

# Cougar Communiqué

A publication of  
**Desert Sky Middle School**  
"Building a Community of Learners"  
9850 E. Rankin Loop

February 2018



## Dates to Remember

### February

- 1 **Open House @ CHS, EHS and VIC – 5:00pm – 7:00pm**
- 5-9 Spring Book Fair
- 5-9 **Love of Reading Week**
- 5 Pennies for Patients Fundraiser Begins (ends 3/2)
- 5 Girls' Basketball/Boys' Soccer vs. CFMS – home – 3:45pm
- 7 Girls' Basketball/Boys' Soccer vs. OVMS – home – 3:45pm
- 8, 9 **Parent/Teacher Conferences – Early Dismissal – 12:00pm**
- 9 **Progress Reports**
- 10 Science Olympiad @ DSMS
- 12 Girls' Basketball/Boys' Soccer vs. RVMS – home – 3:45pm
- 14 Girls' Basketball/Boys' Soccer @ RVMS – 3:45pm
- 16 **Early Dismissal – 12:00pm**
- 17 Vail Pride Day – Pima Country Fairgrounds
- 19 Girls' Basketball vs. VAHS – home – 3:45pm
- 19 Boys' Soccer @ VAHS – 3:45pm
- 22, 23 **No School – Rodeo Break**
- 26-28 Girls' Basketball/Boys' Soccer Tournaments
- 27 Site Council Meeting – Media Center – 4:00pm
- 27 **ELA Benchmark #3 – (Teams A, D, E, 6.1)**
- 27 **Writing Benchmark #3 – (Teams B, C)**
- 28 **ELA Benchmark #3 – (Team 6.2)**
- 28 **Writing Benchmark #3 – (Teams A, D, E, 6.1)**

### March

- 1 **ELA Benchmark #3 – (Teams B, C)**
- 1 **Writing Benchmark #3 – (Team 6.2)**
- 2 **Math Benchmark #3 – (Team A, D, E, 6.1)**
- 2 Spring Dance – Gym – 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- 5 **Math Benchmark #3 – (Team 6.2)**
- 5 Spring Pictures
- 5-9 Spirit Week
- 6 **Math Benchmark #3 – (Teams B, C)**
- 7, 9 **Benchmark #3 Make-ups/Grade Level Math Benchmarks**
- 8 **Science Benchmark #3 – (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Only)**
- 8 **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Awards Assembly – MPR – 1:45pm**
- 9 **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Awards Assembly – MPR – 8:05am**
- 9 **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Awards Assembly – MPR – 9:30am**
- 9 **Report Cards Mailed Home**
- 9 PRIDE Reward – 1:45pm
- 12 **Spring Break Begins – School Resumes March 26<sup>th</sup>**
- 26 **School Resumes**
- 30 **No School – Good Friday**

**Principal, Katie Dabney**

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**Desert Sky Office Hours:**

7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Site Council**

Jon Carlyon  
(Parent/Community)

Chach Jackson  
(Parent/Community)

Kiki Ngo  
(Parent/Community)

Karleene Talley  
(Parent/Community)

Rayna Kruszewski  
(Support Staff)

Abby Jackson  
(Certified Staff)

Melissa Thach  
(Certified Staff)

## *From the Principal..*

Dear Parents,

I'm very excited to share some great news with our Desert Sky community. Our school recently applied for an important award/designation through the Arizona Education Foundation (AEF). We submitted an A+ School of Excellence application earlier this month and have been notified that we are a finalist for this award. We will receive a site visit from the Arizona Education Foundation in late February.

The A+ School of Excellence Program celebrates education and brings to light the positive stories and successes happening in schools everyday. The A+ Program is an amazing catalyst for bringing together the surrounding community and its local neighborhood school. The A+ School of Excellence Recognition was created by the Arizona Educational Foundation in 1983. Its purpose is threefold:

- to identify and give public recognition to outstanding public schools in Arizona;
- to make available a comprehensive framework of key criteria for school effectiveness that can serve as a basis for participatory self-assessment and planning in schools;
- to facilitate communication and sharing of best practices within and among schools based on common criteria related to success.

As some of you may know, Desert Sky was named an A+ School of Excellence in 2011. However, the designation expires after several years. To retain the A+ School of Excellence designation, schools must reapply and go through the A+ process again.

