

Sequoia Choice Times

November 2016

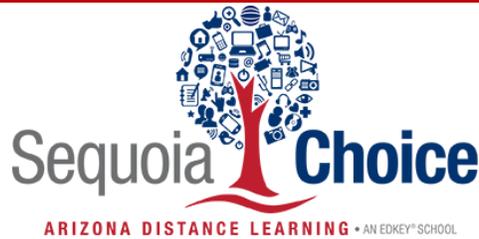
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Dear Families,

As we fly full speed ahead into the holidays, it is important to make sure those good habits that we began the school year with are still intact. I recently read an article in *Psychology Today* about how sleep affects our thinking. Although I have read many articles like it in the past, this one specifically focused on the relationship between sleep, screentime, and performance. The article, "Screentime Is Making Kids Moody, Crazy and Lazy" by Victoria L. Dunckley M.D. shares the six ways electronic screentime makes kids angry, depressed, and unmotivated. I find this especially interesting considering that many of our students are in front of a screen for most of their schooling.

According to Dr. Dunckley, the six ways screentime affects us are:

1. Screentime disrupts sleep and desynchronizes the body clock.
2. Screentime desensitizes the brain's reward system.
3. Screentime produces "light-at-night."
4. Screentime induces stress reactions.
5. Screentime overloads the sensory system, fractures attention, and depletes mental reserves.
6. Screentime reduces physical activity and exposure to "green time."

A solution that is offered by Dr. Dunckley is an "Electronic Fast." An "Electronic Fast" can be for a few days, such as a weekend or during a school break. It also includes time outside, whether it be riding a bike, playing a game, or just napping in the shade. "Electronic Fasts" can reset the brain, improving sleeping and concentration.

In our virtual school world, getting the brain and the technology to work efficiently together can be a challenge, but with careful planning, I believe this can be accomplished and our kids will benefit.

Warm Regards,
Cindy Chleborad

Our mission is to provide a caring environment of high expectations, individualized attention, and great teaching via a distance learning delivery system that is sufficiently adaptable to help K-12 students in traditional and non-traditional educational settings achieve their maximum academic potential and life goals.

Counselor's Corner

Personal Statements

College, internship, and scholarship applications will often ask for a "personal statement." Students are invariably confused by this request, not knowing what the college or scholarship committee is looking for.

A personal statement is generally a short essay, maybe a page long, about who you are as a person and what your goals and aspirations are. It should be distinctive and unique. If, upon re-reading your personal statement, you find that it could apply to anyone else, you should rewrite it. Many students have high GPAs and test scores. Many students have high aspirations regarding college and career goals. What sets you apart from the rest?

Remember that the college admissions or scholarship committee will already have access to your GPA and test scores, so don't worry about highlighting those. Approach your entire application in a holistic manner. There is no need to repeat things in your essay that are addressed elsewhere in your application. Instead, take it as an opportunity to tell something about yourself that may not be readily apparent just by looking at your transcript or test scores.

Did you have a particular challenge to overcome? Do you come from a background not typical of incoming college freshmen? Do you have an interest, hobby, talent, skill, or experience that is unusual or distinctive? What is it about you that is unique or different from all the rest? Keep in mind that we as individuals often do not see ourselves clearly. Talk to some trusted adults and ask them about how they see you. What are your strengths? In what areas have you grown the most while in high school?

Include a personal story. Say you want to be a doctor. Why? Maybe a family member had a grave illness when you were younger, and this experience affected you. Tell that story. Even a simple story is good: "I remember building a shed in the backyard with my dad when I was twelve, and I recall thinking how lucky I was to have a dad who loved me enough to teach me the value of hard work. That thought was a little deep for a twelve-year-old, but it has stuck with me. Because of that experience, I..." and then you go into your goals and aspirations. Just by adding a two-sentence story, you have made your application memorable.

Humor is okay, but a little goes a long way. Neither you nor your application are a joke. Too much humor, and it will

come off that way. Avoid sarcasm completely. The committee members do not know you, so they won't know if you're being serious or sarcastic. They have to assume you're being serious.

Certainly, let your mom and dad read and critique it, but the writing needs to be your own. A personal statement partly written by someone else isn't truly a personal statement; the voice must be yours. As your English teachers will attest, it is easy to spot an essay written by multiple people, or written by someone other than the student. Take your time with it. Don't rush it. Write it, then rewrite it, then rewrite it again. Polish it until it shines like a gem.

Above all, be you. Be the best you possible. Never, ever lie in a personal statement or on an application, but you don't necessarily need to include details that may reflect negatively upon you. Also, mold your personal statement to the type of application it's for. If it's an internship application, you will include different details than if it were a college or scholarship application. What are they looking for? Give them what they want, within the bounds of the truth.

Your ultimate goal is that whoever reads your personal statement will remember it and will want to meet the person who wrote it. Committee members may read hundreds or even thousands of personal statements from prospective applicants. Will they remember yours?

