

# Sequoia Choice Times

Sequoia Choice—  
Arizona Distance  
Learning



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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.

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Dear Students and Families,

Happy Holidays! 2015 is nearly over and we are now headed into the second semester of school. Every day much learning is taking place at Sequoia Choice, and it is wonderful to see the excitement of student and staff as we continue on this path together!

Many of our students are finishing up their courses by successfully completing their final exams. We know just how hard each student continues to work. We are proud of our Sequoia Choice students! Our last day of school before Winter Break is Friday, December 18. If your student has not finished their first semester work by the last day of the semester keep them working.

Breaks are a great time for students to catch up. All online courses remain open during all breaks. Please remember that during school breaks the teachers are not working, students can continue to work which will allow them to start the new year feeling caught up. When school resumes on Monday, January 4, 2016 the teachers will begin grading and responding back to students, but don't be surprised if you hear back sooner.

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season and a happy new year!

Cindy Chleborad

Principal

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning

## Counselor's Corner

The winter break is just around the corner. Just think of it, days in which you can hang out with your friends, play video games, surf the web, go to movies (the new Star Wars movie comes out just when the break starts, after all), and just enjoy the luxury of being lazy with nothing pressing to do for two full weeks!

... Unless, of course, you are behind in your classes.

As of this writing, there are two weeks left in the semester. Two weeks in which to finish your assignments, take your finals, and turn in any final projects. That's not long. Those of you who stayed on track throughout the semester are now reaping the benefits and can look forward to two stress-free weeks off for the holidays. But, for those of you who procrastinated and will not finish your courses on time, your break will be a nervous time. Maybe it will still be full of all the fun things that normally come with this time of year, but you won't be able to fully enjoy it.

As you spend time with your friends, a little voice in the back of your mind will remind you, "You really should be working on that English class you didn't finish." As you play the video game you received as a Christmas gift from your parents, a voice will pop up in your head, saying, "What about that Science class that you're at 80% completion on?" As you surf the web, a voice will irritatingly intrude in your mind, "Your Social Studies course is only half done!" And, as you try to enjoy a movie at the theater, louder than any John Williams' sweeping music, will come the voice of ~~Darth Vader~~ (insert name of new Star Wars antagonist here), "WHY ISN'T YOUR MATH DONE?"

Such is the fate of the procrastinator, who is never able to enjoy time off. All recreational pursuits are tainted with the knowledge in the back of your mind that you should be doing something else.

James Surowiecki, a journalist, said "The essence of procrastination lies in not doing what you think you should be doing, a mental contortion that surely accounts for the great psychic toll the habit takes on people. This is the perplexing thing about procrastination: although it seems to involve avoiding unpleasant

tasks, *indulging in it generally doesn't make people happy*" (emphasis added).

Some are okay with this and have learned to live with the unhappiness that results from procrastination, but procrastination has consequences beyond mere annoying voices of conscience. Procrastination also leads to slowed progress towards high school graduation. This means you get to enjoy (\*cough\*) being in high school for five or six years instead of four. Of course, there are things beyond your control that can hamper your graduation progress, and not all fifth-year seniors are procrastinators. But, chances are, if you procrastinate, you will not graduate on time or at all.

That's all well and good, you may think, but why have a Counselor's Corner on procrastination at the end of the semester when it won't do us any good? The answer is as simple as it is obvious: because now you will actually listen to the lesson and not just dismiss it, thinking you have plenty of time left in the semester to do your work. Now you *know* you don't have plenty of time. Time has run out, and you must work in your classes during the winter break if you want to stay on track for graduation.

Learn the lesson well, so that when summer comes, you can actually take time off and enjoy it and not be trapped in the prison-like cycle of procrastination.

As always, please contact me if you have questions about graduation, college, scholarships, or financial aid.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jeanine Newsom

School Counselor

## AzMERIT/Benchmarks/Attendance

### AzMERIT

The AzMERIT for High School students in specified courses went well and we did not experience any earth quaking experiences. We'd like to thank our parents, proctors, and students for the hard work that went into this testing session. The next session for testing will be at the end of March. Please mark your calendars. More information will be posted in upcoming newsletters.

We are excited to announce that AzMERIT scores from the 2014-2015 school year were released and will be coming soon in your mailbox. Your student's reporting page and a guide to reading family reports will be included. If you wish to review a sample report and guide it can be located at [www.azed.gov/assessment/azmerit](http://www.azed.gov/assessment/azmerit). There are other AzMERIT related links that provide "The Basics" on this page. Review each tab for further information.

