

The Tartan Tribune

The Newsletter of McCullough Junior High

October 2017

McCullough.conroeisd.net

Twitter feed @McCulloughCISD

Volume 18 Issue 3

First U.I.L. Eligibility Deadline for Participation - September 29, 2017

The first University Interscholastic League (U.I.L.) deadline is **September 29th**. Texas students must pass all classes on this date and additionally at each nine weeks mark to be eligible to participate in contests, performances, Science Fair, games, etc. This includes passing all classes that are for high school credit as well as those that are Pre-AP. The complete listing of U.I.L. eligibility dates is available at our website. Students who are not passing a course on September 29th actually lose their eligibility to participate in contests on **October 6th at 3:55 p.m.** At our website, parents/guardians and students can access, print, and/or bookmark the file titled "UIL Eligibility Dates 17-18" for a complete overview of all eligibility changes as well as progress report dates. Note, Texas students who are ineligible are prohibited from riding the bus with the team, being on the field/stage/bench during an event, or participating in any way during contests according to U.I.L. rules.

Early Release- Friday, October 6th

Please note McCullough Junior High will have early release on Friday, **October 6th at 12:50 p.m.** This date coincides with the end of the first nine weeks. If you are picking your child up by car, your patience is appreciated in advance as the line may be longer than normal.

Revised Picture Dates

Picture dates have been rescheduled (due to the flood) for November 29th and 30th. More information is coming soon.

Revised Student Pep Rally Dates and Details

McCullough is tentatively set for student pep rallies on 9/26, 10/17, and 11/7. **Note, these are pep rallies for students** and each gathering will begin at 8:00 a.m. sharp and conclude around 8:32 a.m. There is a designated area for parents/guardians to sit for the pep rally, provided all children have a seat. Expect heavy traffic on the west side leading up to the pep rally start time. Entry is exclusively through the main brown west patio doors on the football field side of the building. Thanks in advance to all of the students and sponsors for their hard work in making our pep rallies possible.

Semester Exams Tentative Schedule

Students will take major exams the last week of each semester. It is important for students to be present for these major tests, if healthy. So that your child can do his/her best, please plan any vacations or healthcare appointments around exam dates. Finals count ten percent of the semester grade for junior high courses and fifteen percent for high school classes. Tentative dates for final exams are listed below.
First Semester Exams- begin 12/14/17
Second Semester Exams- begin 5/25/18

Free Parent and Student Access Center

Parents and guardians have free access to Parent Access Center via www.conroeisd.net. This portal gives complete access to student grades, attendance, tardies, discipline, STAAR scores, and other information. This tool can also give parents and guardians the opportunity to set thresholds where you will be emailed scores of each assignment. Students also have the same access via **Student Access Center**.

PSAT 8/9 - October 10th

Eighth grade students will be taking the PSAT 8/9 exam on **Monday, October 10**. At the same time all seventh grade students will take the writing benchmark. We will operate on a modified schedule. The special schedule for this day can be accessed at the bell schedules folder link on our website. The PSAT 8/9 tests the same skills as the SAT and PSAT, but is normed to the eighth grade. The test contains three timed sections: reading, writing and language, and math.

Free Homework Help Available for Students

McCullough offers many different varieties of tutoring and homework assistance for students. Taking advantage of these programs provides invaluable and free help for students. Please note, programs include:

- Free teacher tutoring at 8:05 a.m. daily (note one day per week teachers have morning duty)
- SPARKS peer tutoring during Advisory with Ms. Donna Meyer - dmeyer@conroeisd.net
- PAWS homework help Monday through Thursday from 4:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m. in the downstairs library

Tutoring begins the second week of school. PAWS and SPARKs will have their start dates announced over the P.A. during Advisory.

Bus Accidents and Breakdowns

What to Know in Advance of a Delay

Our buses do a great job each day of driving our students safely to and from home and school. To put it in perspective, in a given week CISD buses drive further than the distance from Earth to the Moon! With these miles comes the inevitability of minor bus wrecks or breakdowns. It is a rarity, but it does happen. Most students have phones now to keep you updated. Please note in advance we will attempt to send you email updates if we can based on the situations and if we have updated information. The preferred method of getting the child home after an incident is by the bus or a replacement bus. Please be aware, if you do appear on the scene, we cannot release students to parents or guardians until we get the go ahead from the police who are working the accident. Thanks for your understanding and cooperation in advance.

