

# 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.

Dear Sequoia Choice Community,

Happy spring to each of you!

It seems like spring has come earlier this year than in the past. How can we not love the beautiful days we have been having?

Spring also brings thinking about what do with the children over summer. When my two, now college age, children were little we did what they so affectionately called "Boot Camp" each summer day. Both had a snazzy notebook that they had picked out, and several workbooks that focused on the skills I felt they needed to maintain or grow during the summer. Each night I would write them a note in the notebook, and make a list of the assignments for the next day. Each morning their notebook would be sitting on top of their workbooks at the table when they got up. The expectation was that they plan their day by writing a schedule, let me know what time they would start their work, and set a goal for when everything would be complete.

Once my children reached high school we got serious about them being college ready. They were expected to take one or two courses during the summer. This has paid off in ways I never would have expected. Each of my children entered college with several credits. This has allowed one child to pursue a dual major, and the other to change his mind about his major without falling behind. It also taught my children how to be successful digital learners since all college courses are either hybrid or exclusively online.

When my children were in elementary and middle school I wish I knew of Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning. It would have been so nice to have had a plan in place that we could have followed instead of me having to think and prepare the daily expectations. When they were in high school my children did do their learning through Sequoia Choice. It made such a difference in the successes and opportunities they have enjoyed while in college.

I encourage you to begin to think about summer, and how your children will fill their days. Refer us to your friends. We are a free summer school program that is available for elementary through high school children. For high school students we offer credit recovery, the opportunity to get ahead and the ability to earn college credit.

For more information about our summer offerings, please speak with any advisor, academic coach, counselor, or teacher. You can also call our office at 480-461-3222.

Have a wonderful spring break!

Cindy Chleborad

## 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. (Did you know, for instance, that the year 2000 was a leap year, because it was divisible by four?)

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 in your courses, 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

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## Testing Information

Hello Parents and Guardians,

This is the month to prepare your student for Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMERIT). The new achievement test was adopted in November 2011 and has taken the place of AIMS Reading, Writing, and Math. Each test is aligned to Arizona's College and Career and Ready Standards (AzCCRS). Resources for the AzMERIT can be found on <http://azmeritportal.org> select the Parent & Family Resource tab. For information on AIMS please visit <http://www.azed.gov/assessment/aims/>.

There are sample questions that can be reviewed on the front of the AzMERIT website. Check in as a **Guest** to review the questions. The method for Sequoia Choice to take the AzMERIT Spring 2016 session and Science AIMS will be **Paper-Based Testing**.

Arizona Distance Learning students are coming from all areas of the state and have selected key areas for the tests to be administered for your convenience. We are aware of our parents and students travel needs in mind and that is why our testing session will be completed in a two week period. The schedule is as follows:

Testing times are determined on the designated testing location. Please read the emails sent by your advisor for directions. This email will obtain information for your location and time.

Students testing days will be:

### **EOC Schedule**

Tuesday, March 29, 2016

AM: Writing

PM: AIMS SCIENCE (4, 8, and 10 grades only)

Wednesday, March 30, 2016

AM: Part I Reading

PM: Part II Reading

Thursday, March 31, 2016

AM: Part I Math

PM: Part II Math

### **K-8 Schedule**

Tuesday, March 29, 2016

AM: Writing

PM: AIMS SCIENCE (4, 8, and 10 grades only)

Wednesday, March 30, 2016

AM: Part I Reading

PM: Part I Math

Thursday, March 31, 2016

AM: Part II Reading

PM: Part II Math

### **Make-up Testing –Only In Mesa**

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Thursday, April 7, 2016

### **Students required to take AzMERIT:**

Grades 3-8: Math, Reading, and Writing by grade level enrolled

High School level End Of Course (EOC): ELA and Math by enrollment

New this testing session: If your student in grades 7 or 8 are enrolled in an EOC course they will not take the grade level in that subject. Administration of the other grade subject will need to be completed.