If your student did not test with AZDL for the Spring 2015 AzMERIT Statewide Achievement Assessment, your prior school will be mailing those to you. Please contact your prior school for an address update if you have moved. To update your address with Sequoia Choice AZDL, log into our webpage at [azdl.org](http://azdl.org). The address update link is at the bottom right side of the webpage.



### Galileo Benchmarks

We are now in the second session of our Galileo benchmark window. The benchmark window is from February 1st – February 12th . For our online students, Galileo benchmarks are available 7 days a week from 1 am to 11:55 pm. Sites will create a schedule to complete benchmarks during classroom time. To log into Galileo, use the address [www.ati-online.com](http://www.ati-online.com). Contact your advisor if you have questions about your username, password, or assigned benchmarks.

### Attendance

Remember to enter your attendance. This can be done by the day or by the week. Electronic calls and emails will begin to go out next week for those who are missing attendance hours for the week. This can be checked by logging into the attendance website <http://attendance.sequoiachoice.org/login>. Once on your student's page go to the pull down arrow for each week. When you select the down arrow and see "Past Due" weeks, go into that week and enter hours or select "No attendance for this week". If you have any issues please contact your advisor or enter a Support Ticket and an attendance staff will respond to the ticket.

Hours to be entered weekly per grade level (hours may vary per plan created with advisor):

Kindergarten:	12.5 hours
1-3 grade:	20 hours
4-6 grade:	25 hours
7-8 grade:	30 hours
High School:	25 hours

## Tax Credit

One of the most effective and mutually beneficial ways to contribute to your child's education is the Arizona tax credit program. You have the ability to designate your donation toward any part of Sequoia Choice-Arizona Distance Learning's Extracurricular Fund, and you receive a refund for the entire amount through your state income tax return or may deduct the entire amount from any state taxes that you owe.

The link below to MEC's current Tax Credit Form provides more information about the program. Should you decided to take advantage of the opportunity, please print out the form found at <http://azdl.org/donate> complete the form and return it to the school office.



## Title I Refresher

The purpose of Title I is to ensure that every student has access to an **equal, fair, and high-quality education** that meets, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and assessments.

### Title I can help:

- Children to be more successful in school
- Parents to have a voice in their child's education
- Teachers to collaborate with parents to assist their child's education

### Title I programs generally offer:

- Additional teachers and aides
- Opportunities for professional development for school staff
- Extra time for teaching Title I students the skills they need
- A variety of supplementary teaching methods
- An individualized program for students
- Additional teaching materials which supplement a student's regular instruction

## Refer a Friend Program



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 Amazon or Walmart gift card! Claiming a gift card is easy. Just visit our website at [azdl.org](http://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 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- \* Many of our students are trying to get ahead in their high school credits.
- \* We offer an elementary program that allows parent 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 currently have several schools as they wish. We students who attend one school during the day, and work in their AZDL courses



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**Did you know we're on Facebook?**

Sequoia Choice– Arizona Distance Learning can now be found on Facebook!  
Come give us a like on our new and improved page!  
See all the latest news!

**Free Event at GCU!**

Free Event: Jan 3, 2016 Charter School Night at GCU

Enjoy the last few days of Winter Break by attending the Men's Basketball game at Grand Canyon University for free! GCU is holding a Charter School Night on January 3, 2016 and you can reserve tickets for your family at the link below. The online form is simple and asks for a Guardian name, School name (Sequoia Choice AZDL), number of adult tickets, number of children tickets, the names and grade levels of your students, a phone number, and an e-mail address. If you are interested in attending this free event for charter school students and their families, you can find more details on the website or direct your questions to [lorin.marchese@gcu.edu](mailto:lorin.marchese@gcu.edu)

<http://www.gcu.edu/Upcoming-Events/GCU-Arena/Charter-School-Night-at-GCU.php>

## 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 480.461.3222 for help.

## Calendar of Events

### December

- ◆ 11– Star Academy Winter Concert
- ◆ 21-January 4: Holiday Break– **NO SCHOOL**

For a complete view of our school calendar, please visit our website at [azdl.org](http://azdl.org)

### January

- ◆ 4: School Resumes
- ◆ 18: Civil Rights Day – **NO SCHOOL**

### February

- ◆ 1-12: 3rd Benchmark Testing Cycle
- ◆ 15: President's Day – **NO SCHOOL**
- ◆ 16: PD Day– **NO SCHOOL**



**2015 Arizona Tax Credit Donation**

Check here if you are donating after December 31, 2015; 2015 donations can be made until April 15, 2016

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Here is an opportunity to decide where your tax dollars are spent. The State of Arizona allows a tax credit of up to \$200 for single taxpayers and up to \$400 for married taxpayers filing jointly.

