

Symons Elementary School Family Handbook

432 S. Platt Rd. Milan, MI 48160 (734) 439 – 5300

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Welcome to a new school year at Symons Elementary!

We look forward to learning and growing with our students.

At Symons, we are proud to have outstanding teachers!

Our teachers will guide your child

through a learning journey
and partner with you, as family members,
to maximize academic growth.

If you have any questions, suggestions, celebrations, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us or stop by to visit.



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Vision - Mission Statement - Guiding Principles

Vision: Milan Area Schools: Founded on Tradition – Focused on Excellence

Mission: Milan Area Schools is a community committed to achieving academic excellence for all learners through research, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Symons Elementary School Guiding Principles

- Symons is a community that fosters mutual respect and trust, a school where every person is valued. Symons emphasizes the joy of learning with the exchange of thoughts and ideas in a safe, orderly and caring environment.
- Symons' curriculum is guided by high expectations for all students and derived from the essential skills and concepts necessary for full participation in a democratic society. The curriculum is rigorous, defined sequentially from grade to grade and implemented consistently by all teachers.
- Instructional practices at Symons are designed to help each student become a successful learner. Teachers meet this goal by supporting every student in assuming responsibility for his/her own learning and employing a wide variety of instructional strategies.
- Assessments are used to measure, monitor and communicate each student's
 progress toward mastery of essential skills and concepts. Learning
 expectations are clear to both students and parents and progress is
 reported in an appropriate, honest and timely manner. Teachers at Symons
 use a wide variety of assessments to shape instruction and to meet the
 needs of individual students.

Milan Area Schools

Founded on Tradition. Focused on Excellence.

Student Attendance

School hours are 9:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. State Law requires that all students of school age shall be in school during the school year and that this is the responsibility of the parents and/or guardians.

Absences

If a student is ill or must be absent from school, the parents must notify the school and leave a message before 9:00 am. If the school is not notified, a call will be made from our system to verify the absence.

- Students arriving between 9:01 9:15 will be marked tardy.
- Students arriving after 9:15 will be marked half-day absent.
- Students leaving prior 3:30 will be marked half-day absent (prior to 12:00 on half-days).
- Students leaving after 3:30, but prior to the end of the day, will be considered an early pickup.



Habitual Attendance Problems

Good attendance is a critical part of academic achievement. All children need to attend school on a regular basis. After eight absences, a letter will be sent to the parent(s) notifying them of attendance laws. After the 12th absence, a meeting will be scheduled with the principal. After twenty absences the county truancy officer will be contacted for further action.

Leaving School Early

Families can help their child get a full day of learning each day. Whenever possible, please plan medical appointments and extra trips outside of school hours, as it is difficult to make up missed instruction and negatively impacts your child's academic growth.

Adults picking students up early **must show an ID.** Students will be called to the office and walked to the front doors for dismissal. Students will only be released to people listed on the data form.

Cancellations and Delay of School

If school is canceled, the announcement will be made on local TV stations. Information will also be available at www.milanareaschools.org, through the School Messenger System, and on our school and district social media pages. School delays will be for the amount of time announced and will affect all students.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival Procedures

- Students may enter the school beginning at 8:50. For safety reasons, students should not be dropped off before this time. If a student arrives before 8:50 they will be sent to the Before School Care and parents will be charged a fee.
- Bus transportation is available for any student living one mile from the school. Students must ride their assigned bus unless arrangements are made with the transportation department.
- Students who take the bus will be dropped off in front of the school.
- Students arriving by car should only be dropped off at the **back** of the building. Please pull as far forward as possible and follow the directions of staff members to help us provide a safe and orderly arrival and dismissal for our students and families.
- If a student arrives after 9:00, an adult must call the office and the student can ring the bell by the front door for entry to the building.

Dismissal Procedures

- Dismissal at Symons is at 3:45.
- Students riding buses will be dismissed by bus number.
- Students walking should exit through the back doors and walk around the building by the playground.
- We use the DriveLine system for students who will be picked up. Each family will be given a hang tag with a number. When you arrive at the back of the school, display this tag and a staff member will enter it into our system. Your child will be notified that you have arrived and will exit out the back doors. Once your child is safely in your vehicle, you may pull out of line and exit the parking lot. Please use caution and drive slowly as other vehicles may be moving as well.