The A+ School of Excellence award is a prestigious designation for schools. It is a rigorous process with many steps. First, schools must submit an extensive application. Only schools that meet the AEF's high standard requirements are allowed to apply (must be labeled an A or B school from ADE, evidence of high student achievement, multiple opportunities available to students, strong parental involvement, etc.). Our application was completed by an incredible committee consisting of several DSMS teachers, staff members, parent volunteers, and endorsed by our Site Council. It was a two-month labor of love. The end result was an application that highlighted Desert Sky's high academic and behavior standards, positive school culture, emphasis on strong relationships, and the many programs/extracurricular activities available to our students. Next, AEF Judges read through all submitted applications and determine which schools met the application criterion and are eligible to receive a site visit. Site visits are scheduled with schools and conducted by AEF Judges. Site visits usually take two days. Judges spend time in every classroom and observe the various school programs described in the application. After the site visit, all AEF Judges meet to determine which schools will be named an A+ School of Excellence. Schools are usually notified in late April.

Receiving a site visit is an accomplishment in and of itself. Desert Sky has amazing, hard working students and an incredible, talented staff. However, without the support of our parents and families, this would not be possible. Thank you for all of your support this year. Research shows that parental involvement not only increases student achievement, but a sense of community as well....and that is what makes an A+ School.

Here's to awesome 2<sup>nd</sup> semester! We look forward to working with you and your child during the last half of the school year!

Sincerely,

Katie Dabney, Principal

## Benchmark #3

In February and March, all students will be taking the Benchmark #3 tests in reading, writing, and math. Testing takes place on the mornings of the dates listed below. If possible, please make sure your child does not have any outside appointments scheduled during these days. It is also important that students get plenty of rest the night before, have a healthy breakfast, and do their best.

February 27<sup>th</sup> – ELA – Teams A, E, D, 6.1  
Writing – Teams B, C

February 28<sup>th</sup> - ELA – 6.2  
Writing – Teams A,E, D, 6.1

March 1<sup>st</sup> – ELA – Teams B, C  
Writing – Team 6.2

March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Math – Teams A, E, D, 6.1

March 5<sup>th</sup> – Math – Team 6.2

March 6<sup>th</sup> – Math – Teams B, C

March 7<sup>th</sup> – Grade level math for advanced math students

March 8<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

The Vail School District Raising Expectations document states:

*A District Assessment will be given to all students for math and reading prior to the end of the first three quarters. Any 6th - 8th grade student who falls far below the district assessment standard will be required to complete 12 hours of remediation for each deficient area.*

AzMerit testing will occur in April. This is our state assessment for writing, reading, and math.

**Calculators are allowed** on certain sections of the AzMERIT math test.

With this in mind, Desert Sky has purchased several classroom sets of calculators for students to use. Our teachers have incorporated their use into lessons when it is appropriate, and lead our students in how to access the advanced functions and capabilities. We will continue to value pencil-and-paper solving while recognizing the value of using the tools and technology available to us.

We want to make you aware of the model we are using, in case you want to purchase one for your child. This is optional. Purchasing one for your child will allow him or her to use it at home on homework and projects, and will increase their familiarity with its capabilities.

We are currently using the [Texas Instruments TI-30XS MultiView](#) scientific calculator. These are available at stores like Target, WalMart, Amazon and office stores, and sell for around \$15. If you purchase one for your child, please label it with his or her name using permanent marker or some other means.

Thank you for all you do to support our school and our students!



## DESERT SKY MIDDLE SCHOOL Parent-Teacher Conference Information

Conferences are scheduled to be held on **February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>**. Students will be released at 12:00 pm on these days. The conference schedule is as follows:

**Thursday, 2/8**      **12:30 - 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Friday, 2/9**      **12:30 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Sixth grade teachers will schedule individual conferences with parents.** Forms to sign up will be coming home soon with 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade core teachers, as well as Art, Band, Music/Choir, P.E., STEM, ELP and Special Education teachers will be available on a walk-in basis.

We look forward to meeting with you during conference times. Parent-Teacher conferences are extremely important as they provide the opportunity for you, your child, and your child's teachers to meet to review your student's progress.

Our goal is to meet with one-hundred percent of parents. If you are unable to attend conferences during these times, please contact your child's teacher via e-mail or phone to arrange for another opportunity.



Congratulations to Kylie Williams, Celeste Zufelt, and Gregory Castillo for making it all of the way to the district spelling bee!!! Even though these fine students didn't place at the bee, they handled the day with decorum and Desert Sky spirit! We are so proud of them!



## STUDENT RECOGNITIONS



It is no secret that the staff at Desert Sky Middle School truly values and appreciates the efforts of its hard-working students. With this in mind, we would like to take the time to recognize and celebrate the many accomplishments of several of our students in each monthly edition of The Cougar Communiqué. These accomplishments may be school or non-school related.