By giving your tax donation to Edkey Inc. you will be improving the quality of education of our kids .

I would like to donate:

\$400 \_\_\_\_\_ for married filing jointly taxpayer (total for both filers cannot exceed \$400)

\$200 \_\_\_\_\_ for all other filing statuses

Other amount (please indicate TOTAL amount ) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate where you would like your tax dollars to be applied:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Character Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Field Trips
- \_\_\_\_\_ Athletics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arts (music, dance, visual arts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most Needed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please indicate below)

***I would like my donation to go to:***

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| _____ Sequoia Charter Secondary   | _____ Children First Academy—Phoenix |
| _____ Sequoia Charter Elementary  | _____ Children First Academy—Tempe   |
| _____ Sequoia School for the Deaf | _____ Pathfinder Academy             |
| _____ Sequoia Pathway             | _____ Sequoia Lehi                   |
| _____ Sequoia Village Secondary   | _____ Sequoia Village Elementary     |
| _____ Sequoia AZDL/Star           | _____ George Washington Academy      |
| _____ Precision School            | _____ ACAA Secondary                 |
| _____ ACAA Elementary             | _____ American Heritage Academy—CV   |
| _____ Pathfinder Eastmark         | _____ American Heritage Academy—CW   |

\_\_\_\_\_

## **FAQs on Tax Credit**

### **What is a tax credit?**

A tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the actual tax owed. For example, if you owe \$800 in state income taxes and you donate \$400 to a public school for extracurricular activities, you may subtract the \$400 from your tax bill and pay the state just \$400. There is no net cost to you! ECA donations are not refundable.

### **What is an extracurricular activity?**

Extracurricular activity means any optional, noncredit educational or recreational activity that supplements the education program of the school. Activities such as sports, visual and performing arts, special programs, character building, field trips, clubs, outdoor education, gifted programs or classroom enrichment programs can be funded with tax credit money.

Extracurricular activities help children develop qualities such as leadership, team play and cooperation. They also provide safe, supervised activities after school hours.

### **What other support areas are eligible?**

Beginning in 2015, additional support areas include:

- standardized testing fees for college credit or readiness, such as PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP and IB tests
- career and technical education industry certification assessment preparation courses and materials for standardized testing.

### **Who is eligible to contribute?**

This tax credit is available to all individual Arizona taxpayers whether they have children in school or not. An individual can contribute and receive a tax credit for any amount up to \$200, or a couple filing jointly may contribute up to \$400.

### **Does all of my money go to student activities?**

Yes, 100% of your donation goes directly to the school to benefit students through extracurricular activities, character education or standardized testing as outlined in state statute. None of the money is used for overhead.

### **May I designate where I want my money to go?**

Yes, you may say where you want your donation to go. If you have a child in school, you may donate to an activity in which he or she participates or use it to pay standardized testing fees. You may choose a school based on student poverty, type of activity, grade levels or location. You may choose a school where not all parents can afford to contribute.

We will make every effort to ensure that your donation is used for the purpose you specify. However, in the unlikely event that an activity is cancelled or receives more funding than is needed, the school will use your donation for another worthwhile purpose that directly benefits students. If no designation is listed, the school will determine the extracurricular activity or other approved purpose of greatest benefit. Be assured that your donation will not fund non-educational recreational, amusement or tourist side trips.

### **Do I have to donate the full \$200 or \$400?**

No, you may donate up to your \$200 or \$400 limit in installments during the calendar year or donate it at one time. Any individual who pays Arizona State income tax can donate.

### **How can I make a contribution?**

Make checks payable to Edkey, Inc.

Mail payment and form to:

Edkey, Inc., 1460 S. Horne St, Mesa, AZ 85204

Receipt will be mailed to you at the end of the year

Drop off a completed contribution form, including your credit card information or your check, at 1460 S. Horne St, Mesa, AZ 85204, building 6, second floor. Offices are open 8 am to 5 pm Monday—Thursday; Friday 8 am to 4 pm.

If you have questions regarding your tax credit donation, please call 480-461-3200.