Science Fair - Friday, February 2nd

Junior high science fair will occur on Friday, February 2nd. Specific information on the day will be distributed by your child's science teacher.

Crosswalk Guards - Creekwood Park and Glen Loch Intersections

We have crosswalk guards that can help students cross at the southwest crosswalk connecting the main parking lot and Creekwood Park. Also, we now have crossing guards at the Panther Creek and Glen Loch intersection if your child is walking and needs to cross at this location.

Assistant Principals

Craig Harbin (7th A-K)
Lindsay Nichols (7th L-Z)
Steve Skidmore (8th A-K)
Beatriz English (8th L-Z)

Counselors

Marti Meerscheid (7th A-K)
Alex Schulz (7th L-Z)
Lindsay Hollomon (8th A-K)
Jana Shriver (8th L-Z)

Principal:

Chris McCord

Upcoming Events

- **11/20** Thanksgiving holidays begin
- **11/29** Student pictures
- **11/30** Student pictures
- **12/20** Early release day
- **12/21** Winter break begins
- **1/9** Students return for second semester - red day
- **1/11** Incoming eighth grade parent/guardian presentation - noon
- **1/15** Holiday
- **1/16** Incoming seventh parent/guardian information morning- 9:30 a.m.
- **1/17** Incoming seventh parent/guardian information night - 6:00 p.m.
- **1/18** P.T.O. Meeting
- **1/30** Elective information night for incoming 7th
- **2/2** Science fair
- **2/8** Cheerleader tryout information meeting
- **2/19** Holiday
- **3/12** Spring break begins
- **3/27** Highland Girl tryout information meeting
- **4/19** P.T.O. Meeting
- **4/30** Holiday
- **5/28** Holiday
- **5/31** Early release day
All dates are tentative

McCullough Phone Numbers

Transportation: (832) 592-8800
Main Line: (832) 592-5100
Metro Line: (832) 482-6215
Main Line: (936) 709-7215
Fax: (832) 592-5116
Attendance: (832) 592-5111
Kidchat Tipline (888) KIDCHAT

Early Checkout Specifics to Help

If you are checking your child out early during the school day, it will be far quicker if the student brings a note to the front desk before school with your clear directions on what time he/she should be waiting for you in the front office. Please note, this is even more important if the child is in athletics or physical education as it can take much longer to locate them and have them in the front office if they are picked up without an advance note. A form is available on our website for use to help make the process faster. This document is located in our parent services area titled "early release request form." Additional forms are available as needed at the front desk. *Please note a parent or guardian must come into the building to check a student out.* For student safety, please note in advance a photo I.D. is required to check out your child.

Parking Lot Safety and Speed Limit

The posted speed limit in our lots is 5 mph. For the safety of all, please note the posting.

Bicycle Safety

If your child is riding a bike, our bicycle rack is on the west side by the football field. This area is under video surveillance and is close to the west doors in case of rain. Please remind your child to please make certain he/she does not ride through the parking lot. The setup is such that the rider can ride through the grass and bypass normal parking lot traffic. *If you operate a vehicle in our parking lot, please be cognizant of all bicycle, car, and foot traffic.* The first week of school we met with all students to discuss bike safety and expectations within that meeting.

Riding Home on an Alternate Bus in an Emergency

Students may be allowed to ride home on an alternate bus in the event of an *emergency*. However, there are a number of action items students/parents/guardians need to know in advance to ensure a student can and does secure the appropriate transportation home at the end of the day. These include:

- some buses are operating daily at maximum capacity and *cannot* take extra riders
- to ride home on an alternate bus with a friend, a note from a parent or guardian is required including the full name of your child, alternate bus your child needs to ride, parent/guardian phone number, and parent/guardian signature
- a contact number where you can be reached to potentially verify
- the request form with the parent signature and contact number must be submitted to the grade level office by noon for verification

Visit The McCullough Webstore at www.mccwebstore.com

Go to McCullough's online webstore direct link to purchase select athletic clothing, science fair supplies, pay for class activity fees, and purchase choir, band, and orchestra uniforms. Login instructions are on the website.

