

Sequoia Choice Times

Sequoia Choice—
Arizona Distance
Learning



323 North Gilbert Road
#104
Mesa, Arizona
85203

Phone: (480) 461-3222
Fax: 480) 890-4106
Email:
info@sequoiachoice.org

This Issue:

McKinney-Vento 1

Benchmark Testing 2

State Tax Credit 2

Mascot Contest 2

Data Discussion 3

Helping 4

Students Stay
Motivated

Counselor's 5

Corner

Khan 6-

Academy 8

Calendar of Events 9

November 2014

Volume 1, Issue 3

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.

Dear Students and Families,

We have just completed one quarter of our school year! This time of year brings a shift in learning. The beginning of the year bugs are worked out, relationships with the student and teachers are established, and everyone is in full-gear. October and November are optimal learning times for all students since routines and expectations are set.

The end of one quarter, and the beginning of the next can be a time of reflection. It is a great time to speak with your child about what is going well, and what he or she feels needs improvement. Small adjustments can make learning so much easier, and who better to share what adjustments are needed than your child. Sometimes, as a parent, I forget this. I will often find myself trying to solve something that I feel is a problem for my son rather than asking him what he feels the problem is, and what the solution may be. If I let him talk long enough and ask the right questions he will often solve his own problems with solutions that are far better than any I may have had in mind.

At this time of the school year it is also extremely important to resolve any unresolved issues. If your child is having difficulty seeks a solution. I encourage you to reach out to us to help. We want to help!

Best Wishes,

Cindy Chleborad

Principal

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning

McKinney-Vento Information

Attention Students and Families!

Is your family living in one of the following situations?

- In a motel or campground due to lack of an alternative adequate accommodation
- In a shelter
- In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station
- Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

If so, we can help you. Please contact our homeless liaison, Ashlie Hancock at 480-834-7400 for help.

Next Benchmark Testing Dates

Important: We will be starting our 2nd benchmark with Galileo on November 12th and the testing window will be closed November 26th. Please contact your advisor for any questions.

State Tax Credit

Are you looking for a tax credit? If so, we can help! Single people can donate up to \$200.00 and married couples can donate up to \$400.00. If you would like more information, please contact Christin at [480-461-3222](tel:480-461-3222)

Mascot Contest Extended

Do you draw? Are you interested in drawing? Then, this is great news for you! The Mascot Competition has been extended until January 9, 2015. If you are interested in designing a mascot for our school please contact any of your teachers or advisors to get more information. Get creative and have fun!

Data Discussion

Our re-accreditation visit is just around the corner, and is scheduled for mid-November. We are excited to share our school with External Review Team. Part of the accreditation process was a Stakeholder Survey Diagnostic. Before the results of the student and parent surveys are shared, it is important that each of you who took the time to complete the survey is thanked. So, thank you for your participation. We learned some things about our school, and are working on ideas to improve in areas that were noted.

Highlights of the Student Survey

Our students feel:

- ◆ We have high expectations of them, and they understand the expectations.
- ◆ We provide multiple opportunities for their understanding to be demonstrated.
- ◆ We provide a challenging and engaging school experience that is of high quality.
- ◆ The teachers know the content they are teaching.
- ◆ The orientation met their needs and made learning easy.
- ◆ They are treated with respect in all communications.
- ◆ Our team works together to improve their learning experience.

Areas We Plan to Address:

- ◆ Including more student input when discussing school improvement.
- ◆ Establishing the real-life relevance in course work.
- ◆ Providing opportunities for students to work together on projects.
- ◆ Providing information on internet safety.

Highlights of the Parent Survey

Our parents feel:

- ◆ The curriculum meets the needs of their child.
- ◆ The curriculum is challenging and engaging.
- ◆ High expectations are clearly defined and explained.
- ◆ Their child has at least one adult advocate within the school that shows interest in their education and future.
- ◆ Grading is fair and equitable.
- ◆ The staff is qualified to support their child in a digital learning environment.
- ◆ Each student is well-orientated to the digital learning environment.
- ◆ Each child's progress is carefully monitored, and information about progress is regularly shared.

