must have a note** from the parent/guardian explaining how the child will be picked up. In order to minimize the loss of instructional time, students will not be called to the office until the parent/guardian has arrived at the school to pick up their child.

Due to the large number of students attending MES we ask that if parents/guardians are coming to excuse their child(ren) before the regular dismissal time, **they do so before 2:50 p.m.** After 2:50 p.m. students will be dismissed as part of the regular process — once the dismissal process begins it is difficult to contact teachers to have students excused from class.

Please send all transportation notes to your child's teacher. We ask that you keep all changes to their normal, everyday schedule to a minimum as the new year begins.

Again, thank you for your patience!



School Spirit Days



School Spirit Days for Mokena Elementary School are listed below.

Students are invited to dress accordingly on these special days to show their school spirit!

August 26	Green & Gold Day	January 13	Green & Gold Day
September 9	Crazy Socks Day	January 27	Tie Day
September 23	Cartoon Day	February 10	Red & White Heart Day
October 7	“Pink” Lee Denim Day	February 24	Green & Gold Day
October 21	Bears Football Day	March 9	Crazy Hat Day
November 4	Green & Gold Day	March 23	Green & Gold Day
November 18	Black Hawks/Hockey Day	April 20	Cubs/Sox/Baseball Day
December 2	Green & Gold Day	May 4	Hawaiian Day
December 16	Holiday/ Green & Red Day	May 18	Red, White & Blue Day

All Kindergarten and 1st Grade students who use District 159 Bus Transportation will be wearing a color-coded tag with their bus number at the end of the school day. Please return your child(ren)'s bus tag by putting it in his/her backpack so it comes back to school each day. We will be following this procedure for the remainder of this school year to facilitate the movement of bus students at dismissal. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated!

Thank you!

Mrs. Clavenna and Mrs. Splayt



Physical Education

If students wear gym shoes to school, we are asking that they keep a separate pair at school. This way, one pair can be used for indoor use and one pair for outdoor use. We are asking this of all students—Kindergarten through Grade 3. The outdoor shoes have a tendency to become soiled on the bottom and cannot be used on gym floors.

Please remember that these shoes need not be expensive. We also ask that parents refrain from purchasing black-soled gym shoes that leave black scuff marks in the hallways and on the gym floors. White-soled shoes or shoes that are labeled “non-marking sole” are preferred.

Additionally, we ask that girls keep a pair of gym shorts at school for those days when they are wearing dresses on a P.E. day. The girls will not be expected to change clothes; they can simply put the shorts on under their dresses. Thank you for your cooperation!



Lunch Program

Hot lunches are offered each day to Mokena Public School students. **New this year:** *Lunch menu's will no longer be sent home with students.* Please check the Mokena School District website: www.mokena159.org for detailed information regarding the LunchBox system and to print out a copy of the monthly menu.

The cost per lunch is \$2.50. An extra entrée may be purchased for an additional \$1.00. The price for milk alone is \$.30 per carton. Students will be limited to two cartons of milk each day. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay through the MES office and/or using the online Lunchbox system or students can pay cash on a daily basis.

Kindergarten Attendance on Early Dismissal Dates

Kindergarten parents, please make note of the following dates on which AM and PM Kindergarten students alternate attending school during the AM session (8:55–11:35) due to the 11:40 early dismissals:

AM Students Attend:

September 14
December 7
May 2

PM Students Attend:

October 12
February 8
May 24

Absentee / Tardy Call-In

Please call school the prior evening or before 8:30 a.m. the day your son/daughter will be absent or tardy. For your convenience, a telephone answering machine has been installed to receive your call. **The absentee phone line for Mokena Elementary School is 708/478-4212.** After dialing the number, you will hear a brief recorded message. After the "beep", please leave:

- * Your Name and relationship to student
- * Name of Student (please spell student's last name)
- * Student grade and Teacher name
- * Reason and Length of the Absence or Tardiness



If your child is absent or tardy, and the school has not received a call or a previous written excuse, you will be called by the school to verify the absence. If parents are not at home, we will contact you at work.

Mokena Educational Foundation

The Mokena District 159 Educational Foundation was established in 1996 as a means of financially contributing to the strength of our school district. The Foundation is dedicated to raising funds that will enrich the curriculum, encourage creative learning, and provide additional opportunities for learning. Membership forms for the Mokena Educational Foundation can be picked up in the District office.

Nurse's Corner

Welcome back to MES! Please know that your child is in a safe and wonderful place here at MES.

And to help us keep MES safe and wonderful, we ask that you please follow these guidelines:

- ◆ **Kindergarten Physicals**—deadline is September 2nd
- ◆ **Eye Exams** for Kindergarten—due October 1th and **Dental Exams**—for K and 2nd grade—due before January, 2012
- ◆ **Shoe Safety**—Please wear “closed toe and closed heeled” shoes
- ◆ **Healthy Snack Alternatives**—please consider sending a piece of fruit or other “healthy” alternatives

Please call me with any questions, keep me updated on your child's health issues, and remember...

It's all about keeping your child safe and healthy here at MES!

Nurse Molly



PTA Meetings

General meetings of the Mokena PTA are conducted on the third Monday of each month. The meetings are held at 4:00 pm in room N-104 at Mokena Elementary School.

We invite all Mokena parents and school staff to become a paid member of the Mokena PTA. Membership forms can be obtained in the MES office. All of the funds raised through the PTA are used to directly impact the students of District 159.

We greatly appreciate the continued efforts of the Mokena PTA for their dedication to our schools.



