

December 10, 2018

Dear Titan Families,

It is hard to believe that the first semester is about to come to an end. We have had a great first half of the year with much success in our academics, athletics, and the arts, as well as in academic and social-emotional growth. As we approach the end of the semester, I wanted to take a moment to share some important information to help you be positioned to assist your child do his/her best on upcoming exams.

### **Semester Exams Start December 18 – 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 his/her semester exam reviews.

The [semester exam schedule](#) may be found on our campus webpage. **Please note that no exams may be taken early.** Opportunities to take missed exams occur daily after school in Room 104 starting Tuesday, January 8, and **all exams must be made up by Friday, January 18.** This is a two week window to complete exams. 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 7 (a teacher professional development day).** 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.

### **Early Release Day Expectations**

Please also note that on our **early release days** of **Thursday, December 20, and Friday, December 21**, our day will end at **1:25 PM**. Additionally, we have set aside 30 minutes for all students to eat lunch from 10:50-11:20 AM 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 order their lunches for Thursday and Friday during their classes on Wednesday to give the cafeteria staff ample time to plan. On Thursday and Friday, students will eat their lunch in their classrooms after each day's first exam before proceeding to their next test. **Please note that due to exams, we will be unable to deliver lunches brought during the day by parents.** Furthermore, students are reminded to stay off other FBISD property, such as elementary schools after we dismiss. Also, if you have older children who are SLMS alumni, we request that they not come up to the school on their early release days, as well. Our staff will be engaged with grading semester exams, inputting grades into Skyward, and preparing for checkout responsibilities after school on these early release days.

Last, but also important, on our **early release days (December 20 and 21)**, 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.

Dress code will still be in effect on early release days and on all exam days. Therefore, no blankets, pillows, pajamas, slippers, hats, etc., will be permitted on these days, just as they are not permitted on regular school days.

### **Flagpole in the Front of the School**

You may have noticed that our flags continue to fly at full staff, even though there is a presidential order to fly the flags half-staff through the end of December. This is because our flagpole is broken at the top, and the lift used to attempt a repair was not tall enough. The district is working on a solution, which could include a new flagpole, so that we may pay proper respect to President George H. W. Bush, and to any others for whom we would need to fly the flags at half-staff. Our apologies to the community for this situation.

### **Laptop Lending Library**

Starting in January, students will have access to a Laptop Lending Library. Students will have the opportunity to check out a laptop to support their learning and to use for educational purposes. The devices will also have a hotspot that will allow students to access the Internet to use educational resources (e.g., Schoology, Word Online, etc.). The main purpose of the Lending Library is to provide students with access to a laptop and the Internet for a two-week period so that they can complete online assignments, conduct research, and create products for their coursework.

Devices will be checked out like a library book. A student may extend his/her checkout period if there is no request or other student on a waiting list for a device when your child checks in the laptop at the end of the lending period.

Before a device may be checked-out, parents and students will have some online forms to complete through Skyward Family Access. Full details about these documents and Lending Library procedures will be posted on our webpage and emailed to families in January, as well as communicated to students. We hope that students will find these devices to be helpful, and we are excited that SLMS was chosen to pilot this program, along with Kempner High School.

### **Spirit Night at Chick-Fil-A on Wednesday, December 12**

Please come out to Chick-Fil-A on West Airport and Highway 59 on Wednesday, December 12, from 3:00 until 9:00 PM to support SLMS. 20% of sales will go to our school.

### **Parent Coffee with the Principal**

Please join us on Friday, December 14, at 9:30 AM in the upstairs library for our semi-monthly parent coffee

### **Gift Cards for SLMS Staff**

Thank you to the many families who have donated a gift card to the school to be shared with staff during their Holiday Luncheon on December 20. We have received 96 cards so far (awesome!), and we need about 130. Our goal is to have a card for every teacher and staff member. If you have some time, please drop off a \$10 gift card at the front office. Suggestions include Starbucks, Target, Panera, Walmart, or whatever you like.

## **Yearbooks**

Please visit [www.balfour.com](http://www.balfour.com) and search for Sugar Land Middle School to purchase your yearbook. The price is \$40.00. Our students are working hard to produce a high-quality book! 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents: the deadline to order an ad in the yearbook for your 8<sup>th</sup> grade child is February 1. Visit [www.balfour.com](http://www.balfour.com), search for Sugar Land MS, and then select either 1/4 or 1/8 of a page. \$25 for small size, \$45 for large size. Send your written ad message to [molly.childs@fortbendisd.com](mailto:molly.childs@fortbendisd.com) so that it may be included in the ad.

## **Are You Moving During the Break?**

If you are planning to move during the break and your child will no longer attend Sugar Land MS for the next semester, please come by the school to fill out an *Intent to Withdraw* form. This form needs to be processed before the semester ends. The last day to come in and fill out the form will be December 19. See Mrs. Phillips. Thank you in advance for your help, and we wish you the best!

## **Keeping Up With SLMS**

Be sure follow us on Twitter ([@SLMSTitans](https://twitter.com/SLMSTitans)), keep up with your child's grades, etc., on Skyward Family Access (instructions may be found on our campus webpage), see your child's work in progress through our blended learning platform, Schoology (instructions on campus webpage), and monitor our campus webpage ([www.fortbendisd.com/slms](http://www.fortbendisd.com/slms)) and the PTO website ([www.slmspto.org](http://www.slmspto.org)) regularly.

I and the entire SLMS faculty and staff wish you and your family the best during the Winter Break. We have had a great first semester, and I know that the second semester will be a great one, too!

Kindest regards,

Keith Fickel, Principal  
Sugar Land Middle School