**Sydney Garcia (Beard/Thach)** - We are delighted to recognize Sydney Garcia as our amazing student of the month. Sydney puts heart into all that he does. He is caring and respectful towards teachers and students alike. Sydney's positive attitude toward learning and life in general is inspiring. He is definitely a role model for his peers. Having Sydney on our team is a joy and a blessing. Thank you Sydney for being you!

**Lillian Hall (Jeffries/Smith-Dryden)** - We are happy to recognize Lillian Hall this month as an exceptional student at Desert Sky. Lillian is respectful and hardworking young lady who always goes above and beyond with her schoolwork. She is kind hearted and caring to her classmates. Lillian has a wonderful smile and we love having her in our class. Lillian is a role model student for any Desert Sky Cougar! We are so proud of all that she has accomplished and know that she is going to continue to be successful!

**Sean Cadena (Golembiewski/Sinko)** - We are happy to recognize Sean Cadena. Sean is always positive and upbeat; he is a good friend to fellow students. Sean is prepared for class every day and ready to learn. Sean is conscientious and always takes responsibility for his work and does his very best. Sean is respectful and models Citizenship at the highest level every day. We are very proud and happy to have Sean as a member of our team.

**Caitlin Hirabayashi (Hill/Buchanan/Wactor)** - We would like to recognize Caitlin for her persistent and dedicated efforts this entire school year. Caitlin displays a level of tenacity that truly sets her above her peers on most every occasion. She is one of a handful of students who takes constructive feedback seriously and reflects on how she can get the most out of her education. It is students like Caitlin that really challenge teachers to create enrichment opportunities in their lessons as she always brings her 'A' game to class, seeking to extend her knowledge and enlightenment in all fields of learning in a persistent yet unobtrusive way. Our team is truly blessed to have students like her to set the bar for engagement in the classroom.

**Caleb Scheuerman (Team A)** - We would like to recognize Caleb Scheuerman. Caleb stands out for all of the best reasons. He is respectful and polite. He takes a keen interest in his studies, actively engaging in class activities and always completing his work to the highest standard. Caleb also reaches out to his classmates, looking for ways to support and help where he can. He is an exceptional young man in so many good ways.

**Clara Compton (Team B)** - This month, we would like to recognize Clara Compton, who is a constant reminder of just how good a person could be. Always ready with a kind word or a correct answer, she is a shining example of a Desert Sky Cougar. With her immaculate daily efforts, Clara makes everyone who knows her proud to be a small part of her success.

**Aqueen Brown (Team C)** - Team C would like to recognize Aqueen Brown as an exceptional example of what a true Desert Sky Cougar should aspire to be. Aqueen joined Desert Sky late, but that has not stopped her from working hard and becoming an amazing student and friend to all on Team C. Aqueen works hard in class to understand difficult concepts, asks questions to help clarify and always makes sure she does her very best on homework and formatives. This diligence has earned Aqueen a spot on the honor roll for quarter 2, a position we believe she will maintain for the rest of her career at Desert Sky. Outside of class, Aqueen has been able to do a great job of fitting in and making some great friends...friends that look to her as a model of how to be a true Cougar.

**Sarah Rose Ignacio, Jenny Stulik, Cooper Smith, and Michael Hirabayashi (Team D)** - Team D is proud to recognize these students. They recently applied and were interviewed for the prestigious Corvus honors program at Empire High School. It takes a lot of hard work and determination to be considered for Corvus, and then these students qualified and completed an interview process with school administration. We admire their GRIT and wish them the best!

**Lilyana Barnes (Team E)** - We would like to recognize Lily Barnes for being a shining example of hard work and perseverance. Lily faces every task head on with a positive attitude and keeps on working through challenges. Lily is kind and always willing to lend a helping hand. She is respectful, focused, and determined to do her very best. She is responsible and makes the most of her time in class each day. Lily is an exemplary student and it is a privilege to have her on our team.

**Dominique Ott (Specialists)** - We would like to recognize Dominique as being a hard working role model student. She comes to class everyday with a smile and always enthusiastic to participate. She brings lots of joy everywhere she goes. We truly appreciate her and love having her in our classes!



## Changing up our 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony -

Our 8th grade promotion ceremony will be held on **Thursday, May 24th** at **10:30am** in the Desert Sky Gymnasium. **This year we will be limiting the number of guests attending the ceremony and we will be issuing tickets. Please watch for more information to come regarding this process.** We look forward to seeing you in attendance to help honor our 17th class of promoting 8th graders.