McCullough Online Presence at Twitter and Facebook

Parents, guardians, and students can follow McCullough online at Twitter and Facebook for complete and timely updates on school happenings and student success. Through this portal, our campus will work to keep you updated on all events occurring at McCullough, TWHS, and with our alumni. The addresses are
Twitter - @mcculloughcisid
Facebook - @mcculloughjhcisid

2018-2019 Drill Team Tryouts Tentative Dates

The McCullough Highland Girls Drill Team tryout informational meeting for 2018-2019 will be held on Tuesday, March 27th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Bock Auditorium. Tryout packet forms will be due Friday, April 6th by 5:00 p.m. The tryout clinic will be April 11th through April 13th and April 16th through April 20th, in the large gym at 4:30 p.m. Tryouts will occur on Saturday, April 21st at 8:00 a.m. Please contact Ms. Gilmore at sgilmore@conroeisd.net or Ms. Nichols at nichols@conroeisd.net if you have any questions.

Knowing Where Your Child is After School**Helping Eliminate Stress of Locating Your Son or Daughter After School Dismisses**

When you are a parent/guardian, seeing your child come home from school is an exciting time. Our goal is to ensure your child comes home each and every day at the time you expect and through the method you anticipate. We care and want to ensure everyone is reunited appropriately. However, at dismissal in secondary schools across the country, students choose their own path coordinated with parents/guardians to arrive home whether it be by bus, bike, car, or walking. Every day we have over 2200 children arrive home just as the plan was meant to be. On an occasional basis we have a situation where a child chose an alternative plan on his/her own after school without alerting a parent or guardian. Please echo the suggestions we make to students to help ensure your child notifies a parent or guardian if the child unilaterally decides to change his/her plans.

We have a phone available for free use by students in the front office all day, every day until 6:00 p.m. Our office stays open late over an hour after school is out until 5:00 p.m. with Ms. Villarreal as our receptionist to assist. There are many dangers associated with students having cell phones and by no means are they required. However, late in the afternoon or early in the evening cell phones are a great tool to find your child when otherwise it may be next to impossible for anyone, including a parent, police, or us. Also, some devices have the ability to be located by a parent or guardian to narrow down the location of the phone and presumably the child.

Front Afternoon Pick Up

If you plan to enter the front office for any business after 3:00, you must park in either the west football field side main lot or the west side of the front horseshoe if space is available. There will be no "unattended parking" on the east or first half of the horseshoe after 3:00 p.m. due to the after school pick up line. Signs will be posted designating the east horseshoe area as a no parking zone after 3:00 p.m. Parking correctly will keep your vehicle from being blocked in by the car rider pick up line. The line which builds for afternoon pick up will need to form along the right curb so that emergency traffic can enter if needed.

State Student Success Initiative (SSI) Information**A Gentle Reminder that Eighth Grade Students Must Pass the State Reading and Math STAAR Exams in Order to Advance to Ninth Grade**

As a reminder, Texas students currently in eighth grade are required by the state Student Success Initiative (SSI) law to pass the eighth grade STAAR math and reading exams to advance to ninth grade. Eighth grade students will have three opportunities to take these exams, with two tests for each subject, coming in the school year and one each in the summer if necessary. Summer STAAR testing will occur in late June if necessary and students who do not pass the exams on the second administration are required by the state to attend summer STAAR Academy. Our goal is to support each child to help him/her do their best and pass the first time. If you have a child in eighth grade, please note this state law before making any firm decisions regarding out of town summer vacations.

Ongoing Bullying Prevention

The first week of school administrators meet with students through language arts classes to discuss school procedures, expectations, and where to go for help with any need. A wide range of topics are covered including the student handbook. One aspect of this is bullying prevention. If your child is bullied or perceives he/she is bullied at school, please have your student contact his/her administrator in the grade level offices. Email addresses for our assistant principal staff are available on our website. We want to help. Letting the appropriate assistant principal know, so that he/she can investigate, is key.

KIDCHAT Anonymous Tipline 1-888-KIDCHAT

Our campus and district have an anonymous tipline that can be accessed 24 hours a day by contacting 1-888-KIDCHAT. Information can be communicated at this site regarding activity that is illegal or inappropriate occurring both in the community or on a school campus. Students play a key role in helping keep the school and community safe. Reports are followed up upon by school administrators and/or police. In some cases, informants may qualify for a monetary reward for information leading to felony arrests.