Changes in Your Child's Dismissal Routine

For your child's safety, please try to stick to your regular transportation plan whenever possible. In the event that you need to change the dismissal procedure that your child normally has, please inform your child's teacher <u>and</u> the main office. If you need to change your child's bus route, contact Transportation directly. Their number is 439–5900. Once the change has been approved, please contact the office at Symons and let us know. Phone calls cannot be accepted after 3:10 for end of school dismissal changes, except in an emergency. Please also make sure your child knows how they will get home at the end of each day.

Riding the Bus

Any child living 1 mile or more from Symons Elementary School may take the bus to school. Bus routes start at 7:35 a.m. and bring all children to school by 8:50 a.m.

- To find out the time and location of your child's bus stop, please call the Transportation Manager, Jeannie Baber, at 439-5900. Bus routes change every year to accommodate new students.
- Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned unless parents make specific arrangements with the transportation department (439-5900) and notify the teacher and office of any change.
- By your request, in emergency situations only, your child can get off the bus at a different bus stop or ride a different bus. You must call the Transportation Department first at 439-5900.
- For your child's safety, a parent or guardian must be present when he/she arrives home by bus. If the bus driver cannot locate a parent or guardian, he/she will bring the child back to Symons' After School Child Care Program. There will be a charge for this service.



School Bus Safety Procedures

The right of a student to ride school buses is contingent upon good behavior and observance of rules and regulations. Students who violate the rules will be subject to disciplinary action at the bus driver's discretion. Students shall obey the directions of the driver promptly and courteously. Students will occupy the seat designated for them by the driver.

The first responsibility of bus drivers is the safe transportation of passengers. If any student(s) behavior endangers the safety of others, the driver will issue misconduct reports. These reports can result in bus suspension. Every student who rides the bus will receive a list of rules as well as contact information.

Student Enrollment and Placement

Enrolling Students

You will receive a packet of information that will give you all the information that you and your student will need to get started at Symons. When enrolling a student at Symons Elementary, the state of Michigan requires all students entering to present valid immunizations and a birth certificate. Students cannot be enrolled in school if immunization requirements are not met. You will be asked to fill out a Request of Records form that will be sent to the student's previous school. They will then send the records through the US mail back to Symons.

School of Choice

The Milan Area Schools welcomes many students who choose to come here as a school of choice student. If you know a family member or friend who would like the opportunity to attend our amazing schools, please ask them to contact the Milan Areas Schools at (734)439-5050 or go online to download registration information.

Student Placement

Staff at Symons Elementary School devotes a great deal of time to forming classes. Our primary goal is to place each child in the learning environment that best encourages his/her growth academically, socially, and emotionally. We work carefully to develop balanced classes, considering such factors as academic strengths and challenges, personalities, girl/boy ratios, behavior, and the requirements of special needs students.

Please understand that you may not request a specific teacher. We use input from parents, teachers, and support staff to make the best placement for each child and to provide equity for all families.



School Security

Building Security

All building doors including those at the main entrance are locked. Please use the bell at the main entrance to request entry to the building. Once buzzed in, you are required to sign in and out at the office. **Please understand that for the safety of our students and staff, we will ask for photo identification and the reason for your visit.** Visitors will be given a badge to wear while in the building.

Student Pick-Up Authorization

If you would like a friend or relative to sometimes pick up your child, their name must be on the data form that you completed at the start of school. You can update the form on the Parent Portal or by coming to the main office at Symons. In case of an emergency, you may also call or send a note to the office listing the full name of the person picking up your child. Please sign and date the note. Your child will only be released to those listed on the form. Please notify those you have authorized that they will need to show a photo ID when picking up your child.



<u>Criminal Background Checks Required for Volunteers and Chaperones</u>

ICHAT – For the safety of our students, all adult volunteers and chaperones affiliated with Symons Elementary School must undergo an annual background check before volunteering, chaperoning, or being in the building. This check is good for all 4 schools. The background check that is required by Milan Area Schools is the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT), the sex offender registry list and the offender tracking information system provided by the Michigan State Police. In order to ensure that you are cleared to volunteer, chaperone, or be in our school come to the Symons Elementary office and request an ICHAT background check form. You must fill out the form while in the office and sign the form in the presence of a Symons Elementary staff member. You will also need to provide photo identification such as a driver's license so that the Milan Area Schools may make a photocopy.