## Testing Information

### Tools

Subject Area Tools/Resources Available to All Students		
Dictionary/Thesaurus	Writing	<p>CBT – Students have access to the dictionary/thesaurus tool. Students may opt to use a published, paper dictionary or thesaurus instead of using this tool.</p> <p>PBT – Schools must make published, paper dictionaries and thesauruses available to students.</p> <p>Students with a visual impairment may use an electronic dictionary and thesaurus with other features turned-off.</p>
Writing Guide	Writing	<p>CBT – Students have access to the writing guide tool.</p> <p>PBT – The writing guide is included within the test booklet.</p>
Scratch Paper	Writing and Mathematics	<p>CBT – Schools must provide scratch paper (plain, lined, or graph) to students</p> <p>PBT – Schools must provide scratch paper (plain, lined, or graph) to students</p>

### AzMERIT Calculators:

It is acceptable for students to bring calculators to their testing session and will be reviewed by the test proctor.

Test/Grade	Calculator Policy
<b>Math Grades 3–6</b>	No calculators permitted.
<b>Math Grades 7–8</b>	<p>Scientific calculators permitted on Math Part 1 <b>only</b>.</p> <p>No calculators permitted on Math Part 2.</p> <p>Scientific Calculator should include these functions:            standard four functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), decimal, change sign (+/-), parentheses, square root, and <math>\pi</math>.</p> <p>They may <b>NOT</b> include: any problem solving or programming capabilities, place values, and inequalities.</p> <p>Sample acceptable calculator: TI-30X IIS or similar.</p>
<b>Math End-of-Course</b>	<p>Graphing calculators permitted on Math Part 1 and Part 2.</p> <p>No calculators with Computer Algebra System (CAS) features are allowed. Calculators may <b>NOT</b> be capable of communication with other calculators through infrared sensors. <b>NO</b> instruction or formula cards, or other information regarding the operation of calculators such as operating manuals are permitted. The memory of any calculator with programming capability must be cleared, reset, or disabled when students enter the testing room. If the memory of any calculator is password protected and cannot be cleared or reset, the calculator may <b>NOT</b> be used.</p> <p>Sample acceptable calculators: TI-84 Plus, Casio FX-9750GII, or similar</p>

There are helpful guides and information to assist your students with test preparation. <http://www.azed.gov/assessment/azmeritsupportmaterials/>.

Thank you,

Sequoia Choice Testing Coordinator

## 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.

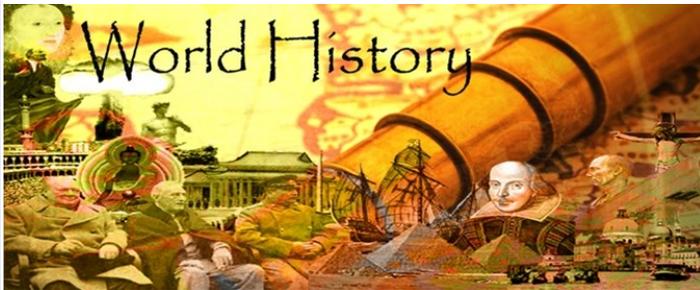
### There are many reasons why your friends may want to attend AZDL for FREE:

- \* 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 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.



## A Note From Mrs. Smith's World History Class



Last month, Mrs. Smith asked students to respond to the following prompt: "If you were kidnapped and could call on only ONE cast of TV or movie characters to come to your rescue, who would you pick and why?" Here are some of the fun responses!

If I was kidnapped the show I would call would be the Smurfs and the reason for that is that there small and there is a lot of them and there smart they seem to know how to handle themselves they work better in a pod so they would sure to be able to find me and get me to a safe ground where I need to be. There small but smart and magical little blue people got the power to be them and there loyal to everyone small but with a big heart. They always put others before them I just know I could rely on them save me.