Electronics and Phones - Expectations, Pros, Cons, Rules, and Considerations for Parents/Guardians to Know

Students are allowed to bring electronics to school as long as they are off between 8:50 a.m. and 3:55 p.m. This includes lunch. Your assistance in helping them understand that vibrate is not off is appreciated. For student safety and privacy, electronics are never allowed to be out or on while in the locker room or bathroom. School and felony legal consequences will potentially occur for phone/camera use in areas of which there is a legal expectation of privacy. These items, including phones, are immensely popular among young people. However, due to the fact that these are high theft items on all campuses, it is highly recommended parents/guardians consider whether their child is mature enough to keep up with these very expensive devices. The amount of smartphones left by users on tables, benches, and in the hallways is *staggering*. These items are brought at the student's own risk. Note in advance that if a student's use of electronics, including phones, violates policy, the device will be taken up and consequences for the inappropriate use will be assigned. The phone may need to be picked up by a parent or guardian depending on the infraction and overall number of violations and may not be returned to the student on the same day. Please do not ask your child to have his/her phone on so that you can text or call them, potentially disrupting instruction of children. If you need to get information to your child, please call 832-592-5100 as we deliver messages directly to students throughout the school day. Experience also shows that your child having a phone is incredibly valuable when trying to locate them after the end of the school day.

Bus Safety and Student Transportation Behavior Expectations

Now that school is underway, I want to take a moment to address a very important issue regarding bus safety and behavioral expectations of students. Our students, and by default your children, are the most important thing and the reason as a school we exist. Many of you count on bus transportation to successfully transport your child to and from campus each day. The drivers do a great job and are some of the most patient and caring people among us. A statistic that is amazing is C.I.S.D. drivers, in one week, drive further than the distance between the Earth and the Moon largely without incident. As a campus we are serious and committed to making the ride to and from school a great one for each child. Our campus is not in charge of transportation. However, we do work collaboratively with transportation, students, drivers, and parents/guardians to make the trip the best it can be. Being on the bus is a different environment for students and one most handle wonderfully. However, for some, this is more of a challenge. We will communicate with each student, in person, what is expected on the buses the first week of school. The safety and civility of all in this higher risk area is a top priority. Because we want all to enjoy an uneventful and happy ride home, please take a moment to stress the following with your child:

*Any unsafe behavior can be reported at any time to an administrator. Please encourage your child to not wait to report a concern or assume another student will report it.

*Concerns about actions on a bus can always be submitted anonymously to 1-888-KIDCHAT.

*Students can board or depart buses only at their designated bus stop.

*Drivers may assign seats on the school bus. In this case students are required to sit in these designated areas.

*Departing through the back bus door is only permissible during an emergency.

*For additional student safety, most buses have one or more video cameras operating. Most of these now include audio recording for additional student assistance when needed.

*The bus stop is considered school property. Any inappropriate action occurring at a school bus stop is the same as if it occurs on campus.

*Consequences will be assigned for failure to follow bus guidelines and meet safety expectations. These consequences include normal campus discipline, temporary removal from the bus, and permanent loss of transportation privileges.

*For more information please visit the C.I.S.D. transportation website at <http://www.conroeisd.net/departments/transportation/>.

Test Retake Policy - An Opportunity To Improve Learning and Grades

Students have the opportunity in many cases to retake exams in order to improve their understanding of specific topics and improve their overall grades.

Tests can be retaken in social studies, science, math, and electives. The maximum grade that can be made on a retest is a 75. Retaking an exam can have *dramatic positive impact* on the grade achieved by a student at any level. Exams count for 60 percent of the overall marking period grade. Please note:

- teachers may choose to require tutorials or review prior to the retake
- due to the nature of some assignments and lab practicals, teachers can limit which tests can be offered for retakes
- tests cannot be retaken if the student was cheating on the first administration
- teachers may offer a new test or assignment on the retest

Subject: Important U.I.L. Competition Information for Parents/Guardians/Students

* Periodically, contests may be canceled or delayed due to lightning. When a lightning strike occurs within a ten mile radius we are required to wait 30 minutes before resuming the outside event. If we delay a game due to lightning, please evacuate the stands and return to your vehicle or the safety of our building. We want to play but the safety of our students and fans always comes first.

* Any contest short of varsity is not made up, replayed, or rescheduled.

* We have no control over the delay or cancellation of a contest at an opposing school where we are not the home team.

* If a game is canceled early due to conditions that clearly dictate it is unplayable we will attempt to email you.

