

SANDS CISD—Home of the Mustangs

Parent Newsletter | 2026–2027 School Year

Por favor consulte la oficina si necesita esta información en español.

Bitte wenden Sie sich an das Büro, wenn Sie diese Informationen auf Spanisch benötigen.

CLIMBING TOGETHER TOWARD SUCCESS

Dear Sands CISD Parents and Families,

Welcome to another exciting school year at Sands CISD!

At Sands, we believe that success does not happen by accident. It happens when students, parents, teachers, and our entire community work together with a shared purpose. This year, we are continuing our commitment to **CLIMB**—a theme that represents the character and mindset we want to develop in every Sands Mustang.

Our C.L.I.M.B. Commitment

C — Commitment

We commit ourselves to doing our very best every day.

L — Love

We care about one another, our school, our community, and the work we do.

I — Intensity

We approach learning and challenges with energy, focus, and purpose.

M — Mental Toughness

We persevere when things become difficult and refuse to give up.

B — Brave

We have the courage to take risks, face challenges, learn from mistakes, and keep moving forward.

Our goal is simple: **Keep Climbing!**

Celebrating Our Success

We are proud to announce that **Sands CISD earned an “A” rating from the Texas Education Agency for the 2025–2026 school year, with an overall score of 94.**

This achievement reflects the tremendous work of our students and staff. An A rating is not simply a number—it represents thousands of hours of teaching, learning, studying, practicing, encouraging, and persevering.

We are especially proud because this accomplishment belongs to our entire Sands community.

Our students worked hard.

Our teachers worked hard.

Our parents supported them.

Our community believed in them.

And now, we keep climbing.

An A rating is something to celebrate, but it is not our finish line. Our commitment for 2026–2027 is to continue improving, continue challenging our students, and continue preparing every Mustang for success in college, a career, or the military.

Parents Make a Difference!

Research and experience consistently show that parents play an important role in student success. You do not have to be a teacher to make a tremendous difference in your child's education.

Here are some simple ways you can help your child **CLIMB**:

Ask About School Every Day

Instead of simply asking, “Did you have a good day?” try:

- What did you learn today?
- What was challenging?
- What are you proud of?
- What do you need help with?
- What is coming up this week?

Encourage Good Attendance

Being at school consistently matters. Encourage your child to attend school every day and arrive on time. Missing instructional time can make it harder for students to keep up with new concepts.

Establish a Homework and Study Routine

A consistent place and time for schoolwork can help students develop responsibility and independence.

Read Together

Encourage reading every day—even when your child is not assigned reading. Ask questions about what they are reading and encourage them to explain their thinking.

Check Grades and Assignments

Regularly monitor your child's academic progress and communicate with teachers when you notice concerns.

Encourage Perseverance

When your child struggles, resist the temptation to immediately solve the problem for them. Encourage them to keep trying, ask questions, and seek help.

Mental Toughness means learning that difficulty is not failure—it is part of the climb.

Celebrate Effort, Not Just Results

An A, a high test score, or a championship is worth celebrating, but so is improvement, perseverance, responsibility, and hard work.

Stay Connected

Attend school events, parent meetings, athletic events, performances, and other activities whenever possible. Students notice when their parents show up.

The strongest school communities are built when schools and families work together.

Understanding STAAR Testing

STAAR—the **State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness**—is Texas's state assessment program. STAAR assessments are aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and are used to measure student learning and academic progress.

STAAR also fulfills federal requirements that students be assessed in specific grades and subjects during their K–12 education.

What Does My Child Have to Take?

Elementary School

Grade 3-5

- Reading Language Arts (RLA)
- Mathematics

Grade 5 additional testing

- Science

Middle School

Grade 6-8

- Reading Language Arts (RLA)
- Mathematics

Grade 8 additional testing

- Science
- Social Studies

Students taking certain high-school-level courses may take the corresponding End-of-Course assessment instead of a grade-level assessment in some circumstances. For example, a Grade 8 student taking Algebra I takes the Algebra I EOC. TEA provides specific rules for students taking advanced courses.

High School End-of-Course Assessments

Students completing the following courses are required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment:

- **Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, U.S. History**

These assessments are important because the EOC assessments are part of the state's high-school assessment and graduation requirements.

2026–2027 STAAR Testing Windows

The Texas Education Agency has established the following STAAR testing windows for the 2026–2027 school year:

English 1 & 2 EOC – on **April 6th**.

STAAR 3-8 reading on April **12th & 13th**

Biology & US History EOC, STAAR 5th & 8th Science, STAAR 8th Social studies **April 20-21**

Algebra 1 EOC. STAAR 3-8 MATH **April 26-28**

Can Parents Opt Their Child Out of STAAR?

An Important Clarification for Parents

Parents sometimes ask whether they can “opt their child out” of STAAR testing.

Texas law does not provide a general parent opt-out option for required STAAR assessments.

Texas public-school students in grades 3–8 and students enrolled in courses associated with the required high-school EOC assessments are required by state and federal law to participate in the applicable assessments.

Parents’ Right to Know — Title I

Sands CISD is committed to providing parents with important information about their child’s education.

Under the federal **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A**, parents of students attending a school receiving Title I funds have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teachers.

Upon request, parents may receive information regarding:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing requirements for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status for which state qualification or licensing requirements have been waived;
- Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the teacher’s certification; and
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, the qualifications of those paraprofessionals.

Parents also have the right to receive information regarding their child’s academic achievement and growth on state academic assessments and to receive timely notification if their child is assigned to, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

Parents may contact the Sands CISD administration office to request this information.

Parents' Right to Know About Assessments

Title I requirements also provide parents with the right to request information regarding state and local assessment policies, including information about student participation in required assessments. Schools receiving Title I funds are also required to make information about required assessments available to families.

Sands CISD is committed to communicating clearly with families about required assessments, their purpose, and how assessment results are used to support student learning.

STAAR Is Part of the Climb—Not the Destination

A test score does not define a child.

At Sands CISD, we want our students to understand that assessments are opportunities to demonstrate what they know, identify areas where they can grow, and set goals for continued improvement.

When students encounter something difficult, we want them to remember our theme:

C — Commitment

L — Love

I — Intensity

M — Mental Toughness

B — Brave

We want our students to keep climbing when the path gets difficult.

Other important information.

I want to remind everyone that we do have important information on our school website. You can go to PARENT RESOURCES or STUDENT RESOURCES to find information on a variety of important topics from our STUDENT HANDBOOK to our FAMILY ENGAGEMENT policy and many more items you may be interested in. The school website is www.sands.esc17.net

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