Fire, Tornado, and Lockdown Drills

Fire, tornado, and lockdown drills are held regularly throughout the school year so that students and staff can practice how to quickly and safely respond to emergency situations. In the event of a real emergency, please understand that our staff will strictly follow emergency procedures to keep children as safe as possible. In the event of a real lockdown, children will not be released from school until it has been established by the proper authorities that the surrounding areas are safe.

Curriculum and Assessment

Milan Area Schools provide high quality instruction based on the Common Core State Standards. Teachers at Symons use a wide variety of assessments to shape instruction and to meet the needs of individual students.

Reading Workshop

We use the Units of Study for Teaching Reading. The units are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Reading workshop includes a mini-lesson, small group reading instruction; and sharing. During the reading workshop, students read independently or with a partner while the teacher works with small groups of students to teach strategies, provide instructional level support for reading, and/or to reinforce skills and strategies that the reader is learning to use independently.

Writing Workshop

We use the Units of Study for Teaching Writing. The units are aligned with the Common Core State Standards for opinion writing, informational writing, narrative writing, and the conventions of writing. Writing workshop includes a mini-lesson, which teaches and models a specific skill, and a combination of small group instruction or conferring one-to-one with writers.

Math

Everyday Math is our math curriculum at Symons. The units are aligned with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. The program requires homework each night, which some students may complete in class if they have time. Within the program, our teachers are able to differentiate to meet the needs of individual students, providing support for students who are struggling with mathematical concepts and enrichment activities for students who are ready to move forward.

Science

We use Science HMH Dimensions for our Science curriculum. Science instruction is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Social Studies

Our social studies curriculum is Inquiry Journeys. Our curriculum follows the state of Michigan standards for Social Studies.

Assessment

We administer two different standardized computer-based assessments: NWEA MAP in the fall, winter, and spring and M-STEP in the spring. Teachers also conduct a variety of classroom assessments in reading, writing, spelling, and math.

Positive Behavior Expectations

At Symons, we believe in using positive behavior intervention supports. As a staff, we also have a consistent set of positive behavior expectations.

Symons Behavior Expectations For Positive Behavior Intervention Support

	Be Respectful (language and actions)	Be Responsible (things and time)	Be Safe (personal space and physical space)
Arrival & Dismissal	Follow adult directions. Use inside voice.	Take care of your belongings Go directly to your destination. Know your plan.	Watch out for others. Stay in own space.
Hallways	Use quiet voices and actions. Close lockers quietly. Enjoy displays with eyes only.	Go directly to your destination. Go where you have permission to go.	Walk Keep hands and feet to yourself.
Lunch Room	Use inside voices. Follow adult directions.	Clean up after yourself. Get what you need in line.	Stay at the seat you chose until dismissed. Walk and carry your food with both hands.
Bathroom	Allow for privacy. Keep bathrooms clean. Use quiet voices.	Flush toilet. Wash hands with soap.	Use designated bathroom. Return directly to class.
Recess	Take turns and share. Include others. Use kind language.	Resolve conflicts peacefully or seek adult help. Take care of belongings and equipment.	Stay in play areas. Use equipment appropriately. Line up when called.
Home	Talk to your child about the importance of being respectful.	Show an adult your planner to initial. Read for 20 minutes each night.	Follow dismissal and arrival procedures.

Be Respectful BERESPONSIBLE Be Safe

Health and Wellness

The school nurse is available to discuss health concerns and answer student/parent questions. Please contact the nurse at 734-439-5858 or through email. Duties of the nurse include follow-up on health concerns and medication, individual counseling regarding health concerns, co-facilitating groups, and teaching classes related to health. Please contact the school nurse if your child has a health condition that requires an emergency plan to be in place for his/her care and treatment. Examples of such conditions include: insulin-dependent diabetes, seizure disorders, severe asthma, anaphylactic reactions to foods or insect stings, etc. The nurse is on call for medical concerns/injuries such as asthma attacks, sprains, strains, etc. In the event of a serious emergency, 911 is called. Parents are always contacted in the event of an injury or an emergency.