If I was kidnapped & I had to pick a character from a TV show, I would call Michael Western from the show 'Burn Notice'. I would pick Michael Western because he is a smart, wise guy who knows how to help people. He has tactical skills & CIA training; he has a group of 4 people that help out as well. He is smart, careful, & safe when it comes to lives. In the show it states that he is in the CIA he finds his way to help people & also find out who burned him from the CIA. The show gives examples of how their group works & what they do to help people, they show the tactical skills of Michael Westen & how he takes situations. This means that they

are capable of a strong rescue & know how to take things if something messes up or gets in the way of trying to help the people, they have to come up with other solutions & find a reasonable & good plan to take so no one gets hurt. I would trust them to come in & free me from being kidnapped, they take great solutions & use them. I believe that they would take care of the solution & get in & out as well as capturing the kidnappers so they don't get away whether it be by gun or cuffs. That is why I chose Burn Notice, & Michael Western to help me if I were to be kidnapped; which is un-likely to ever happen.

If I were kidnapped and had to call on the characters from one television show, who would I call? I would call the scout regiment from the show Attack on Titan. The scout regiment is one of the branches of military in this television show. I chose the scout regiment because soldiers in the scout regiment have had superior training to deal with titans. Titans are creatures that are anywhere from 10-50 meters tall, and they destroy humans. The scout regiment, however, destroys the titans and protects the humans. In conclusion, if this regiment is able to kill 10-50 meter tall monsters, then I think they would be able to rescue me from just about anywhere.

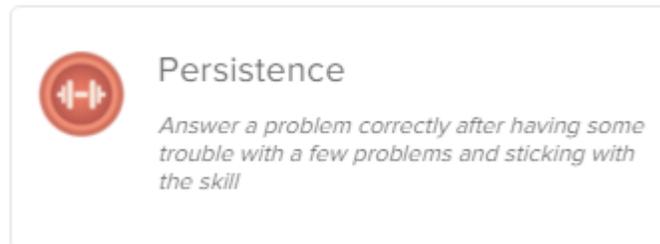
Oh no, I have been kidnapped who will come to my rescue? I'm locked in a cage under the sea and don't know how I am going to get out. There is only two people i know who will come to my rescue, Spongebob Squarepants and Patrick Star! I had a magical signal that only they would know. The magic conch shell, after blowing into it Spongebob and Patrick were there in less than five minutes to save my life. They will forever be my best friends.

## Math corner: The growth mindset

Khan Academy is the comprehensive, standards-based math platform that we use as part of our math courses. Sal Khan is an interesting and altruistic fellow, and his not-for-profit organization has a lofty mission: "to provide a free world-class education, to everyone, everywhere."

He wrote an article last year that had a very provocative title: "Why I'll Never Tell My Son He's Smart". I began to feel sorry for his under-appreciated five year old son until I got to his point. The brain is like a muscle, and it grows with use -- trying a task, finding it hard, maybe failing at it, persevering, and then ultimately achieving it, is proof that anyone can learn anything. When Sal does praise his son, it might sound more like "Wow, you worked really hard at that, but now you learned it!"

A lot of students enjoy the challenge Khan offers and, sort of like a video game, rewards learners with badges for successes. The majority of these recognize effort and perseverance. This is one of my favorites:



That's the growth mindset at work -- the philosophy that "You can learn anything."

To find out more on this topic, go to [www.khanacademy.org/youcanlearnanything](http://www.khanacademy.org/youcanlearnanything) and if you'd like to find out to help coach your child toward success along with us, please email me at [kburbank@edkey.org](mailto:kburbank@edkey.org) and I'll help get you set up.

## Student Spotlight– Star Academy

The staff of Star Academy wanted to give a special shout out to John Morgan. John is just 14. Not only has he already completed Calculus and English 101 at Rio Salado Community College, but John is also currently enrolled in Chemistry. The Chemistry course includes a lab where he gets to attend the actual class at Mesa Community College. Way to shine John! Keep up all your hard work! If your student is interested in taking community college courses, please get in touch with your student's advisor to learn more!



## Mindful Moments

For many students (and parents, too), school can be quiet hectic and stressful. For students who have fallen behind or who have special deadlines to meet, it can be especially difficult. That's what it's important to remember to take good care of yourself and manage stress as best you can so you can be the most successful, productive you possible! :-)

Below I've included some tips on how to relax/de-stress. Please feel free to try them out!

