

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
Counselor's Corner	2
5 Effective Tips for Parent-Teacher Communication	3
Hearing and Vision Screenings	3
Test Information	4
ADE Press Release on AIMS	5
Calendar of Events	5

March 2015

Volume 1, Issue 6

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,

While many of you live in parts of our state that still shows signs of winter, spring has come to the majority of Arizona early this year. It is so beautiful outside! This can make learning indoors trying for both students, parents, and school staff. But we still have a long way to go to finish out the school year, and everyone desires to feel success.

While wanting to be outside can create a distraction, it can also be a motivator for learning. Many families have rewards for school performance built into their home structure. For example, some homes may reward hard work with TV or video game time. Instead of more indoor activities, why can't the reward can be outside time? As you know, our courses can be accessed anytime day or night. A change in the school schedule may be an option regardless of whether your child learns from home, or comes home from a lab and continues working on their online courses. If your student is a home-based learner they can have their learning breaks outside. Maybe it is as simple as eating lunch on the back porch.

Students who are in academic centers are also showing signs of wanting to be outside. Since their computers must stay inside, I encourage families to look for other ways to soak in some of the sunshine. This may be a good time to swap some inside chores for some outside chores. I don't know about your yard, but mine is sprouting weeds. Instead of your child being responsible for the dishes after dark, they could pull weeds while the sun is still up.

There are many studies that have demonstrated the relationship between sunshine and happiness. People who are able to spend some time in the sun are happier. There is also quite a significant amount of research which correlates happiness to learning. Happy kids tend to do better in school. With these two things in mind we can loosely connect that students who are able to spend sometime in the sun may just enjoy learning a little more. I am sure we can all agree that if learning is enjoyable it happens quicker and sticks for longer.

As we head into the last quarter of the school year, please keep the lines of communication open with all school staff tied to your child's learning. The teachers love to hear from students and their parents. Your feedback makes us a better school.

Warm Regards,

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.

Counselor's Corner

We are seeing the inevitable signs of spring already: blossoming flowers, baseball spring training, and unmotivated students languishing in their courses.

Hm. One of those things is not like the others.

Motivation is a tricky thing. Here we are, well past the start of the spring semester, but not quite to spring break, and you are meant to be working diligently on your courses. But are you? Perhaps your pace has slowed and now you're working in a rather dilatory manner. You need to find your motivation!

But how?

You could be motivated by fear. This is a less-than-desirable motivation, but if that's what it takes, then go with it. Fear of failure, fear of a parent finding out you haven't been working, fear of the consequences of not working: all of these fears can motivate you to do your work. Fear is often not enough. Your parents, teachers, and advisor can persuade, cajole, entice, and command you to work, but they cannot coerce you. Only you can bring about the motivation necessary to focus on your schoolwork.

Are you motivated by curiosity and a desire to learn? My mind is very trivia-oriented. If I discover an interesting factoid, I immediately want to look it up and find out more about it; explore the world from my chair, so to speak. Science, Math, English, and Social Studies all have fascinating aspects. Sometimes you just have to dig a little to find their cool features.

Or are you driven by ambition and a desire to succeed? Do you want to get into a great college and thus have to buckle down to achieve the GPA required? Hard work is its own reward, true, but the sense of accomplishment you'll feel when you receive your high school diploma with honors is incomparable.

Are you motivated to complete your schoolwork simply because it's what's expected of you? The path of least resistance is to conform to expectations. Ironically, conformity is disdained by all, but in this case, it's not a bad thing.

In truth, most students are motivated by a combination of fear, ambition, curiosity, and expectation. Which dominates your motivation? If you find you lack motivation, you need to look inward. Self-motivation is much stronger than outside motivational forces. If you wish to be a great dancer or a great pianist, you must practice for hours every day. You must engage your willpower. You must desire to do it, or it will not happen. Likewise with education.

How do you acquire motivation? Whole careers have been built upon trying to answer that question! Motivational speakers may inspire, but only you can find the answer for yourself. My advice? Keep working until you have it. Even if you lack motivation, don't stop working! Once you lose momentum, it's that much harder to start again. But if you persevere, motivation will come to you. Whether it's the delight in the discovery of new information, an unexpected A on a quiz, a smile and a "Good job!" from a respected adult, so simply the satisfaction of seeing progress on your student dashboard, you will become more motivated as you progress. It's a positive feedback loop.

"It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop." – Confucius

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

5 Effective Tips for Parent-Teacher Communication

Everyone wants each student to be successful in school. This is a true and easy statement to make. There is not a parent or teacher who is happy when a student is not successful. Often times, especially when students get a little older, the communication becomes between the student and the teacher while the parent get everything second hand. We encourage parents to communicate with teachers and all school staff as often as they desire. Communication between parents and teachers can only be a step in the right direction toward student success. Here are some tips to keep in mind.