When to Keep a Sick Child Home

Children are most successful in school when they are present for as many days as possible. However, children who are sick need to stay home if they will not be able to concentrate sufficiently on learning or if they may cause others to become sick. To help reduce the spread of illness to students and staff, please keep your child home for the following reasons:

- 1. Fever: Your child should be fever-free (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to school. We will call home if your student's temperature is 100° or higher.
- 2. Rash: Check with a doctor before bringing a child to school with a rash.
- 3. Vomiting: A child may return to school after s/he has not thrown up for 24 hours and is back on a regular diet.
- 4. Diarrhea: A child who has a loose stool more than two times in 24 hours, should stay home. S/he may return to school after being diarrhea free for 24 hours.
- 5. Cough/Cold: A child with a severe or frequent cough and a runny nose is likely not to feel well enough to concentrate sufficiently on learning. S/he would benefit from more rest and fluids at home.
- 6. Doctor Recommendation: If a child has been prescribed an antibiotic, check with the doctor to see if the child needs to be on medication 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Health and Medical Limitations

A letter from a doctor must be submitted to the school office requesting a change in a student's schedule at school if a student cannot participate in physical activity because of health or physical limitations. A letter from a doctor must also be on file if a child needs to stay inside the school building during recess.

Medication Administration

Whenever possible, medications should be given at home either before or after school hours. We understand that there are times when it is necessary for students to take medication at school.

Medications, prescription, and non-prescription, (including cough drops, Tylenol, and cough medicine) require a medication permission form to be filled out before medication can be administered at the school. Medication permission forms are available in the main office.

Important information regarding medications:

- All medication must be brought to school by a parent/guardian in the original container and stored in the school office
- Students are allowed to carry and self-administer certain medications at school, such as inhalers, epi-pens, and insulin. Written permission from the parent/guardian and physician is required
- Medication cannot be stored in the school office over the summer months.
 A parent/guardian must pick up the medication at the end of the school year. Medications not picked up will be disposed of according to Washtenaw County Waste procedures.

Head Lice

Head lice are a frustrating nuisance. Please check your child's hair regularly to prevent head lice from becoming a problem. Milan Area Schools has a NO live bug policy. If your child is found to have LIVE head lice you will be asked to come and pick up your child from school. If your child is found to have nits (eggs) you will be notified and you will need to treat their hair and remove the nits. Students who have had live lice will not be allowed to return to school until checked by school personnel and found to have a decreasing number of nits (eggs) and no live lice.

Dressing and Taking Care of Yourself for School

Dress and Grooming

Symons Elementary School students are expected to come to school in clean and comfortable clothing appropriate for the classroom. Children who come to school appropriately dressed and well-groomed are more motivated to learn and are better behaved. Please help your child consider the weather when choosing clothes for the day. Layers are often a good choice as classroom temperatures can fluctuate during the day.



- Hats and hoods should be removed during the school day.
- Straps on shirts should be at least the width of two fingers.
- Shorts should be no shorter than a child's fingertips when arms are extended down their sides.
- Shirts and sweaters should cover the midriff; no crop tops.
- Clothing and/or accessories with disrespectful or inappropriate language should not be worn to school.
- Please make sure your child has tennis shoes for daily trips to the playground and for PE class. Shoes such as flip-flops, slides, sandals, or open-toed shoes can be a safety hazard when students are playing at recess or during PE.

Family and Parent Involvement

PTO

The Symons Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets regularly and invites parents to join in on the fun! Together this parent group plans and organizes a variety of events for the student body of Symons. For more information please visit the Symons web page and click the link for the parent

teacher organization.

School Events

Symons Elementary has an active Student Council and Parent Teacher Organization that help to coordinate several events for students and families throughout the year. Please look for notes coming home with your child in order to stay informed. Stay updated on school events by checking the Symons Facebook and Twitter pages and communications from your child's teacher.

Volunteering in the Classroom

Please check with your student's classroom teacher for volunteer opportunities in the classroom. We welcome your help at Symons and appreciate the support of our many volunteers. Please remember that all adult visitors to the building must be ICHAT approved.

