



WELCOME TO AUSTIN'S PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS!

The staff and administration in each school welcomes students and parents to a new school year. We realize that a proper atmosphere for learning must exist to allow students to best enhance their educational, social and physical development. This handbook has been prepared to help acquaint students and their parents with our procedures and programs.

Please keep this handbook and use it as the reference guide it is intended to be.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Building	Address	Phone Number	Grades Served
Banfield Elementary	301 SW 17 th St	507-460-1200	1-4
Neveln Elementary	1918 East Oakland Avenue	507-460-1600	1-4
Southgate Elementary	1601 SW 19 th Avenue	507-460-1300	1-4
Sumner Elementary	805 8 th Avenue NW	507-460-1100	1-4
Woodson Kindergarten Center	1601 SE 4 th Street	507-460-1400	Kindergarten

2020-2021 AUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ELEMENTARY PARENTS HANDBOOK
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ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Woodson	Time	Banfield/Neveln/Southgate/Sumner
Teacher workday begins	7:30 a.m.	Teacher workday begins
	7:45	Students begin to arrive
Bus students arrive	7:45	
	8:00 a.m.	Student Day begins
Student day begins	8:15 a.m.	
Student day ends	2:00 p.m.	
	2:30 p.m.	Student Day ends
Teacher workday ends	3:30 p.m.	Teacher workday ends

Elementary students should not be on school grounds before 7:45 a.m. Woodson Kindergarten Center students should not be on school grounds before 8:00 a.m. Supervision is not provided prior to these times. Students are expected to leave the school grounds when they are dismissed. Supervision is not provided for children to stay and play on the school grounds.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE (TRUANCY POLICY)

It is the philosophy of the Austin Elementary Schools that attending school every day is important. Instruction occurs every school day. Students learn something every day from their teachers, their fellow classmates and from the planned interaction that takes place each day in the classroom. It is not educationally beneficial when a child misses' school. Children are expected to attend school unless there is a valid reason for not being there.

Minnesota Statute 127.20 requires school age children to attend school on a regular basis. Parents are responsible for making sure that their children are at school every day. If your child is absent from school, parents are to notify the school immediately by phone as to why your child was absent. If notification is not received, your child's absence will be considered unexcused. Extended illnesses require a doctor's note.

Minnesota Statue 260A.03 states that a child missing school without a valid excuse(s) for three days is classified as "continuing truant" and is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Section 120.01. Furthermore, parents or guardians that fail in their obligation to have their children in school may be subject to prosecution under Section 127.20 of Minnesota law.

***The school district reserves the right to require medical documentation in order to excuse an absence.**

Upon a child's initial classification as a "continuing truant", the school shall notify the child's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

1. that the child is truant;
2. that the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absence;
3. that the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school pursuant to section 120.01 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under section 127.20;
4. that this notification serves as the notification required by section 127.20;
5. that alternative educational programs and services may be available in the district;
6. that the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
7. that if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under chapter 260;
8. that if the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to section 260.191 (high school only);

We expect that students are at school and ready to begin the instructional day on time. Tardiness is disrespectful and disruptive to the learning environment. For attendance purposes every six (6) tardies will count as an unexcused absence. Any student arriving after the start of the instructional day (8:30 a.m.) will be counted as an unexcused absence for the morning.

If students have any combination of seven (7) unexcused absences this may result in a Truancy Petition being filed with the Mower County District Court, Juvenile Court Division.

ATTEND SCHOOL OUTSIDE OF ATTENDANCE AREA

It is the goal of the Austin Public Schools to meet the needs of our community by balancing class sizes and meeting families' needs such as daycare.

The following shall be the procedures for allowing students to enroll in an attendance area outside of their address:

1. Parents wishing to change elementary schools will return a completed **Request to Attend School Outside of Attendance Area Form** noting their school of preference. (this does not include specialized programming offered at specific elementary school sites. ie: Pi Academy, 45/15 calendar schools, Level 3 Special Education programming)
2. Parents shall sign off on any requests for attendance outside of their address area with the following understandings:
 - a. Parents are responsible for all transportation to and from school.
 - b. Siblings may not be granted attendance in requested schools if room is not available.
 - c. Once a student is enrolled in an attendance area, they will have the option to remain at that attendance site until they complete grade 4.
 - d. Schools will not accept transfer students beyond the target number for each class to allow for new students to the district who register after the deadline.
3. All applications must be returned to the elementary school
4. Parents will be notified by the building principals as to whether attendance area requests have been granted by June 1 of the school year.
5. All decisions of the Austin Public Schools are final.