Areas We Plan to Address:

- ◆ Provide additional opportunities for parents to learn about our school.
- ◆ Providing additional variety in the learning process.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for parents to be more involved in the learning process.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for parents to be more involved in the school.

Helping Students Stay Motivated

This time of year students either kick it in gear or they lose their motivation all together. Here are some tips to help keep your students motivated even when they are pushing back.

- ⇒ Remember that motivation is something that is created with our children, not for them. We want to create environments that cultivate curiosity and personal investments. Students need to feel it is safe to take the risk of investing themselves.
- ⇒ Kids are not lazy by nature. Laziness is usually a strategy when hiding a different problem such as not having the skills to be successful, afraid of rejection when they have tried, or admitting they don't understand. Many times kids just refuse to admit they don't know something so they may pass it off as lazy instead.
- ⇒ Make sure your child knows that you empathize with them when it is hard. Empathy is a form of attention that feels good. When a child knows you have their back, he or she may be willing to do just a little bit more.
- ⇒ Remember where your child is in life. When I look back to my childhood years, there are very few of them I would want to go back to. This isn't because of a catastrophic event or a miserable school experience; it is because it was hard growing up with so little control of each day in a world that didn't always make sense.
- ⇒ Provide feedback that is descriptive. Children like to be talked to. If you are letting them know exactly what you liked or didn't like there is a good chance the next attempt will be better.
- ⇒ Spark the curiosity of your child. Think about the excitement they feel before opening a gift. It is tricky, but how can everything we do and say to our children spark that level of curiosity.

While finding the path to motivating a child can be long and winding there are some sure-fire ways to squelch any motivation that may be building. These include:

- * Telling a child how important something is for their adult life. Most children are living large in the now.
- * Speaking in long paragraphs when disciplining.
- * Being given tasks above the current skill level.
- * Being told what they are or should be thinking or feeling.
- * Indicators of failures. Instead of failures being lessons toward success.
- * Having the bad pointed out more often than the good.
- * Being treated either too young or too old.
- * Belittling a strong emotional response to something that seems minor to an adult. It really is a big deal for a child.
- * Putting a schedule before a child's needs and abilities.
- * Sarcasm

When trying to motivate your child remember not one strategy will work every time. Somehow we have to be a step ahead of them each day. Inspiration is hard to come by, but once it is engaged kids can do anything and everything!

Counselor's Corner

College- or university-bound students: Here is what you need to be doing at this time of year to prepare for your post-secondary schooling. Although I have broken down my advice into the different high school years, most of what I advise to freshman applies to all, and so on.

Freshman: You have the time to cultivate the talents and extracurricular activities that scholarship committees and college admissions officials look for. Get a job, volunteer your time, learn a musical instrument, polish your essay-writing skills, apply for an internship, play a sport, acquire an interesting or unique hobby, or get involved with a church or scouting group. Whether you do one or several of these things, it's important that you do something. Most of all, get good grades. Both GPA and extracurricular activities matter, so don't focus on one to the detriment of the other.

Sophomores: I hope you took the PSAT in October. Get involved with outside activities that will improve you as a person and also look good on a college or scholarship application. Start thinking now about specific colleges or other post-secondary options you may be interested in. Remember that your freshman, sophomore, and junior years count more than your senior year as far as grades go, so keep your grades up. (Senior-year grades will not yet be available when you apply to colleges and for scholarships.)

Juniors: You should plan on taking both the SAT and ACT in the spring. There are loads of practice questions and support online. Check out the College Board and ACT organization's websites for help and information. If you took the PSAT, look for your scores sometime in December. Remember, not all scholarships are for seniors. There are many scholarships for which you can apply now. Don't wait until your senior year to start!

