

Desert Star School

August 2015

Desert Star School
Home of the Scorpions



2131 S. 157th Ave Attendance: 623-772-4601
Goodyear, AZ 85338 Office: 623-772-4600
<http://ds.avondale.k12.az.us>

AUGUST HAPPENINGS

6 - PTO Meeting
@ 6pm in the
Library



6-14 - Galileo PreTest
in Math for grades 2-8
and English Language
Arts for 3-8

6-18 - DIBELS
(dynamic indicators of
basic early literacy
skills) Beginning of Year
Testing for Grades K-3

13 - PTO Baskin
Robbins Night 5-9pm
(location on Estrella just
south of I-10)

19 - APTT Night for
Kinder @ 5:15pm and 3rd
& 6th @ 6:30pm

20 - APTT Night for
2nd & 5th @ 5:15pm and
7th @ 6:30pm

21 - APTT Night for 1st
@ 5:15pm and 4th & 8th
@ 6:30pm

28 - Fall Picture Day
(free dress for
students)

LOOKING AHEAD . . .

9/3 - Quarter 1
Progress Reports Go
Home

9/7 - Labor Day (No
School)

FROM THE PRINCIPAL – KARA LARGENT

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year! We are very excited to be welcoming you back to Desert Star as a returning family or possibly for the first time as a new family. What I hope you will find at Desert Star is that we are a community and a team. We believe in working together to achieve greatness for each and every child. We firmly believe in our Kids at Hope philosophy and that we are all Treasure Hunters for our students. In order to achieve greatness, we encourage you to be active in your child's education and our school overall. In this effort, our school will communicate with you often through a variety of formats: monthly newsletter, weekly email blasts, text alerts, our marquee, and school website. We hope you find all of this communication helpful and informative.

Last school year our team spent much of the year discussing and working on a new vision and mission statement. These represent what we truly believe in as a Desert Star team and what we are working towards every day for your students. Our final statements are below . . .

Vision: Thinking, Learning, Growing . . . empowering students who shape tomorrow.

Mission:
Desert Star
Engages and supports
Students to be thinkers and problem solvers
Enthusiastically prepared for life and
Real world challenges that take perseverance,
Teamwork, passion and integrity.

Success for ALL is shaped by a strong community
That values safety, character, creativity and rigorous
Academics that help our students succeed,
Reach for the stars and inspire others to do the same.

As we progress through the school year, please do reach out to your child's teacher or myself for any questions or needs you have. With our Academic Parent Teacher Team initiative, we do believe it takes a strong partnership between school and home for students to reach their fullest potential. You can find all our staff's email addresses and phone extensions on our website under the tab at the top "Staff Directory" and then "Our 2015-2016 Staff & Contact Information." We will be also be working to add and update teacher websites you can find under the same section. We know that the 2015-2016 school year will be successful and we are thrilled to be working with all of you to achieve greatness for our students!





Welcome New Team Members

We want to welcome the newest members to the Desert Star Team. We are excited to have their energy and dedication to support our students.

Kindergarten - Hannah Robinette

First Grade - Krystal Martinez

Fourth Grade - Megan Melna

Seventh Grade Math - Elisha Snow

Eighth Grade Math - Erik Manoogian

Eighth Grade English Language Arts - Jennifer Looney

Seventh & Eighth Grade Science - Charles Winter

Special Education - Maria Dominguez, Erin Price, Bruna Presz

School Counselor - Leah Lorimer

Psychologist Intern - De'Von Patterson

Technology - Julie Amaro

Art - Dyane Welt

Music - Marietta Swim

Support Staff: Alycia Vincent, Maria Rubalcaba, Sandra Friedman, Carolyn Lowe, Jessica Willis, Erica Scott, Ester Vazquez, Jesse Dorantes

PTO Patter

Your PTO Board is excited to kick off the school year with returning and new families. We hope you are able to join us for our monthly PTO meetings that take place typically on the second Thursday of each month in the school library at 6pm. Our first meeting of the school year is actually this evening, the first Thursday of the month, due to our Baskin Robbins Night next Thursday from 5-9pm. Some of our signature events for your family include the Boo Bash in October and the End of Year Family Celebration in May. Please look for our upcoming meetings and events posted on the school calendar on the website and in this newsletter. We hope your family can join us for events and that you, as the parent, are able to help with some of the activities we do for our students and staff.