Remember: Be distinctive, be personal, and be you. If you do that, you will write a memorable personal statement that will open doors to you.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jeanine Newsom

School Counselor

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Testing Information

Benchmarks

This year we are working harder on achieving accuracy and effectiveness within the Galileo benchmarking system. In order to do this, benchmarks will now be aligned with the student's actual progress in their courses. When it's time to take the test, a marker within the course will direct the student to take the pre-, CBAS #1, or post-benchmark.

For those families that are returning, you will see that Galileo has a new interface. There are many improvements to allow you and your student to review the assigned Galileo assessment on the dashboard and make it easier to obtain your student's scores. Please review the introduction to the new student page using the link below.

http://www.ati-online.com/video/PD_K12/Student_Access/Student_Access.html

The student username will be the same as your MyEdkey information. On occasion, a student may have a different username due to a prior student having the same one. If you have any questions about your username and password, please contact your advisor.

AzMERIT

In order to prepare your student for AzMERIT, the state has provided sample tests on <http://azmeritportal.org> which are open to all individuals. You can also find other support materials such as calculator guidance, ELA Writing Guides, and Math Blueprints at that link. AzMERIT will be administered in the Fall for students enrolled and receiving high school credit for specific courses. See the chart on the next page and look for more information from your advisor.

General testing information can currently be reviewed on the ADE website. <http://www.azed.gov/assessment/azmerit/>

AzMerit sample test instructions: <https://cms.azed.gov/ContentCache/54e7666daadebe103c500934/index.htm>

Civics Test

New this year!!

We will be working in accordance with the Arizona Department of Education to implement this high school graduation requirement. The Civics test does need to be proctored and scores will be recorded at the school level. There will be more information to come as the year progresses.

From the ADE:

In 2015, the Arizona legislature passed the Arizona Civics Test Law (House Bill 2064). This bill will require students, beginning with the graduating class of 2017, to pass a civics test based on the United States Immigration and Naturalization civics questions. Students will be required to score 60% or higher in order to graduate from high school or obtain a high school equivalency certificate.

Arizona Civics Test Law: <http://www.azleg.gov/ars/15/00701-01.htm>.

Several links have been provided to prepare your student for the Civics test.

Study Materials for the Civics Test:

<http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/study-test/study-materials-civics-test>

Flash Cards:

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/see-all-section-items-title-right/Civics%20Flash%20Cards%20for%20the%20Naturalization%20Test/55239?destination=node/41140>

Fall 2016 Testing Dates

State testing is a requirement of your enrollment at Sequoia Choice. If you are enrolled in one or more of the following classes, you will be required to take the assigned AzMerit test this fall.

English	Math
English 9 B	Algebra 1 B
English 10 B	Geometry B
English 11 B	Algebra 2 B
ENG101 and ENG102 (or equivalents)	MAT090 through MAT151

We make every effort to arrange testing locations at convenient times and within a reasonable distance from our families all across the state of Arizona. Please coordinate with your advisor to sign up or confirm your AzMerit testing sessions for Fall 2016. Makeups and alternative testing arrangements can be made through your advisor at our office in Mesa.

Sequoia Student Spotlight

This month's Sequoia Student Spotlight is Averia Russo. She is a 2nd grade student in her second year with AZDL. She attends the R.E.A.C.H. program in Maricopa, and has been a student of Sequoia for 2 years. Averie was nominated by Mrs. Radigan.

Averie is an exemplary student in many ways. Not only is she a diligent and hard working student with academic accomplishments to show for it, but she is also a person with a strong character. She gives all projects her greatest effort, and seeks to include other students, making sure they have everything they need.

She makes a point of offering to help in any way that she can, with students and the teachers, and she is well-liked by all of us at R.E.A.C.H. We are so lucky to have Averie as part of our Sequoia Family!



Refer a Friend Program

REFER A
FRIEND



Throughout the years, Sequoia Choice - Arizona Distance Learning has offered our Refer-a-Friend Program to our students. We are excited to be offering it now! Referring a friend to our school makes you eligible for a \$50 Walmart or Amazon.com gift card! Claiming a gift card is easy. Just visit our website at azdl.org. Find the drop-down menu in the top right corner and completed the required form.

There are many reasons why your friends may want to attend AZDL for FREE:

- * We offer credit recovery to students who may have previously failed a course at their home school.
- * We offer college courses to students who meet the requirements.
- * Some students enroll to take elective courses with the intent of transferring the credit back to their high school to improve their GPA or class rank for scholarship purposes.
- * We serve students who quit school, but need an option for continuing school while working full-time. We accept students up to their 21st birthday.
- * Many of our students are trying to get ahead in their high school credits.
- * We offer an elementary program that allows parents to be very involved. Our approach is unique to the industry.
- * We are a small school with a great staff who care about each student. We are not a national conglomerate.

Many students do not realize that being enrolled in more than one school is an option in Arizona. Students may attend as many schools as they wish. We currently have several students who attend one school during the day, and work in their AZDL courses at night and on the weekends.