Seniors: Scholarship season has begun! Deadlines generally run from September to March. There are many good scholarship search engines online. Check out azdl.org's scholarship tips and links pages for more information. You can find them by hovering over the Students tab (Students > Counselor's Corner > Scholarship Tips, Scholarship Websites). If you have not yet taken the SAT or ACT, sign up right away! If you have taken one or both of them and have your scores back, sign up to re-take the test you did better on. You have a better than 50% chance of improving your score.

If you have questions or need help with scholarships, financial aid, college applications, or anything else to do with your current and future schooling, please call or e-mail me at 480-461-3222 ext. 10644 and jnewsom@edkey.org.

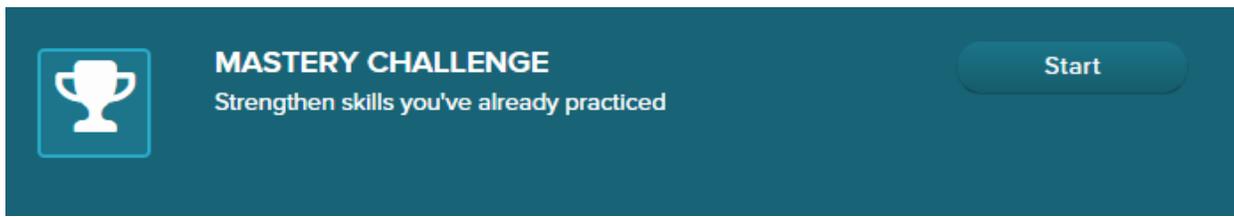
Ms. Newsom

Khan Academy

Three Things Parents Should Know about Our Math Courses

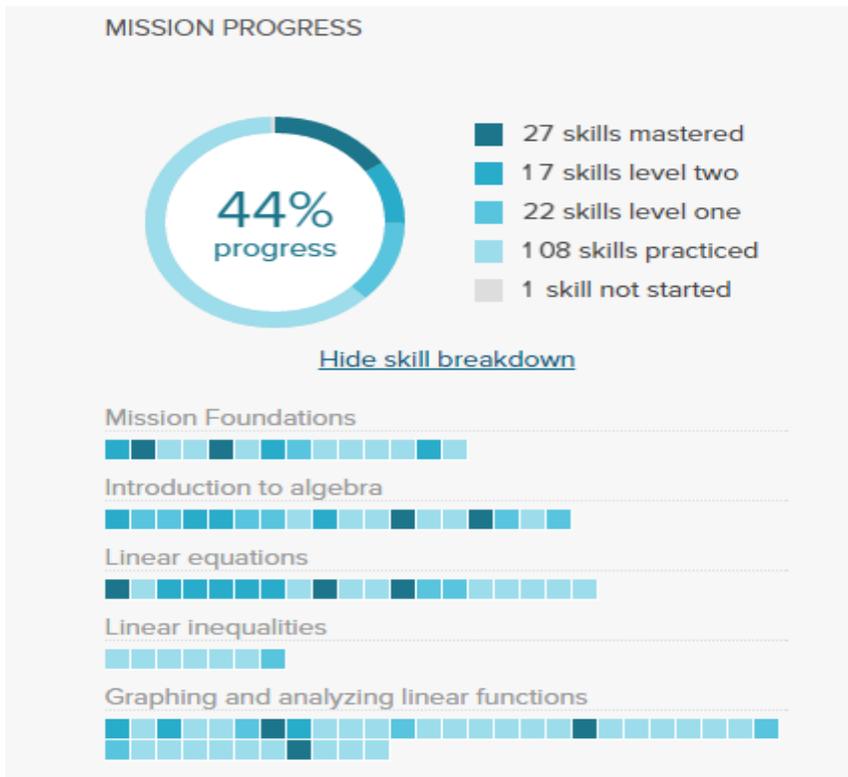
1. Our prime focus is mastery of the standards.