Report Cards and Conferences – Symons Elementary
School sends home report cards three times a year. You
will see report cards come home at the end of each trimester. Parent and Teacher
conferences are held twice a year. We require that all students are represented by a
parent or guardian at fall conferences. Spring conferences are scheduled per the request
of the parent and/or the teacher.

Childcare Services

Symons has several child care programs to offer families attending school in the Milan district. Programs are in service starting the first day of the school year and continue until the last day of school. All dates follow the district calendar. These programs are not in service when the school is closed for any reason. Call 439-5159 for more information.

Recess



Recess is held outdoors when the weather permits. As a general rule, we feel that if students are well enough to be in school, then they are well enough to go outside for recess. Requests for indoor recess must be accompanied by a physician's statement. Recess is held inside when temperatures drop below 10 degrees Fahrenheit (including wind chill).

During recess, students are always supervised by teachers and playground supervisors. The students are expected to be safe, responsible, and respectful.

Lost/Damaged Books and Materials

At the beginning of the school year, students will be assigned a Chromebook as well as a variety of textbooks and materials. The cost to replace these items could be costly, so we ask that students take good care of the materials assigned to them. It is the responsibility of the student to return or pay for their assigned items.

Technology/Email Use

Students are expected to be safe, responsible, and respectful when using technology in our classrooms. Students should only use the technology for educational purposes assigned by the teacher. If a student chooses not to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully or for a purpose other than what is assigned by the teacher, the student will lose the privilege to use technology for an amount of time to be determined by the teacher and/or the principal and may experience other consequences if deemed appropriate. Cyberbullying, which includes the use of technology to bully someone, will result in consequences to be determined by the teacher and/or the principal.

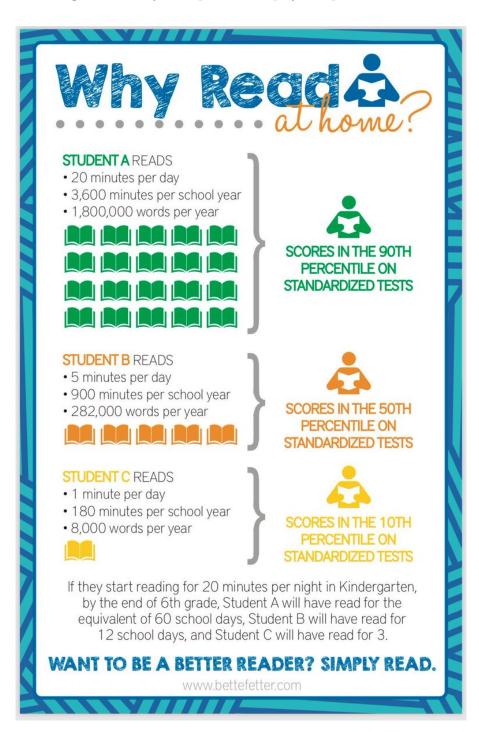
Personal Communication Device Policy

Cell phones, smart watches, and other personal communication devices are not allowed to be used during the school day. If a student brings a personal communication device to be used before or after school hours, it must be kept in his/her backpack in their locker.

The school assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage, misuse, or unauthorized use of personal communication devices brought onto our property. Students and parents are strongly encouraged to make sure these devices are not left unattended or unsecured. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in loss of this privilege, additional disciplinary action, and confiscation of the personal communication device to be returned to the parent or guardian only.

Expectations for Reading at Home & Book Bags

Research shows that students who practice reading at home have much greater success academically. Our expectation is that every student at Symons will read for at least 20 minutes each night at home. The Symons PTO provides book bags for each student so that students have access to "just right" books to practice reading at home. If a student loses his/her book bag, the family is expected to pay a replacement fee of \$6.



School Lunch Information



Breakfast and lunch are served daily to students at Symons Elementary School. Milk is available to students who bring their lunch from home for an additional charge. Menus are available online at Nutrislice, which you can access through the Milan Area Schools website.

Breakfast/Lunch Debit Accounts

Breakfast and lunch sales are computerized at Symons Elementary School. Each student enters their own ID number.

