

Dickson County Board of Education

817 North Charlotte Street

Dickson, TN 37055

615.446.7571

Johnny Chandler, Director of Schools

August 2011

To the Families of all Secondary School Students in Dickson County:

I hope the first few weeks of school have been great for your child. We have a very high performing school system with many outstanding educators. Our schools rank very high in student achievement levels and yearly achievement gains. We are glad to have the opportunity to help educate your child.

In recent years, a tremendous amount of effort at the national, state, and local levels have been placed on preparing our students to be ready to start a working career or be ready for college when our students finish high school.

For students planning on attending college, we are striving to have them prepared so that they need no remedial classes when they go to college. For students who do not plan to attend college, we are striving to prepare them with the skills that will allow them to gain employment in the difficult economy in today's world.

To be successful in the 21st Century, a post high school education is almost essential. Our young people are competing with people from all over the world for jobs. The best trained and best educated student will receive the most attractive jobs.

To prepare our young people for a successful life, we all must work together. Here are some things that will help your child perform better in school:

1. Make sure he/she is in school, on time, everyday they are physically able. Schedule appointments during breaks or after school hours. If they are sick, keep them home; if they feel bad, send them to school. Absenteeism is a major cause of students not being successful in school.
2. Keep in contact with your child's teachers. Insist that you be contacted when your child first starts having difficulty in school. Attend all Parent/Teacher Conferences.
3. Encourage your child to get involved in school activities. Being involved makes school enjoyable and puts your child with children of similar interest.
4. Make performing well in school a priority. Let your child know that performing well in school is very important to you. All other activities should come after school work. Don't accept less than they are capable.
5. Provide a quiet place with necessary supplies that your child needs to do his or her school work. Expect a reasonable amount of homework. Homework should reinforce what was taught at school that day or in previous lessons.

ACT Test scores are much more important to your child's future than most people realize. Not only will good ACT scores allow students to attend colleges of their choices but can be a huge financial benefit to their parents. Students who score a 21 or higher on the ACT will be eligible for the \$4,000 Hope Scholarship (Lottery). That money may be applied towards colleges or technical schools. \$4,000 is a lot of money to the average Dickson County family. We are working hard at preparing our students for the ACT. Our goal is to have 70% of our students in Dickson County to qualify for the Hope Scholarship. Here are some things we are doing:

1. Students in 8th grade are given the Explore Test which is a Pre-ACT.
2. All 9th graders are given a practice ACT.
3. 10th graders are given the PLAN Test which also is a Pre-ACT.
4. All 11th graders will be given a practice ACT in September of their 11th grade year.
5. A part of the school day throughout their high school career will be used for ACT preparation.
6. All 11th graders in Tennessee take the ACT on March 20, 2012.
7. We have started recognizing students that score high on their ACT. We have a 30 Club that allows students free admission to school events, preferential parking, and their names/photos displayed. We are making it important to do well.

What you can do to help prepare your child to do well on the ACT:

1. Encourage your child to take more challenging classes. This includes students in middle school.
2. Prepare: ACT websites (www.act.org, www.act.org/ew/resources, www.act.org/standards) allow students to take practice questions as often as they like. Encourage your child to begin early preparing. I spoke with a young lady at CWHS that said her mom made her do 5 practice ACT questions a night. I predict she will do well.

In the fall of 2011, the average ACT score for UT Knoxville freshmen was a 26.5. Dickson County 11th graders scored an average of 19.3 on the ACT in March of 2011.

New State Legislation passed in 2010, requires school systems to make TCAP results between 15% and 25% of a students' final report card grade. This percentage will be factored into students final spring semester. The subject areas impacted by the change are math, reading/language arts, science, and social studies. The Dickson County school Board voted to allow TCAP scores to count 20% of middle school students' final semester average in grades 6-8th. High school End-Of-Course test counts 25% of the final semester average.

When you are notified that your child is having academic difficulties, do everything possible to work with the school to help get your child back on track. Our schools provide all kinds of help for students. Before school and after school tutoring along with some time built into the school day are just two of the ways students can receive extra help. We just cannot let our children get behind and be unsuccessful.

We have drastically reduced our dropout rate in our schools in the past few years. As far as I am concerned, one child dropping out is one too many. Not letting students get behind in school is the key to keeping them on track to graduate.

All Educators in Dickson County take their jobs very seriously. We will not tolerate disruptions, disrespectful conduct, violence of any type, bullying or refusal to do their school work. **Violators will have consequences.**

Please note:

In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Health, all 7th graders (or any new enrollees in TN. Schools) must show proof of the following immunizations:

- **Teranus-diphtheria-pertussis booster ("Tdap")**
- **Verification of immunity to varicella (Chicken Pox): 2 doses or a history of the disease.**

Dickson County 7th graders will have until Monday, October 17, 2011 to obtain these required immunizations. After that date, any 7th grader without proof of these immunizations will not be allowed to attend school.

With all of us working together we can accomplish great things for all of our students in Dickson County. We hope your child has the most productive and enjoyable year ever.

Sincerely,

Johnny Chandler

Please clip and return to your child's first period teacher to verify you have read this.

Student Name (please print) _____

Parent's Signature _____