  
Read Every Day. Lead a Better Life.

Dear Parents and Families,

The whole school is excited about our upcoming Book Fair. An amazing selection of books is headed our way! The book fair will have a wonderful selection of fiction and nonfiction titles that will appeal to middle school student and adults.

Mark your calendar for our Family Event where the family can join in the fun. The Book Fair is a great way to get everyone excited about reading.

Book Fair Dates: Monday, February 5th to Friday, February 9th

Shopping Hours: 7:45 am to 3:45 pm

Special Events: Family Night Thursday from 4:00 to 7:00 pm (during the first day of Parent Teacher Conferences).

Our Scholastic Book Fair is part of a reading event that brings to school a wonderful selection of fun, engaging and affordable books for kids want to read. Giving kids access to good books and the opportunity to choose their own books to motivate them to read more. And like most acquired skills, the more kids practice reading, the better they'll get.

If you cannot make it to the Book Fair, you can order books on line for a limited time (2/1/18 through 2/15/18) and Desert Sky will get credit for the sales. Online advantages include:

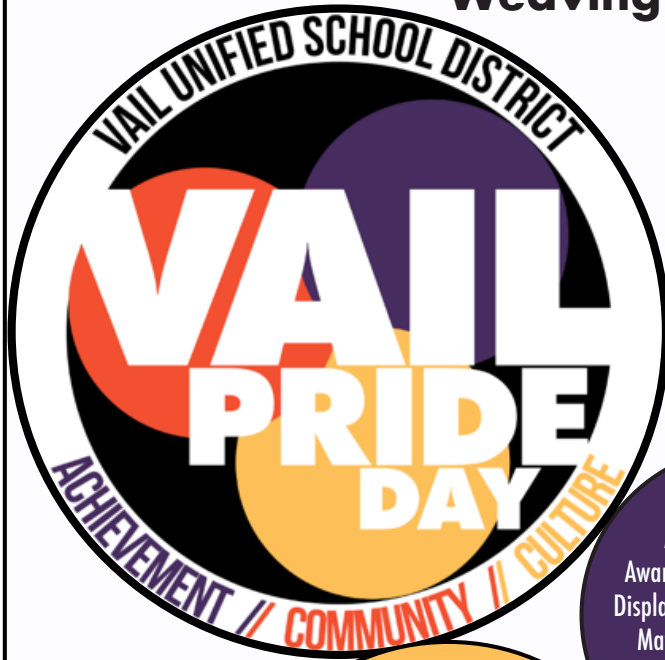
- \* Send wish lists to family and friends
- \* All orders ship for free to school
- \* Browse an expanded book selection - including Storia eBooks

Go to [scholastic.com/bookfairs](http://scholastic.com/bookfairs)



# VAIL PRIDE DAY 2018

"Weaving Our Legacy"



**Saturday  
February 17th  
9am to 4pm**

Pima County  
Fairgrounds  
11300 S. Houghton Rd  
**Free Admission**

## Events

Academic Jeopardy  
Awards Ceremony • School  
Displays • K-8 Music Concerts  
Math Bowl • Art Galleries  
Jumping Castles • STEM Show-  
case Area • Kid Zone  
Finale Parade

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Steamy Concepts • Truly Nolen • Tucson  
Medical Center

## GOLD SPONSORS!



## BRONZE SPONSORS

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**Vail School District: Where Education is a Community Effort**



**PK-8 STUDENT CALENDAR 2018-2019**

**July**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**August**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**September**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**October**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**November**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**December**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**January**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**February**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

**March**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**April**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**May**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**June**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

- B/E = Beginning/End of school
- C = Parent/Teacher Conferences (1/2 day for Students)
- T = Teacher Grading Day (1/2 day for Students)
- Y = Inservice for Teachers - 1/2 day for Students
- VPD = Vail Pride Day
- = Holidays/Vacations (No School for Students)

# Desert Sky Middle School

## Yearbook Order Form



Order your yearbook now and  
enjoy a lifetime of memories!

To order now go to  
[www.jostensyearbooks.com](http://www.jostensyearbooks.com)  
Select Desert Sky Middle School  
(Be careful to choose the one in Tucson)

Order now and save! The cost will increase  
from \$35 to \$40 in Feburary!

If you have questions or concerns please contact Mrs. Willard  
at 520-879-2754

or [willardm@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:willardm@vailschooldistrict.org)