This is a rarity for outside events. We always make an effort to play the contest. A call on playing, delaying, or canceling the game may not be made until game time or even after the scheduled start depending on developing conditions. The best way to know the ever changing status of an event is to follow our campus Twitter feed @mcculloughcisd. Additionally, many activities have their own Twitter feeds they update with information.

* If you have family or friends flying in from afar to see a child play, your assistance in ensuring they understand the lightning policy and exactly which team they are on is helpful.

* Entry fees at Conroe I.S.D. junior high events remain only two dollars for adults and one dollar for students.

Please note, when we are the visiting team at other school districts entry fees may be much more. Tournament fees are considerably higher.

* If you are a fine art or athletic parent/guardian attending a game involving our home stadium sunglasses are highly recommended.

* U.I.L. academic eligibility is real. Students in Texas have to pass all of their courses at the end of the first six weeks and every subsequent nine weeks to remain eligible for games, contests, concerts, plays, and other competitions. The complete calendar of U.I.L. eligibility dates can be accessed on the front page of our website.

* Note the first grading period for the U.I.L. concludes on September 22nd. By law, the first marking period is only six weeks. This means grades that determine eligibility are compiled statewide from a smaller total number due to the limited number of days involved. Translated this means each grade has more impact than over the normal nine weeks period for a grade. Students need to understand that overall averages can change wildly, either way, pending exams that are taken leading up the September 29th date a Texas student could lose eligibility.

2018-2019 Cheerleader Tryouts Tentative Dates

The McCullough Cheer tryout informational meeting will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bock Auditorium. Tryout packet forms will be due Friday, February 16th by 4:00 p.m.. The tryout clinic will be March 5th-7th, in the large gym, at 4:30 p.m. Tryouts will be on Thursday, March 8th at 4:00 p.m. Please contact Shelly Newitt at snewitt@conroeisd.net or Ashley Thomson at athomson@conroeisd.net if you have any questions.

10/10/17	PSAT 8/9 Benchmark: 7 th Reading
10/30/17-11/10/17	Benchmark: 8 th Reading Benchmark: 8 th Social Studies
10/30/17-11/17/17	Benchmark: 7 th Writing
11/6/17-11/17/17	Benchmark: 7 th /8 th Math
11/27/17-12/8/17	Benchmark: 8 th Writing
11/27/17-12/20/17	Benchmark: Algebra 1 and Geometry
12/4/17-12/15/17	Benchmark: 7 th Social Studies
12/11/17-12/15/17	Benchmark: 7 th Science
1/16/18-1/19/18 (optional)	Benchmark: 8 th Science
1/22/18-1/26/18	Benchmark: 7 th Reading Part I
2/5/18-2/23/18	Benchmark: 7 th Writing and 8 Reading
2/5/18-2/16/18	Benchmark: 7 th /8 th Math
2/26/18-4/6/18	TELPAS
2/26/18-3/8/18	Benchmark: 8 th Social Studies
4/4/18-4/6/18	Benchmark: 7 th Reading Part II
4/9/18-4/13/18	Benchmark: 8 th Science
4/10/18	STAAR: 7 th Writing
4/10/18	STAAR: 8 th Math
4/11/18	STAAR: 8 th Reading
5/9/18	Algebra 1 EOC
5/14/18	STAAR: 7 th grade Math/ 8 th Math Retest
5/15/18	STAAR: 7 th grade Reading/8 th Reading Retest
5/16/18	STAAR: 8 th Grade Science
5/17/18	STAAR: 8 th Grade Social Studies
5/18/18	STAAR – all makeups need to be completed by the end of this day
5/5/18-5/25/18	Benchmark: 7 th Science
5/7/18-5/18/18	Benchmark: 7 th Social Studies

* ***Eighth grade students in Texas are required to pass STAAR Reading and STAAR Math in order to advance to ninth grade.***

* Eighth grade non-passers after two attempts are required by the state to attend summer school remediation throughout June to prepare for their third attempt to pass. ***Before planning summer vacations, please take this into account.***

* Students will be in their testing room until 1:45 p.m. on STAAR days.

* Lunch will be eaten in the classroom from 1:10 p.m. until 1:40 p.m. * Each student should bring, if possible, a sack lunch and water bottle.

* The lunchroom will be accessible for students on free or reduced lunch as well as those who need to purchase food.

* Private P.E. pick up on most testing days will occur at 3:16 p.m. at the regular location. Private P.E. students need to monitor the schedule and inform their ride of the pick up time for each day.