**Mindful Breathing** – When you are feeling overwhelmed, it can help to take a moment to consider that all people make mistakes from time to time, and so it's important not to be overcritical of yourself. Find a quiet place, and for three minutes straight focus only on the present and only on your breathing. Take long, slow breaths in and out.

**Mindful Sensing** – Many people don't realize just how much our brain naturally filters out from the world around us. Taking a moment to practice focusing on our individual senses one at a time can be a great way to de-stress.

**Mindful Listening:** This can be as simple as listening to music and focusing fully on the music (listening to the different instruments and how they contribute to the overall song or focusing on what types of emotions the melody evokes) or stepping outside to listen to the daily sounds. It helps to close your eyes and really think about what you are hearing – pay attention to the little details.

**Mindful Seeing:** This is all about slowing down to focus on small details. This can be as social activity like a game of eye-spy with a friend or family member or a solitary activity such as drawing (draw an item, then pick up the item, look at it from multiple perspectives, and review your drawing to see what details you could add/change).

**Mindful Smelling:** Scent has long been known to trigger memory and emotion, so it's effect on us can be pretty powerful. You can practice smelling different fragrances (perfumes, colognes, tasty treats) with your eyes closed to focus on what makes them appealing, or you can try eating things like jelly beans first with your nose plugged, then unplugged (it's amazing how strongly scent impacts taste).

**Mindful Tasting:** When in a rush, it can be easy for meal time to turn into a quick chore – a task to be completed so you can move on to more important things. But take a moment to really savor a meal. Think about each food item of your breakfast, lunch, or dinner as you eat it – how differences in texture play a role in food as well as flavor (sweet vs. savory).

**Mindful Movement:** In distance learning, we spend a lot of time sitting. Getting up and active not only helps wake you up, it can also help you re-focus and relax. My personal favorite is to put on some music and dance (the sillier, the better). Balancing is also another great technique (practice standing on one foot, then the other, focusing only on staying up straight).

**Positive Thinking, Happiness, Gratitude:** Positive attitude leads to release of dopamine and DHEA, which can actually help a person be healthier and live longer. If you love music, listen to some songs that typically make you happy. If you've been thinking a lot about what you are behind on, instead take a moment to focus on what you've accomplished so far. Take time each day to think about things you are grateful for – focus on what's going right rather than what's going wrong. You can even make a more visual trigger for happiness – pick a place in your room to decorate with images that bring you joy (art, family photos, inspirational sayings). It will give you a place to focus at times when you are feeling down.

Most importantly, don't forget you are human! :-) We all experience anger, sadness, fear, and stress sometimes. It's important to have a good tool kit like the tips above to help you relax and re-focus. Make sure also though to remember your resources – friends and family members (not to mention teachers, advisors, and counselors) you can talk to. :-)

(Note: The above tips were derived from the book [10 Mindful Minutes](#) by Goldie Hawn)