Halloween @ TRC

It was another year of Halloween horrors at the TRC lab on October 31, 2016 as students were replaced with creepy clowns and dolls, dessert warriors, musicians, and more! As lunch time crept around, students perfected their make-up skills and competed for best costume. 1st place went to Anastazia Shaeffer as an antelope fresh from the slaughter and 2nd place went to David Guzman as a desert soldier. After lunch, students competed for best wrapped mummy, limbo, and other minute-to-win-it games. It was a ghoulishly fun time for all! Many thanks to Mrs. Z. for the time and effort she put in preparing for the party—and for her costume!



On the floor: Kashaii I. as Prince

Sitting: Mrs. Z as creepy doll

Standing L to R: Anastazia S. as antelope fresh from slaughter; David G. as desert soldier; Jacob K. as creepy skeleton; and Brian S and a Trump supporter

Youth Leadership Day

**Governor Doug Ducey's Youth Commission
Youth Leadership Day
May 5th, 2017
Grand Canyon University**

**This event is free for high school students and
lunch will be provided!**

The Governor's Youth Commission invites all Arizona high school youth to the 11th annual Youth Leadership Day (YLD) conference. This day provides an opportunity for students across the state to hear inspirational speakers, attend leadership development workshops and network with their peers. Our goal is to motivate Arizona's future leaders to recognize their inherent skills and gain the necessary tools to assist them in positively contributing to the development of a stronger, safer, and more prosperous state. In 2016, YLD was attended by over 600 youth, youth group leaders, and educators. We hope to see you there this year!

Workshops!

Last year we had 20 workshops that focused on anti-bullying, increasing the awareness of substance abuse, how to apply for a college scholarship, finding your leadership style, increasing your civic knowledge, reducing stress, effective communication, AmeriCorps 101, self defense, Native American History, marketing yourself for a job, and MORE!



A full list of workshops will be sent to each group leader in April.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Jeanine Newsom at jnewsom@edkey.org or 480-461-3222 Ext. 10644.



Friday, May 5, 2017	
9:00	Check-in
10:00	Opening Session
10:45	Workshop Session I (50 Minutes)
11:45	Lunch
12:45	Workshop Session II (50 minutes)
1:45	Closing Address
2:30	End of Day



Fry's Rewards



Enjoy shopping at Fry's Food Stores? Want to help raise money for your school? Sequoia Choice AZDL now has a Fry's Community Rewards number! All you have to do is link the number below to your Fry's VIP card and every time you shop, Sequoia Choice gets a percentage of the purchase.

Sequoia Choice AZDL Community Rewards number: 56215

PLEASE NOTE: Before you can link your Fry's V.I.P card to an organization, you must have an e-mail address.

STEP 1: Creating an Online Fry's Account

NOTE: If you already have an online Fry's account, skip to #2

- * Go to <http://www.frysfood.com/>
- * Select Register.
- * Under Sign-in information, enter your e-mail and create a password. (**Write down your e-mail & password; you will need it in step 2.**)
- * Select Use Card Number.
- * Enter your Fry's V.I.P Card Number, last name, and postal code.
- * Under Select Your Preferred Store, enter your postal code.
- * Select Find Stores.

- * Choose your store then select Create Account.
- * You will then be prompted to check your e-mail for a confirmation e-mail.
- * Click the hyperlink in your e-mail to finish creating your online Fry's account.
- * Continue to step #2 to register for the Fry's Community Rewards Program of your choice.

STEP 2: Register for the Fry's Community Rewards Program

- * Go to <https://www.frysfood.com/topic/community?activePage=community-rewards-2>
- * Select Sign in.
- * Enter your e-mail and password then select Sign in. (**This will be the e-mail and password you created in step 1.**)
- * Select My Account then select Account Settings from the drop-down menu.
- * Click Edit under Community Rewards. If prompted, enter personal information.
- * Under Find Your Organization, enter the NPO number (56215) or name of organization (Sequoia Choice), then select Search.
- * Under Select Your Organization, check the box next to your organization.
- * Then select Save changes.
- * If you have registered correctly, you should now see your organization information listed under Community Rewards on your Account Summary page.

Calendar of Events

October 2016

- ◆ 10 - 14: Fall Break, NO SCHOOL
- ◆ 24: AzMERIT Testing Window Opens

November 2016

- ◆ 11: Veterans Day, SCHOOL OFFICES CLOSED
- ◆ 16: AzMERIT Writing Portion Must Be Completed

- ◆ 24 - 25: Thanksgiving Holiday, SCHOOL OFFICES CLOSED

December 2016

- ◆ 2: AzMERIT Testing Window Closes
- ◆ 22: Last Day of the Fall Semester
- ◆ Dec 23 - Jan 6: Winter Break, NO SCHOOL

For a complete view of our school calendar, please visit our website at <http://www.sequoiachoice.org/>.