- 1. Have an Objective in Mind-** Communication is most effective when it is not an item on a checklist to be checked off. Create a conversation to get to where you want to go. Don't be concerned about asking the tough questions. The teacher may not always have an answer which may lead to more productive dialogue as you problem solve together.
- 2. Communicate Your Expectations for Your Child-** If you have high expectations for your child be sure that the teacher is aware. This information will not only help the teacher help your child, but it will also alert the teacher to when to involve you if your child begins to slip. Every family enters the school with different rules and standards for their children.
- 3. Communicate Early and Often; the Good and the Bad-** When there is a problem, say so. When something good happens, say so. It is through communication that change can happen, or improvements can be made.
- 4. Choose to Communicate in a Way that Works for You-** If email is your preferred method of communication, email your child's teacher as often as you want to communicate. If phone calls are your preferred method, call your child's teacher. If you would like to meet your child's teacher communicate that as well. The majority of the teachers travel throughout the state visiting students at our academic centers. A meeting place can usually be arranged.
- 5. Measure the Success of Your Communication-** Pay attention to the results. Did the communication move things in the direction you desired? Did the communication help set the standard or address the problem? Were all of your questions answered? If after communicating and you still feel that something is unresolved, continue to communicate with the same person or invite someone else such as another staff member or administrator into to discussion.

Hearing and Vision Screenings

It is required by the state to screen K, 1, 2, 6, 9 and Special Education students. It's important that all students in kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 6th grade get screened each year. The screening takes no more than 10 minutes

Who: K, 1st, 2nd and 6th grades

What: Come to our office to get a hearing/vision screening.

When: Call the office and make an appointment Monday-Friday 8-4pm

Contact info: 480-461-3222 x10652

From the desk of AZDL Testing Coordinator

AIMS

It was quite a surprise Friday evening when the last email to enter on my screen was a letter from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) State Testing Coordinator stating that AIMS was no longer a requirement to graduate High School, according to Senate Bill 1191. This news was a complete jaw dropper, since AIMS was scheduled for the next Monday. Even with this news, AIMS testing was available for any of those students who wanted to increase their score to reach Exceeds. There are going to be questions and our office will continue to provide answers as we receive them. Please read below for several answers about this change in graduation requirements. If you have further questions please contact your testing coordinator at enystrom@edkey.org or call the office at 480-461-3222.

AIMS HS Graduation Requirements

- ⇒ Students no longer need to have the AIMS requirement for graduation. Any student that has the current high school requirements can receive a diploma. Completer students that returning to test on AIMS can receive a diploma as long as they have the current high school course requirements, including the additional math.
- ⇒ Schools must offer the AIMS HS Writing, Reading, and Mathematics tests to any student who wants to test, including those students testing for the scholarship.

AzMERIT and AIMS Science

- ⇒ This new bill does not affect any of these tests. All of these tests will still be administered as previously scheduled.

The scheduled date for AIMS Science and AzMerit for AZDL students:

- ◆ Student to test:
 - ⇒ All students grades 3-8, Mathematics and ELA
 - ⇒ Grade 9-11 HS students in Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2, English Language Arts
- ◆ **AIMS Science: Monday, April 13th, 2015.** All 4th, 8th, and 10th graders. (HS students may test on AIMS HS Science once.)
 - ⇒ AzMerit Writing: **Tuesday, April 14th, 2015.**
 - ⇒ AzMerit Reading Part 1 and Math Part 1: **Wednesday, April 15th, 2015.**
 - ⇒ AzMerit Reading Part 2 and Math Part 2: **Thursday, April 16th, 2015.**

Galileo Benchmarks:

Congratulation to all!! We have completed another round of benchmarks. Scores are now available to view in your parent/student Galileo portal. www.ati-online.com. If you are having difficulty logging in or have questions, please contact your advisor or the testing coordinator at enystrom@edkey.org. We appreciate all your hard work.

AZELLA Testing:

Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) will be in progress from March 2nd to March 20th. Certified staff will be contacting you if your child is eligible for AZELLA services. For information regarding the AZELLA program please use www.azed.gov/assessment/azella. or contact your schools ELL testing coordinator at enystrom@edkey.org.



**Arizona Department of Education
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane M. Douglas**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sally Stewart
Sally.Stewart@azed.gov
602-542-5072

AIMS High School Graduation Requirement Repealed; No Testing Required February 23-25

(Phoenix, AZ - Feb. 20, 2015) - Today Senate Bill 1191 was signed into law, immediately ending the AIMS high school graduation requirement. This action means that any students scheduled to take one or more sections of the AIMS test next week will no longer be required to do so.

"I congratulate the Legislature and Governor Ducey for removing this last vestige of high stakes testing," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas. "I hope this decision relieves much of the stress that parents and their children face when a high stakes test determines whether or not a student can graduate from high school. High academic standards and tests that provide information and accountability are very important, but placing all the responsibility and stress on individual students for the success of our educational system is unfair."

Until today, students had to pass the reading, writing and mathematics portions of the AIMS test in order to receive a high school diploma. The requirement was previously set to expire Dec. 31, 2016.

Testing will still be available next week for those students wishing to take AIMS for scholarship eligibility or other personal reasons. Parents or families with questions about testing availability in these situations should contact their student's school.

Future planned administrations of the test will be canceled.

Calendar of Events

March

16-20: Spring Break— NO SCHOOL

April

3rd: April Break- NO SCHOOL

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