Parental Permission and Signature Verification Form / Early Closing of Schools Form

Parents should have received two documents brought home by their child the first few days of school; one outlines the need for a parental signature for Internet Acceptable Use, Publication of Student Photos, and receipt of the Parent/Student Handbook. The second was the Early Closing of School form with Student Contact Information.

It is imperative that both the signed Parental Permission form as well as the Early Closing of School form be returned to school immediately.

Custody Alerts / Orders of Protection

If situations arise within a student's home life that result in custody issues or court orders of protection, please provide the school office with a copy of the court's written order. This information needs to be updated each school year. If you need to speak with a school official regarding issues related to legal custody and/or orders of protection, please contact Mrs. Splayt.

Young Rembrandts The Power of Drawing

Young Rembrandts new sessions will begin on Monday, September 26th. For more information or for an enrollment form:

1. Visit your Virtual Backpack; or
2. Stop by the school office to pick up an enrollment form; or
3. Call the Young Rembrandts office at 847-760-5050 to enroll; or
4. Register online at www.youngrembrandts.com/willkendallcount-IL/schedule.aspx



Box Tops for Education

Mokena Elementary School will continue to collect box tops from General Mills products to raise money for the purchase of school-related equipment.

Please save these box tops and send them to school with your child or drop them off at the MES office.



Attendance Policy

Just a reminder of the Attendance policy at MES. According to the state guidelines for attendance in a public school the Mokena Public School Attendance policy has been updated as follows:

MES starts at 9:00 am (this has not changed). For all MES grades students will be:

- ◆ Tardy up till 9:25 am (after that students are a half day absent)
- ◆ Students who arrive on time and stay here till 11:30 will be a half day in attendance.
- ◆ If a student is here all day and leaves before 2:45 they will be a half day absent.

More information can be found on pages 1-5 in the Parent/Student Handbook located on the District Website: www.mokena159.org. We appreciate all your help in getting our students here promptly and in attendance in order to maximize their learning time.

Non-Edible Birthday Treat Policy

As a school district, we have to be proactive with regards to the health and well being of our entire student population. In order to promote healthier eating habits overall, and to protect those students with food allergies and sensitivities, and medical conditions that require our care and support, **we are implementing a “non-edible birthday treat” policy .**

If you would like to send something to the class to celebrate your child’s birthday, some suggestions include: pencils, stickers, special erasers, or the donation of a favorite book to the classroom.

The administration and staff greatly appreciate your support in the implementation of this policy.



MES Introduces STARS Qualities–A Positive Behavior Support System

Mokena Elementary School is very excited to be starting a school wide positive behavior system that will provide our students with a positive school culture to promote both social and academic success. The School-Wide Positive Behavior System (SWPBS) is an evidence based practice that has many years of research to indicate that, when implemented with integrity, can have a positive effect in academic's and behavior for ALL students. We are implementing our own version of SWPBS by introducing the students to the STARS Qualities, which is an acronym for the following:

S -Show Respect	"The Golden Rule"- Gold/Yellow
T -Take Responsibility	"Think Green"-Green
A -Always be Honest	"True Blue"- Blue
R -Remember to...	
-Be Fair	Orange
-Care	Red
S -Strive for Cooperation	Purple

This month, the STARS quality that will be introduced by the classroom teacher will be RESPECT. All staff in the building, including teachers, support staff, custodians, building aides, office staff, administrators, lunch staff, subs, and bus drivers will be given a set amount of "tickets" that they will be encouraged to give out weekly to ANY student they see that week demonstrating respect. Students are told to give any tickets they earn for the day to the teacher, who will put them in the Classroom Star Bucket. At the end of each week, the teacher will send down their Classroom Star Bucket and all of those student's names get put into the Grade Level Star Bucket in the MES Office. Mrs. Clavenna and Mrs. Splayt will select one student from each Grade Level Star Bucket and these students will be called down as the "STARS for the WEEK." Each student will then be able to choose a reward from the STARS Reward chart located in the MES Commons. The following week, the process starts all over again, and now another student is able to earn the reward at their grade level.

We will begin passing out tickets the week of September 6th. As you can see above, each STARS Quality is associated with a color as this helps make the terms a little less abstract for some of our little friends. *Therefore, we are asking parents to help us kickoff our first month of Respect, which is associated with Gold/Yellow, by having your child wear something with these colors on **Tuesday, September 6th**.*

This will help reinforce to the students how important the first quality is, and what we will be looking for in each of our students. We wanted to share with parents our new initiative so you can also reinforce these qualities at home. As we go throughout the school year, our plan is to let you know through the newsletter when we are introducing a new STARS Quality and when we will want students to wear the color for the new quality. Please contact myself or Mrs. Splayt if you have any additional questions about our SWPBS or the STARS Qualities.



Mrs. Clavenna & Mrs. Splayt



September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 <i>Picture Re-take Day</i>	3
4	5 <i>Labor Day No School</i> 	6	7	8 <i>Board of Ed. Meeting @ 7:00 pm, MJHS</i>	9 <i>Crazy Socks Day</i>	10
11	12	13 <i>Kindergarten BTS/Open House AM: 6-6:30 PM: 6:45-7:15</i>	14 <i>Early Dismissal at 11:40 am AM K Attends</i>	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 <i>Market Day Pickup at MJHS 4:30-5:30</i>	22	23 <i>Cartoon Day</i>	24
25	26 <i>PTA Meeting 4:00 MES</i>	27	28	29	30	31
						