**Love**  
**BUTTERFLIES TO GOODBYES**

**Date:** Friday,

March 11th

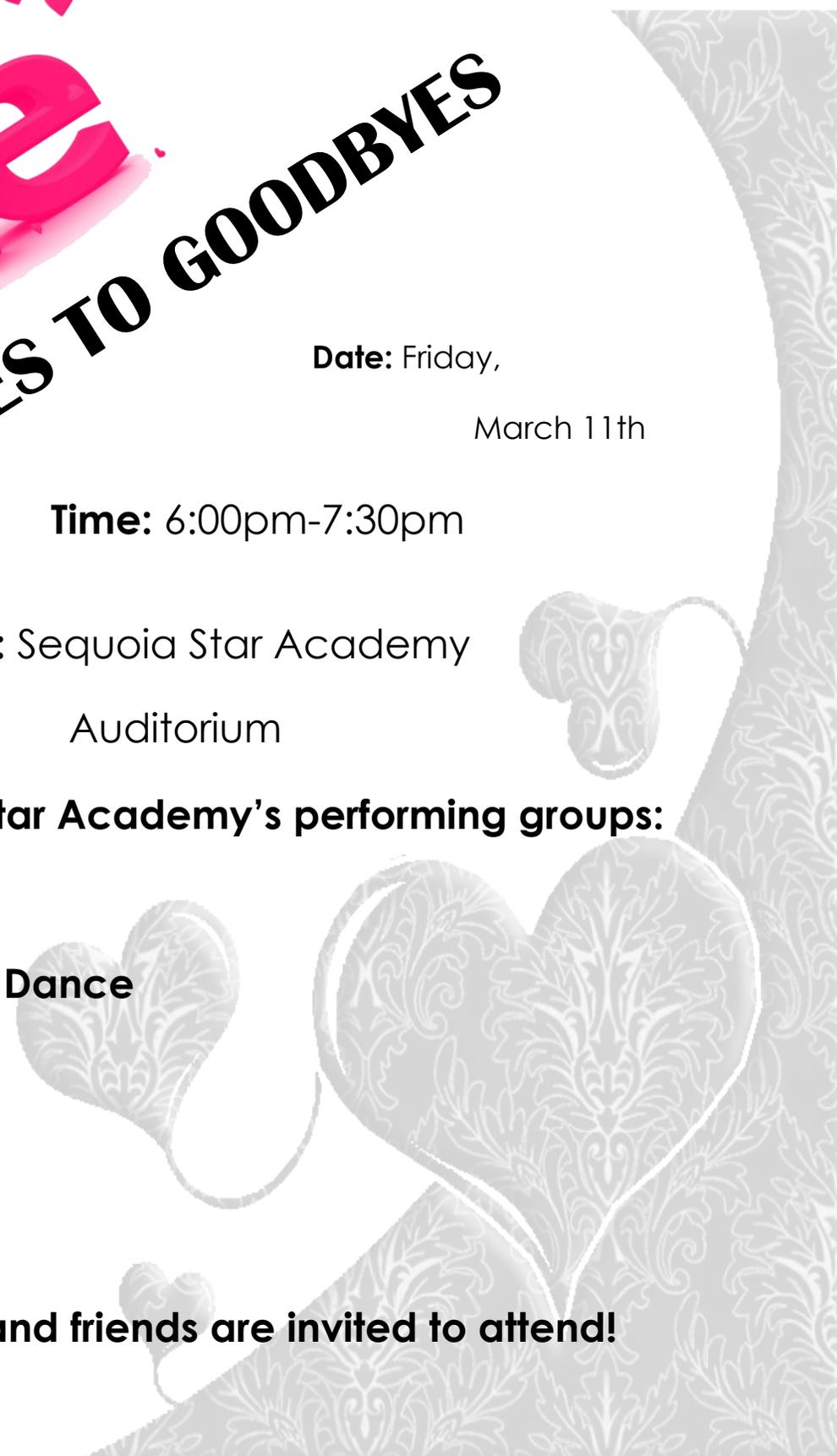
**Time:** 6:00pm-7:30pm

**Location:** Sequoia Star Academy  
Auditorium

**Featuring Sequoia Star Academy's performing groups:**

- Vocals
- Contemporary Dance
- Untamed
- Precision

**All parents and friends are invited to attend!**



## 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, Christin Pike at 480.461.3222 for help.

## Calendar of Events

### March

- ◆ **11:** Star Academy Production— Butterflies to Goodbyes
- ◆ **14-18:** Spring Break— **NO SCHOOL**
- ◆ **25:** March Holiday— teaching services closed
- ◆ **29-31:** AzMERIT testing/AIMS Science Testing

### April

- ◆ **11:** Star Academy Production— Butterflies to Goodbyes
- ◆ **22:** Professional Development Day— **NO SCHOOL**

### May

- ◆ **9:** 4th Benchmark Testing Window Opens
- ◆ **20:** 4th Benchmark Testing Window Closes
- ◆ **25:** Graduation Ceremony
- ◆ **26:** Last Day of School
- ◆ **30:** Memorial Day— teaching services closed

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