BALLOONS AND FLOWERS

Flowers and balloons should not be sent to students at school, as they can be disruptive to their learning as well as the learning of their classmates. Flowers and balloons which are sent to school will be kept in the office for pick-up at the end of the day.

BEHAVIOR

Austin Public Schools has a Bullying Prohibition Policy #514 that addresses bullying in the schools. The policy can be found at:

<https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-offices/school-board/district-policies-posts/policy-detail/~board/school-board-policies/post/policy-514-bullying-prohibition-policy>

BICYCLES

Students may ride their bicycles or skateboards to school with their parents' permission. Students who ride bicycles or skateboards are expected to obey all traffic regulations. Bicycles should be parked in the school bike rack. A good locking device used through the frame or back wheel is advised. Students must work with their classroom teacher regarding storage of skateboards. The school assumes no responsibility for bicycles or skateboards.

BIRTHDAYS

Individual classrooms will observe birthdays with special activities planned by teachers, such as allowing children to wear a "Birthday Hat" or by singing to them. If students choose to share a treat with the class on their birthday, food must be an individually wrapped and purchased treat that, in the interest of instructional time, can quickly be consumed. Examples of such treats are fruit snacks, individual packages of cookies or crackers, etc.... **Parents should contact the teacher to make them aware that they are sending a treat for the class.** Please do not distribute personal party invitations at school.

If you do not want your child to participate in holiday or birthday celebrations for personal or religious reasons your desires will be honored. Please contact the classroom teacher to discuss the activities in which your child should not participate, and to decide what he or she will do during these events.

BREAKFAST

Universal free breakfast after the bell program is served in each building. Any student who arrive thirty minutes after the start of the day, will have access to a grab and go breakfast.

BUS SERVICE

The following companies provide bus service to all transported children:

Palmer Bus Service.....433-5358
Palmer Bus Service Special Services Inc.....437-6051

Children who ride the bus are expected to ride consistently unless the school and bus driver are notified. Parents of bus students are asked to send a note to their child's teacher if their child is not to ride the bus home after school on a certain day. **CHILDREN WHO NORMALLY WALK TO SCHOOL ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RIDE THE BUS TO HOMES OF FRIENDS.** This is a bus company regulation.

If you have a change from your regular transportation plans, it is important to NOTIFY THE CLASSROOM TEACHER WITH A NOTE PRIOR TO THE CHANGE. In the absence of a written note from you, your child will be sent home by way of their regular after-school plan. Changes of plan may be telephoned to the school in an emergency.

Transportation as provided is a privilege, not a right. **Student misbehavior on the bus may result in the loss of this privilege.**

Please refer to your Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook for a complete list of student transportation safety procedures, rules and consequences.

CHANGE OF PLANS

If you have a change from your regular pick-up plans, it is important to notify the classroom teacher with a note prior to the change. **In the absence of a written note from you, your child will be sent home by way of their regular after-school plan.** Change of plans may be telephoned to the school in an emergency.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Careful thought is given to the class placement of each child for the new school year. We strive to balance classrooms and optimize learning for ALL children. The needs of all children are important and taken into consideration. Below are guidelines that we follow as we consider parental requests regarding class placement of their child(ren) for the following school year:

- 1) Parents/guardians wanting to provide specific input about their child may request a Class Placement Form from the office. This written input should emphasize the needs/characteristics of your child. Providing this type of information about your child is helpful to our staff as we prepare class placement for students.
- 2) As class placements are made, we give careful consideration to the information that you share about your child. Please do not make specific teacher requests. The staff takes many considerations into account when class placements are made. We strive to develop classes that balance achievement/ability levels and learning styles. We also consider class size, boy/girl ratio, relationships with peers, and the children's degree of dependence and independence.

While we carefully review all parental input, it is not always possible to honor requests as we balance classrooms to optimize learning for all students.

