

Middle School Teachers Pilot Program to Improve Communications Between Home & School.

This fall and winter, Millis Middle School teachers will be trained on how to use their electronic grade book to improve communications with parents regarding student attendance, assignments and grades. Thanks to Powerschool, the districts web-based student information system, parents who want to know how their child is doing in school will no longer have to wait for progress reports or a parent teacher conference. By simply logging into a website from any Internet connection, parents will be able to see how their child is doing on homework assignments, tests and class projects. They will receive messages from the teacher and check if their child was absent or tardy to school.

Millis Middle School teachers will be extensively trained on the PowerSchool electronic grade book program (PowerGrade) during the first half of the year. Once they are completely trained and comfortable with the system, PowerSchool's Parental Access will be turned on for parents and students to log in. The plan is for parents to be on PowerSchool Parental Access for the third term in January 2007

This pilot project has been a year in the planning process. A team of teachers and administrators began researching PowerSchool Parental Access during the 2005 school year. Encouraging greater parental involvement is the number one reason for this important new tool. Studies* have shown that students with involved parents, no matter what their parents' income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level courses
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Have better college entrance statistics
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

(*www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf)

“After visiting other PowerSchool districts in and around the state and speaking with their teachers, we expect to see some immediate advantages as a result of leveraging this type of technology to improve communication between home and school” says Grace Magley, Technology Director of the Millis Public Schools. “We have heard repeatedly from teachers of other districts that we can expect to see more homework returned, less absences and tardies, more meaningful parent/teacher conferences and improved student achievement.” “What I like most about this system is that it empowers the students to take control of their academic progress.” “A student can clearly see how a bad grade or missed assignment can affect their overall grades.”

For more information about PowerSchool Parental Access contact Grace Magley, Director of Technology for the Millis Public Schools at gmagley@millis.k12.ma.us