

MINUTEMAN MOMENT

Semester 2 Begins

Semester one is behind us, and we are officially into the spring semester. Between state testing, awards events, and busy athletic schedules, this semester will go by fast!

JH Lockers

No doubt, many of our students received new technology during the holidays. As a result, it is *essential* that students lock their lockers. We know that many students are not using the locks on their lockers—despite our many directives to do so.

As a reminder, all students have been issued locks for their hallway- and PE lockers. Additionally, junior high students must keep cell phones and other devices in their lockers as they are not allowed to have them with them throughout the day, nor are they allowed to take backpacks or bags to class. It is especially important that students protect their valuables as the school district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We are fortunate that when things go missing, it is usually a result of another student playing a prank; however, these nerve-racking events can be avoided when students lock their lockers.

Please speak with your student and remind him or her of your expectations to lock their lockers.

5Essentials Survey

Every spring our students take the 5Essentials Survey. The data from this survey gives us a variety of information, like how students feel about the rigor of their courses, their feelings of school safety, etc. Families can also take a survey which gives us similar information as well. The surveys open at the end of this month, and we will arrange for all students to have the opportunity to take it, and we will send out links for the family version when it opens.

Chronic Absenteeism

As I reported in the last Minuteman Moment, we saw a concerning uptick in our Chronic Absenteeism rates last year, especially at the high school; however, we are also concerned with our junior high percentages. Please remember that according to the State of Illinois, chronic absenteeism is missing 10% or more of the school year. That is ***any absence***—excused or unexcused.

With the school year typically made up of just under 180 days, students cannot miss more than 17 days *the entire year*. This number may not sound like much but when students miss just two days a month, they will likely fall into the chronically absent category.

You can help your student avoid being identified as chronically absent by scheduling appointments for outside of the school day and taking college visits or planning vacations for after school or during school non-attendance days.

Attendance Matters!

Missing a day of school may not seem like a big deal, but absences add up!

When students miss just 2 days a month, they miss...	When students miss 4 days a month, they miss...
20 school days a year (grades K-12). 800 minutes of math instruction per year (grades 6-12). 26.5 hours of English/reading instruction (grades 6-8) 1 year of school by graduation (grades K-12).	40 school days a year (grades K-12). 1600 minutes of math instruction per year (grades 6-12). 53 hours of English/reading instruction (grades 6-8) 2 years of school by graduation (grades K-12).

Freshman Orientation

We are planning to host Freshman Orientation on Wednesday, January 25th from 6:00pm-7:30pm.

High School Minuteman Period

For the beginning of second semester, high school staff will use our Minuteman Period as an opportunity to help students prepare for their SAT and PSAT tests. For the first few weeks of this semester, students will use Mondays and Tuesdays to prep; we'll then add Wednesdays, working three days a week until the test on April 12th.

8th Grade Promotion

Over the last few years, 8th grade promotion has undergone a few changes. Specifically, it's become a less formal event, and students no longer wear gowns. We've also woven in a few ways to make the event more engaging for our students. All students have their moment of recognition by walking across the stage, and we also give out department awards that evening as well. Each student will receive a t-shirt that they can wear to promotion along with nice blue jeans or pants (no shorts, please).

Meet Our Staff: Ms. Diez

Ms. Diez is our new Spanish teacher! She found her passion for teaching after working as a graduate student at Illinois State University. Ms. Diez works to immerse her students in the language as soon as they enter her classroom. She instructs almost solely in Spanish, connecting new concepts/terms to what they already know—often acting out and miming the concepts.

We're looking forward to watching our Spanish program grow under Ms. Diez's direction!

Shout Out

Do you have a JH or HS staff member that you think deserves some praise? Please fill out a "Shout Out" [form](#), and we will recognize this person at a staff meeting.

Mark Your Calendars

Monday, January 16th: No School, Martin Luther King, Jr Day

Wednesday, January 25th: Freshman Orientation, 6-7:30pm

Friday, February 17th: ½ Day School Improvement

Monday, February 20th: No School, Presidents' Day



Students enjoyed a visit from ISU's A Cappella Group in December.



The High School Choir during our Winter Concert.



Advanced Choir students serenaded the high school office staff.