CUSTODY INFORMATION AND RESTRAINING ORDERS

Custody and restraining orders must be on file in the school office. It is vital that you keep the office informed in writing if there is a legal ruling that an individual is restricted from seeing your child during the school day. Non-custodial parents may receive school bulletins, report cards and other school communications upon request.

DATA SHARING PRACTICES

It is the practice of Austin Public Schools to share data with appropriate representatives from Mower County Human Services, Mower County Corrections, Mower County Attorney's Office, and law enforcement on a need to know basis for the sole purpose of coordinating services to support the education of a student in the Austin Public Schools. Parents will be provided written notice of this practice at the beginning of each year. (MN Statute 626.558)

DRESS

Please refer to school board policy 504 for details regarding student dress. The policy can be found at:

<https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-offices/school-board/district-policies-posts>

FOOD

All food served to students at school must be purchased from commercial sources such as bakeries, grocery stores, or department stores. Due to public health reasons, food should not be prepared at home to be shared with others.

GIFTED AND TALENTED SERVICES

Each K-4 elementary school provides Advanced Academics and Talent Development (AATD) and has a teacher who oversees these services at the site. Services in and out of the classroom occur through reading enrichment groups, math enrichment groups, and Young Scholars groups. Young Scholars is a program that focuses on creative thinking. Students move in and out of these groups based on their performance in the classroom.

Pi Academy is a full-time gifted program for district-wide first-fourth graders. It is housed at Southgate Elementary. The mission of Pi Academy is to provide personalized instruction to develop, enhance, and maximize the development of highly-able learners in the Austin Public School District. Students qualify for this program based on achievement and ability testing. Families of eligible students are notified in the winter months.

Gifted Services for Talent Development also offers opportunities for all students within the district. Opportunities at the elementary level include the Young Authors, Young Artists Conference and The Austin Public School Poetry Contest.

HEALTH CONCERN/MEDICATIONS

The purpose of a school health program is to maintain, improve and promote the health of the school age child. Austin Public Schools Health Services consists of a Licensed School Nurse, RN and LPN nursing staff, and administrative assistants.

The health office is a space where ill students can rest until they are able to return to class or are placed under their parent's care. It is a site for health screening procedures, a center where health records are located and an area where nursing procedures are done so that students can participate as fully as possible in the least restrictive educational setting.

If your child becomes ill, suffers an injury requiring your attention, or appears to have possible symptoms of a communicable disease, you will be notified and asked to pick up your child. By doing this, we are protecting both your child's health and the health of the other children in the school.

If you cannot be reached at home or work, the school will contact the emergency party you have indicated on your child's enrollment form.

Many parents are unsure about whether students should attend school or stay home. Staying home and resting permits the body to combat the illness more quickly. **If your child is coming down with a communicable disease, remaining at home may prevent infecting other students.** Austin Public Schools give the following guidelines for determining whether a child should attend school or remain at home.

It is recommended that children remain at home if they have the following conditions:

- Severe cold, cough or sore throat
- Skin rashes, especially if draining, unless medical opinion states the rash is not communicable
- Temperature of 100.0 or more with or without symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain
- Or any other signs of acute illness

The child may return to school when:

- They are free of symptoms (including fever) for 24 hours without the use of medications
- Or advised by a physician to do so

Please do not hesitate to contact the nurse in your child's building, if you need assistance in deciding whether your child is well enough to be in school.

Austin Public Schools recognizes that some students may need medication during school hours. The school district has implemented policies and procedures to make sure these services are delivered to your children safely. **Prescription medications** require an authorization form that is signed by the medical provider and parent. The medications **must** be brought to school by the parent in the original pharmacy labeled container. **Over the counter medications** that do not exceed bottle recommendations may be administered with written parent permission. The parent needs to provide a new, unopened bottle, labeled with the student's name. Do not send any type of medication to school with your child in their backpack. Please feel free to reference our medication policy on the school website.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Austin Public Schools requires all parents and students to read and sign an Internet Acceptable Use Policy prior to gaining access to the Internet at school. The Internet Acceptable Use Policy will be given to parents and students for their review and signature at the beginning of first grade or when a student enrolls for the first time.

Parents that have questions concerning the Internet Acceptable Use Policy should contact the Technology Coordinator for the Austin Public Schools.

