



8500 E. Jackrabbit Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Telephone: 480-484-6100
website: www.susd.org

For Immediate Release
Contact: Erin Helm, 480-389-9033

Nǐ hǎo! New Mandarin Immersion Program Begins at Desert Canyon Elementary

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona (August 9, 2017) Desert Canyon Elementary School kindergarteners are saying “Nǐ hǎo” to a new school year! The Scottsdale Unified School District is expanding its Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) programs to include Mandarin Chinese.

Participating students spend half of their day learning math, science and Chinese language arts from a native Mandarin speaker, who will speak to them in Mandarin only. The students will spend the other half of their day learning reading, writing and social studies from an English-speaking teacher.

The new offering at Desert Canyon Elementary School is so popular, it fills up two kindergarten classrooms this school year. The Mandarin FLI program will now follow those students as they advance in grade level, expanding next year to first grade, then second grade, until it progresses all the way through Desert Canyon Middle School and, ultimately, Desert Mountain High School.

“Mandarin Chinese is the most widely spoken, first language in the world,” said Desert Canyon Elementary principal Kristin Kinghorn. “If you are able to communicate in both Mandarin and English, you can speak to 50 percent of the world’s population. We are excited to be able to offer this opportunity to our students.”

Mandarin has been identified by the U.S. Department of Defense as a 21st century ‘critical language.’ Among the benefits of acquiring second-language skills:

- greater cognitive flexibility
- superior problem-solving skills
- better performance on English standardized tests
- increased cultural sensitivity

Mandarin Immersion is the second FLI program for Scottsdale Unified School District. Spanish Immersion is currently available at Pueblo Elementary School and Mohave Middle School.

The media are invited to visit Desert Canyon Elementary to see this new program in action. Please contact Erin Helm to arrange. erinhelm@susd.org

Scottsdale Unified School District, where we *Engage, Educate and Empower Every Student, Every Day*. The Scottsdale Unified School District offers 30 schools, serving approximately 24,000 students. School boundaries include parts of Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, Phoenix and Tempe. Find more information about SUSD at www.susd.org.