Mark your calendars now to stop by for some ice cream and cool off from the heat on **Thursday, August 13th from 5-9pm at the Baskin Robbins** on Estrella Parkway just south of the I-10. You may even see some of our wonderful Desert Star staff behind the counter helping to scoop up your special treat!



Playworks comes to Desert Star

We are thrilled to bring a national school recess program to Desert Star this year called Playworks. The Playworks program and philosophy is all about safety, organization, conflict-resolution, and inclusive play for all our students. Playworks creates a place for every kid on the playground to feel included, be active, and build valuable social and emotional skills. On Playworks playgrounds across the country, kids play hard, cheer loud and high five with joy. They settle their conflicts quickly and fairly with rock, paper, scissors and they carry a feeling of empowerment and belonging with them into their classrooms, back to their neighborhoods and out into the world. We are in the process of implementing this for our students and expect to see a big impact on our playground and in our classrooms. You can expect to hear more about this program as the year progresses. You can learn more about this program by visiting www.playworks.org.

Academic Parent Teacher Teams

Desert Star is once again implementing Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) for our family engagement model. If you are new to what APTT is all about, here is more information on why we believe APTT helps us to work together as partners in your child's education.

APTT[®] is a classroom-based, teacher-led, data-driven family engagement model. It is rooted in training families to support children's academic goals by linking home and school learning. APTT is grounded in the notion that schools can thrive when families and teachers work together, as genuine partners, to maximize student learning inside and outside the school. Meaningful partnerships can be set in motion when schools establish a systematic approach to family engagement that gives all families the information, skills, and confidence to be meaningfully engaged in their child's academic success.

During APTT meetings, teachers share student performance data, review grade level foundational skills, and demonstrate activities that parents can do at home to help students master those skills. Each parent sets 60-day academic goals for their student before leaving. When families attend APTT meetings, they go home feeling informed, clear about their role, and committed to improving their child's learning outcomes.



For all team meetings, translation and childcare will be provided.

Our first APTT Nights are coming up soon. Please mark your calendars now. K-4 APTT Nights will be held in their classrooms and 5-8 will be held in the library.

Kindergarten: Wednesday, August 19th @ 5:15pm

First Grade: Friday, August 21st @ 5:15pm

Second Grade: Thursday, August 20th @ 5:15pm

Third Grade: Wednesday, August 19th @ 6:30pm

Fourth Grade: Friday, August 21st @ 6:30pm

Fifth Grade: Thursday, August 20th @ 5:15pm

Sixth Grade: Wednesday, August 19th @ 6:30pm

Seventh Grade: Thursday, August 20th @ 6:30pm

Eighth Grade: Friday August 21st @ 6:30pm





Attendance is Important

Attendance is vital to student success! Please work with your child in

#schooleveryday

enforcing a bedtime that allows for adequate sleep and a morning routine that gets them on our campus by 7:30am. We do not want students missing school unless it is absolutely necessary. Every day is important to a child's academic growth. If your child is ill and needs to stay home, please try to call them in by 7:30am and consider requesting work to be sent home with a sibling or picked up by you so they don't get far behind. Our direct attendance line is 623-772-4601.

Also know that students who are consistently tardy tend to struggle in their classes as well. Students who are on time, have had a good breakfast, and plenty of sleep are able to comprehend and focus better throughout the day. We care about your children and want to see them in our classrooms every day - please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you in this effort of great attendance for all.

School-wide Classroom Management Procedures

Every classroom on our campus has the same three rules:

Be Respectful

Be Responsible

Be Safe

While these three rules may look or sound different in a kindergarten classroom versus an eighth grade classroom, all three are fundamental for student learning, safety, and overall well-being.

K-4th Grade Clip System

All students start on "Green" and it is our goal that every student ends on Green, Blue or even Purple at the end of the day. Students can move up and down on the clip chart during the school day. Teachers will contact parents for consequences, as well as incentives related to this clip system.

Purple - Outstanding

Blue - Good Choices

Green - Ready to Learn

Yellow - Slow Down

Orange - Think About It

Red - Stop & Make a Change



5th-8th Grade Stamp System

With our 5th-8th grade students having multiple teachers, we want to ensure that students are held accountable from class to class and we are communicating effectively and efficiently with all our parents. Students in these grades are expected to use their school provided student agendas to write down learning objectives, homework, and receive stamps for behavior reporting.

Communication is very important to us at Desert Star! If you are not receiving our weekly email blast, please call our front office at 623-772-4600 to ensure we have your current email address in our system.

You can also sign up for our text reminders by texting the message @desertstar to 81010.