KIDS KORNER

Kids Korner is a quality preschool and school age childcare program. We provide a place for children before and after school, on specified non-school days, snow emergency days, and during the summer. Our program encourages adventure, creativity, healthy self-concepts, respect for others, responsible behavior, and a positive attitude.

Children ages 3 years old through 4th grade may be enrolled if space is available at the age-appropriate site. Students must enroll at the site located at the school in which they are currently enrolled or to which they are assigned.

The Community Learning Center provides care for children ages 3 – 5 that are enrolled in ECFE or ECSE Preschool programs and with limited availability open to the community.

Banfield, Neveln, Southgate, Sumner and Woodson schools provide quality before and after school care for Austin Public School students in kindergarten through 4th grade.

There is a minimum **three** business day processing time between registration and the time a child can begin to attend the program. Children may not start the program until the registration fee is paid and processed.

For more information on Kids Korner call the main office at 507 460-1706 or visit the Kids Korner page on the district web site www.austin.k12.mn.us

Non-School Days/Early Release Days

During the regular school year when school is not in session, the Kids Korner programs will have a designated site open. Parents need to sign their child(ren) up one week in advance to attend.

Late Start Woodson - If school is delayed 2 hours, Kids Korner will be open at 6:15 a.m. If school is cancelled for the day after the site opens, Kids Korner will remain open until 6:00 pm unless directed to close by the superintendent.

Early Dismissal all sites - If school closes early because of weather, Kids Korner will be open from dismissal time until 6:00 p.m.

School Cancellation – When school is cancelled prior to 6:00 am for the day because of weather, Kids Korner will be open 6:15 am-6:00 pm at one central site for all students. If school is cancelled after 6:00 am Kids Korner will be open at all locations 6:15 am-6:00 pm. Sites will close only upon direction of the superintendent. School lunch will not be provided.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

Students may leave the school grounds during school hours only with a written or verbal request from their parent or guardian. The teacher and school office personnel must be informed any time your child is leaving school before the regular dismissal time. The adult responsible for taking a student out of school must sign out in the office before leaving and again if the child returns to school the same day.

Children will not be dismissed at the request of an adult if the identity of that adult has not been established. If there is any question about whether a child should be leaving with someone, the school office will be consulted.

LOST AND FOUND

Clothing and other items found on school grounds are placed in the lost and found area of each school. Money or other articles of value are turned into the office. Please label your child's clothes and other school items before he or she brings them to school.

LUNCH

A school breakfast and lunch is available to all students. Each student is issued an individual lunch account & lunch number upon enrollment. The District uses a pre-paid system in which a deposit is made into the student account and as lunches are purchased, the balance shrinks. Payments in the form of checks or cash may be sent with your child to their school or can be mailed to the Food Service Cashier at 301 3rd St NW, Austin, MN 55912. Payments can also be made at www.mypaymentsplus.com. Please contact the food service office for your student's ID number prior to registering at this secure site. Mypaymentsplus also allows you to view your student's purchasing history, set up low balance reminders & use debit/credit card for payment. Please try to keep balances at or above \$0.

Breakfast is provided at no charge to all students. Lunch prices will be published before registration. We encourage families to fill out a form for Educational Benefits (free & reduced price lunches) at registration. We need only one form per family and must have a new form each school year. Students who qualify for reduced priced lunches will receive their lunch at no charge, due to a Minnesota state funding change.

Students with special dietary needs are required to have a notice from a physician. This should go to your school nurse, who will then forward it to the Food & Nutrition Dept. This will remain on file unless we are notified of a change in dietary needs.

Parents are welcome to join their students for lunch. Please phone the school office by 8:30 a.m. if you plan to have a school lunch. Students may opt to bring a sack lunch from home. Milk is available for purchase.

Parents may call 460-1919 or 460-1821 with questions or concerns. For a complete copy of our Visitor Guidelines please inquire in our school office.

Lunches purchased elsewhere (fast food, etc.) are not to be brought to school. Students may not bring soda to drink with their lunch.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are discouraged from bringing personal items to school unless requested to do so, such as for "Show and Tell." CD players, Ipods, MP3 players or any electronic device, sports equipment or toys should be kept at home. The district is not responsible for damage to or loss of personal property which is brought to school.

USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

The Austin Public Schools recognizes the value of the use of technology in the education of our students. To the extent possible, the school district is committed to providing the technology resources needed to provide a quality education to our students. The district recognizes the rapidly expanding use of personally owned devices (**such as cell phones, ipads, ipods, kindles, etc...**) in all areas of students' lives and the desire of students to use their own devices in school as they do in their personal lives. For this reason, students will be permitted to bring their own devices to use for educational purposes in school subject to these conditions:

1. The use of personal devices within a school will be at the discretion of the school administration.
2. Students are expected to use their devices for educational purposes and in an appropriate manner.
3. Students using personal devices are to comply with district policies and with the district Acceptable Use Policy.
4. Students must obtain the permission of their teacher before using a personal device in class. The use of personal devices must support the instructional activities in the classroom.
5. Students must shut down and put away a personal device immediately when requested by a staff member.
6. The use of a personal device must not be a distraction to others.
7. Network access must be via the wireless network only. Students are not permitted to connect personal devices to the District Network via Ethernet or any other wires.
8. The school district is not responsible for the theft, loss or damage to any personally brought to school.

PETS

Pets are not permitted at the elementary schools unless for an educational purpose with prior approval. This procedure is for your child's safety.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America weekly. Any person who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students must respect another person's right to make that choice. Students will also receive instruction in the proper etiquette toward, correct display of, and respect for the flag.

RECESS

Always see that your child is dressed appropriately to play outside. Students will go outside for fresh air and exercise during the lunch hour unless it is colder than 0°Fahrenheit, or if the wind chill is -10°Fahrenheit, or it is raining. Your child may not stay inside for recess without a doctor's note. Students are more ready to pay attention to their lessons if they have had a chance to be physically active at recess. Also, supervision is difficult when some students are outside and others are inside.

SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the Austin Public Schools to recognize the right and responsibility of parents in the matter of school attendance on stormy or cold days. In most cases of bad weather conditions, the parents should make the decision as to whether the child should attempt to come to school.

Austin Public Schools provides school closing alerts through the Parent Portal Messenger utility. If you would like to be included in receiving school closing alerts via email, voice and text messages, please use your Parent Portal account to set your contact support at: portal@austin.k12.mn.us.

It is important for each family to have a plan, familiar to the children, of what to do and where to go if parents are not at home when school is dismissed. If children are to ride with neighbors or friends, parents must make this decision. Children should be aware of your plans before a weather emergency occurs.

Please do not call the school during severe weather unless it is absolutely necessary. We will get messages to children if possible, but telephones may be busy or out of order. For this reason, it is important to have a home plan. Every effort will be made by the school to keep your child safe. **PLEASE SET UP A SEVERE WEATHER PLAN WITH YOUR CHILD NOW!**

Flexible Learning Days are school days where, instead of coming to a school building, students complete preassigned classwork, we will use these days in the event of an unscheduled school closure.

In the past, unscheduled school closures have resulted in the loss of instructional time and, in some years, the need to make up days. Flexible Learning Days allow us to take advantage of our modern digital age to address these issues and give our students authentic learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

In the event of an unscheduled school closure,

- Parents/guardians will receive a notification via Parent Portal and the closure will be announced via local media, the district website, and social media. Our goal is to provide this notice before 6:30 am.
- Students will use the information posted below to complete their Flexible Learning Day sheet.
- Teachers will be available throughout the day via email to provide assistance and answer student questions.
- Academic plans will take into account time requirements and student needs.

Operation of Kids Korner during inclement weather ... We ask you to follow these guidelines during inclement weather.

Late Start CLC - If school is delayed, the CLC will not have morning classes, but afternoon classes will be held. Kids Korner at CLC will be open at 6:15 am. If school is cancelled for the day after the site opens, Kids Korner will remain open until 6:00 pm unless directed to close by the superintendent. School lunch will **not** be provided.

Late Start Woodson - If school is delayed 2 hours, Kids Korner will be open at 6:15 am at Woodson. If school is cancelled for the day after the site opens, Kids Korner will remain open until 6:00 pm unless directed to close by the superintendent.

Late Start elementary sites - If school is delayed 2 hours, Kids Korner will be open at 6:15 am at each elementary site. If school is cancelled for the day after the site opens, Kids Korner will remain open until 6:00 pm unless directed to close by the superintendent.