Almost all of the lessons in our courses conclude with the student going to Khan Academy to demonstrate that they can perform the particular skill. In educational terms, this is a “check for understanding.” Success at that task earns an 85% for that assignment, but achieving mastery demands more than that. The way for students to bring that 85% up to 90, 95, and ultimately 100% is to include Mastery Challenges in their daily math routine. Mastery Challenges check for retention of the skill that was practiced a few days earlier. When the student gets it right again, they bump up to the next level, ultimately reaching the mastery designation for that skill.



MASTERY CHALLENGE
Strengthen skills you've already practiced

Start



Khan Academy– Continued

Turn them dark blue, and they become a part of you!

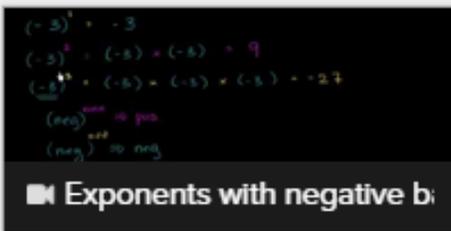
Between the Daily Warm-up and the material in the course, your student should plan to spend between 60-75 minutes every school day on math.

2. **Students have several choices of how to learn the math-** Each class has a searchable pdf file of the textbook on top of the class, but it tends to be the least used of the resources that are available. The two types of resources within Khan Academy are the ones students tend to rely on most – hints and videos. Hints will show the solution to the problem on the screen step-by-step, similar to the way it would be in a textbook. In most cases, this is enough for the student to learn the skill. Many prefer to watch the videos that teach the concepts and demonstrate. Whichever way your child learns best, they should be keeping a math notebook to write down the steps to a sample problem. We allow them to use their own hand-written during the final exam, so it's a really important thing to check for.

Show me how

I'd like another hint (1 hint left)

Stuck? Watch a video.



- Powers of 1 and 0
- Powers of zero
- Raising a number to the 0 and 1st power

When these resources don't do the trick, we encourage students to come to the Math Tutoring Den. Every math student has Math Tutoring Den as one of their classes on their SCORE home page. When they click in, they can make an appointment to meet with their teacher or one of our tutors. Very often, your child can get help immediately. In that virtual classroom, the student can share their screen and we can work on the exact problem they're stuck on.

Khan Academy– Continued

3. We have great visibility into your child's activity and progress with their math, and so can you!

Our math teachers are able to monitor your child's work in Khan and know almost immediately when they are struggling to learn a skill. We can also see how their time was spent, what videos they watched, and what skills were mastered. When they get a question wrong, we can even see what they answered to help us know how to get the student on the right track.

If you would like to have the same ability, getting set up is easy. Simply go to www.khanacademy.org and click the "Parents, start here" button. Once you have an account, your child sets you up as coach, and you can help cheer them on to math mastery! If you need any help getting your child's account set up with you as coach, please write to Ken Burbank at kburbank@edkey.org.

You only have to know one thing:
You can learn anything

For free. For everyone. Forever.

Start learning now

Teachers, start here

Parents, start here

Calendar of Events

November

7: Staff Professional Development Day (Students may still access courses during staff training)

11: Veteran's Day— **NO SCHOOL**

27-28: Thanksgiving Break— **NO SCHOOL**

December

22-January 2: Holiday Break— **NO SCHOOL**

January

5: School Resumes

19: Civil Rights Day — **NO SCHOOL**

February

16: President's Day — **NO SCHOOL**

23: Testing- Writing

24: Testing- Reading

25: Testing- Math

27: Staff Professional Development Day (Students may still access courses during staff training)

March

16-20: Spring Break— **NO SCHOOL**

April

3rd: April Break- **NO SCHOOL**

TBD: Testing— Science

May

1: Staff Professional Development Day (Students may still access courses during staff training)

For a complete view of our school calendar,
please visit our website at azdl.org

**Remember that students
may still access courses dur-
ing staff training and holi-
days! It's a great time to get
caught up or get ahead!!!!**