Deposits

To add money to your child's account, please put the deposit in a **sealed** envelope with your **child's name** and **room number** on it and return it to your child's classroom. The cafeteria will not be responsible for lost cash, so a **check is preferred**. Checks should be made out to **Milan Area Schools Lunch Program**. We also have an online system called eFunds that allows parents to deposit money and view their child's purchases.

SYMONS HAS A "NO POP" POLICY!

Please do not send soda pop or energy drinks to school with your child. These types of beverages will be sent home. We encourage students to help parents pack a lunch with healthy choices.

Classroom Snacks

The decision to have a snack is set by each classroom teacher. When sending a snack with your student, please make sure the snack can be managed by your student without adult assistance (they can easily open it by themselves), they have all the proper utensils (spoon, straw, napkin), and they can clean up by themselves.

Snacks provided must be healthy and can include:

- Protein- hard-boiled eggs, cheese, yogurt/gogurt, meat sticks, rolled lunch meat
- Fresh fruit or fruit cups
- Fresh vegetables
- Pretzels
- Single serving crackers (wheat thins, goldfish, triscuit)



Milan Area Schools Policies on Behavior and Discipline

Bullying

It is the district's policy to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all students. Symons follows district policy regarding bullying. That policy is available on Milan Area Schools' website under board policies.

Sexual Harassment

The sexual harassment of a staff member or student of the district is strictly forbidden. Any staff member, student, board member, or agent of the district who is found to have sexually harassed a staff member, student, agent, administrator, board member, or other individual who is lawfully on district premises will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal.

Weapons

The board, as both an employer and a public school district, is concerned with and interested in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of students, employees, and visitors. The board recognizes that school buildings, facilities, vehicles, grounds, and other school property are best utilized in the education process in the absence of threats to physical well-being and safety.

Individuals possessing weapons of any kind, including knives or pocket knives, on district property or at school-sponsored events, may be suspended for three days from school. Individuals possessing a weapon with the intention of harming someone will be expelled from school.

Discipline

Building administrators may suspend a student for up to 10 school days. Under Michigan law, a suspension of 10 or fewer school days is presumed to be reasonable. Discipline may be administered for offenses that:

- Take place at school
- Take place at a school activity
- Take place en route to or from school or a school activity
- Constitute misconduct with a nexus between out-of-school behavior and school operations

The building administrator may also suspend a student pending further investigation and possible further disciplinary consequences, including a longer-term suspension or expulsion. A suspension of greater than 10 school days, or, an expulsion, will be referred to District Administration. A suspension of greater than 10 school days, or, an expulsion, is, in most circumstances, presumed not to be warranted. Before imposing a suspension of more than 10 school days or an expulsion, the District administration or the Board must rebut the presumption (i.e., explain why the suspension or expulsion is warranted despite the presumption).

When administering discipline to a student, the following factors must be considered:

- The student's age
- The student's disciplinary history
- Whether the student has a disability
- The seriousness of the behavior
- Whether the behavior posed a safety risk
- Whether restorative practices are a better option
- Whether lesser interventions would address the behavior

Additionally, before suspending a student for any length of time, the building administrator must provide the student with due process. If the student is a student with a disability, the student's discipline is also subject to additional considerations.

For purposes of this handbook:

- Suspension means a disciplinary removal from school for less than 60 school days.
- Expulsion means a disciplinary removal from school for 60 or more school days.
- Restorative practices mean practices that emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and the school community caused by a student's misconduct.

Hours of Operation and Frequently Called Numbers

Symons Hours of Operation

9:00 – 3:45 Full day 9:00 – 12:10 Half day

Frequently Called Phone Numbers

Symons Elementary	439-5300
Symons Fax Number	439-5303
Symons School Nurse	439-5858
Symons Before/After School Care	439-5337
Paddock Elementary	439-5100
Milan Middle School	439-5200
Milan High School	439-5000
School Age Child Care	439-5159
Community Education	439-5278
Superintendent's Office	439-5050
Bus Garage	439-5900

Stay connected with us:

Milan Area Schools

Twitter: @masbigreds

Symons Elementary

Twitter: @symonsel

Facebook: Symons Elementary

Symons PTO

Twitter: @symonsPTO Facebook: Symons PTO