Early Dismissal all sites - If school closes early because of weather, Kids Korner will be open at school dismissal time unless otherwise directed by the superintendent.

School Cancellation – When school is cancelled prior to 6:00 am for the day because of weather, Kids Korner will be open at 6:15 am-6:00 pm at Banfield Elementary unless directed to close by the superintendent. If school is cancelled after 6:00 am Kids Korner will be open at all locations from 6:15 am-6:00 pm. School lunch will not be provided.

STUDENT USE OF TELEPHONE

The school phone is for business purposes. Students will be allowed to use the phone in emergencies only (illness, injury, etc.) Students will not be permitted to use the phone to arrange social events.

TITLE I PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Students have access to Title I services in all grades in the areas of reading and math. Services are delivered in small group instruction with a Title I teacher. Parents of students receiving Title I services are invited and strongly encouraged to be active in the following parental involvement activities:

- Be part of the annual Title I meeting to review the program requirements and their right to be involved.
- Attend conferences with Title I teacher and classroom teacher to review their child's performance.
- Read, complete and follow through on the Parent Compact that they receive in the fall.
- Attend parent/family nights which will provide training in literacy development of children.

Contact the building principal or Title I teacher if they have any questions, concerns or needs in fulfilling the above responsibilities.

TRAFFIC

Parents should avoid stopping their cars to pick up children in the area set aside for busses. Please do not park and leave your car in front of the main entrances. Caution your children not to run across a street to get into your car without looking carefully for traffic. Remind your children to cross at marked crosswalks or with a Safety Patrol. If a child does not cross at the marked crosswalks, they should be walked across the street by an adult.

VISITORS

Austin Public Schools recognizes the importance of parents and community members supporting our schools. Requests to visit students during lunch or observations of classrooms are to be made through the school office. School administration reserves the right to closely monitor school visitors in order to minimize disruption of instruction. For a complete copy of our Visitor Guidelines please inquire in our school office.

VOLUNTEERS

Parents and adult family members are encouraged to volunteer at their child's school and with the Austin Public School system. Volunteers provide a valuable service to our students and staff. Volunteers must complete an application and background check before serving students affiliated with Austin Public Schools. This includes chaperoning for school events and field trips. Volunteers must abide by confidentiality and ethical standards set out by the district for all district staff. Volunteer applications are available at all school and district offices. The district will cover the cost of the background check. Please allow four weeks for applications to be processed.

WEAPONS

Weapons or look-alike weapons and explosive devices or look-alike explosive devices are not allowed on school grounds or at school activities, with the exception of weapons in the control of law enforcement officials or those being used for educational purposes and approved by the principal.

It is the policy of the Austin Public School District that any student who brings any such weapon to school shall be expelled for one calendar year. The school board may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis. Any student who brings a look-alike weapon to school shall face consequences including possible suspension from school. (Board Policy 501)

Parents of students found in violation of this policy will be contacted, and the students may be reported to law enforcement officials.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

In the event your child will be moving from the school, please inform the principal as soon as possible. Such notice is necessary even when the family is moving to a different school in the Austin district.

ANNUAL PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Please see the Austin Public Schools' website for annual notifications regarding Indoor Air Quality, AHERA Annual Asbestos Notification, Pesticide Notification, Student Surveys Participation Policy, and the Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records Policy. These can be found at <https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-resources/annual-notifications> or you can request a paper copy by calling the Superintendent of School's office at 507-460-1900.

Please note the parent refusal form from Minnesota Testing Opt out form on the following pages.

Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#).

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 public and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education, and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

MCA and MTAS are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments helps families see a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results:

- For course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.
- For Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and College in the Schools programs.

English learners who take the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions about how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any other consequences for not participating.

Explore
the Statewide
Testing page
for more
information

(education.mn.gov >
Students and Families >
Programs and Initiatives >
Statewide Testing)

Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1 percent of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the beginning of each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20__ to 20__ school year.)



Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. This form must be returned to your student's school before the applicable test administration.

Student Information

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Current Grade in School: _____

School: _____ District: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reason for Refusal:

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting the student out of this school year:

MCA/MTAS Reading

MCA/MTAS Science

MCA/MTAS Mathematics

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.