

December 5, 2016

Dear Titan Families,

It's hard to believe that the first semester is about to come to an end. We've had a great first half of the year with much success in our academics, athletics, and the arts. As we near the end of the semester and get ready to take final exams, I wanted to take a moment to tell you that I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the students, parents, and staff at SLMS. So many students and parents have taken an extra moment here or there to either stop me in the hall, send me an email, or give me a phone call to introduce themselves or to just say hello and welcome me to the school. It's a testament to the family-oriented nature of the community, and it has had a profound impact on me. The students, parents, and staff of SLMS inspire me to be the best leader I can be. I look forward to meeting more of you as we move into the second semester.

### **Semester Exams Start December 13<sup>th</sup> – Important Information**

For our sixth grade students, semester exams are something new, and studying for them will be important. **The first semester exam (SE1) counts for 15% of a student's overall Semester 1 grade (S1), which is the equivalent of 2.5 weeks of work;** each nine-week grade (T1 and T2) count 42.5%, respectively. By the time that you read this message, your child should have received all of his/her semester exam reviews.

The semester exam schedule may be found in the Announcements section of our campus webpage at [www.fortbendisd.com/slms](http://www.fortbendisd.com/slms). **Please note that no exams may be taken early.** Opportunities to take missed exams occur daily after school in Room 104 starting Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, and **all exams must be made up by Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>.** Please make the necessary arrangements for a snack and for transportation on the day(s) your child takes his/her make-up exam(s). Students will be given the same amount of time to take each make-up exam as was originally scheduled during semester exam week, which is approximately 2 hours (4:20-6:20). **We will also have opportunities for your child to make up his/her exams on Monday, January 2, 2017.** We will start exams at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 1:00 PM. Please check in at the front office, and then report to the counseling suite. Please arrive 15 minutes ahead of your desired start time.

Please also note that on our **early release days of Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>,** our day will end at **1:25**. Additionally, we have set aside 30 minutes for all students to eat lunch from 10:50-11:20 on both of those days. What is different, though, is that students will have **two options for lunch**—bring lunch from home or order a sack lunch from the cafeteria. Students will eat their lunch in their classrooms at the conclusion of each day's first exam before proceeding to their next test. Furthermore, students are reminded to stay off of other FBISD property, such as elementary schools after we dismiss; these schools are still in session until their regular dismissal time.

Last, but also important, on our **early release days (December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>),** students will not be visiting their lockers. **Therefore, no backpacks or string bags will be allowed at school on these early release days.** Students may only bring **pencils, a book to read, and a lunch from home** (if not ordering a sack lunch from the cafeteria). Girls may bring a small purse, if needed.

Fort Bend Independent School District

## **New Procedure Regarding Digital Devices on Test Days**

Something new to share with you is that starting with the upcoming semester exams is that our campus-based leadership team (CBLT) has approved a procedure regarding students' digital devices during tests. It mirrors the procedure that is used across the state of Texas during STAAR assessments. It is already posted on our campus webpage, and teachers will review this new procedure with students this week:

- Every test/major assessment will be administered by teachers like a STAAR or EOC exam
- Cell phones, smart watches, and all other electronic devices – except as designated by the teacher – **will be turned off and away from students' desks**
- Students caught with unapproved devices in their **possession** *at any time* during a major assessment will have their device confiscated (delivered to assistant principal, subject to discipline) & their assessment will not be graded
- Students **using** devices during major assessments will receive a “zero” on the assignment, their device will be confiscated, and they will be referred to administration
- Calculators must be cleared before major assessments and verified by the teacher
- Music players will not be worn by students during major assessments

## **Looking Forward to the Second Semester**

As we close out the first semester and start the second semester (on January 3<sup>rd</sup>), please consider the following having your child engage further with school by joining one of our great clubs; the full list may be found on our [clubs and organizations webpage](#). We are also still looking for parent volunteer assistance through our PTO and our VIPS program. Career Day for our 8<sup>th</sup> graders is coming up on Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, and we still need guest speakers and volunteers for the day. Please contact Rebecca Vaughan, VIPS Coordinator, at [rnd.vaughan@gmail.com](mailto:rnd.vaughan@gmail.com) if you are able to help volunteer or Kim Seright, counselor, at [Kimberly.Seright@fortbendis.com](mailto:Kimberly.Seright@fortbendis.com) if you are interested in being a guest speaker/presenter for Career Day.

Be sure follow us on Twitter ([@SugarLandMS](#)), keep up with your child's grades, etc., on Skyward Family Access (instructions may be found on our campus webpage), and monitor our campus webpage ([www.fortbendis.com/slms](http://www.fortbendis.com/slms)) and the PTO website ([www.slmspto.org](http://www.slmspto.org)) regularly.

In closing, I want to re-state that I am proud to serve as your principal, and I wish you and your family the best during the Winter Break. Please feel free to reach out to me at [keith.fickel@fortbendis.com](mailto:keith.fickel@fortbendis.com) if needed.

Kindest regards,

Keith Fickel, Principal  
Sugar Land Middle School