

# DESERT CANYON



Dear Desert Canyon Middle School Families,

I am excited to write to you as the new Principal of Desert Canyon Middle School. It will be an honor to join and work with the DCMS community.

Professionally, I have been an educator for eighteen years and hold an Associate Degree in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Labor Studies, and a Master's of Science in Curriculum and Instruction. Scottsdale Unified School District has been my home for the past twelve years as an Assistant Principal at Saguaro High School, Kiva Elementary and Cheyenne Traditional School (K-8). Before moving into administration, I taught Social Studies, Business and Economics at Pinnacle High School. My experiences with students range in ages from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. I have found the middle school adolescence to be the most rewarding. The ages between 10 and 14 are the most transformational. Middle school should be a place where students prepare for High School in an atmosphere that celebrates mistakes as learning moments and reaches their full potential as students. I believe in a rigorous curriculum with high expectations of students and staff.

Personally, I am a transplant from New York City living in Scottsdale for over twenty years. My wife is a school psychologist, which leads to some interesting discussions about children during dinner. I have made it through the middle school years with my two daughters and I am happy to say you will too. My oldest daughter will be attending NAU in August and leaving home for the first time. This will give us a chance to spoil our younger daughter for three more years. She will be a high school sophomore this fall.

Building strong relationships with students, teachers, and families is very important to me. You and your child can expect to see me in classrooms, in the hallway, at drop-off and pick-up and around campus getting to know you and your child. You can rest assured that I will work diligently and purposefully to make sure your child is challenged and engaged in their learning. I have an open-door policy and I welcome your thoughts and input as we work collaboratively. I plan to have parent forum meetings often (schedule to be determined). I hope to see you there!

There are some dates you will need to know. Please Mark your calendars:

**PTO General meeting will be held at 7 pm on Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup>** at the A.J.'s Fine Foods on Thompson Peak and Frank Lloyd Wright. Here's an opportunity to learn more about DCMS and how you can help make this year successful. I hope to see you there.

**Our Back to School event will be held on August 2<sup>nd</sup> from 8 am - 11 am in the cafeteria.** Students will pick up their class schedules, pay fees, learn about our Parent Teacher Organization, have yearbook/ID photos taken, and buy PE uniforms. You can also pay athletic fees online at <https://www.registtermyle.com/>. Make sure you print your receipt as proof of payment. Teachers will be in their rooms from 8 am to 9 am so you can drop off any supplies. I encourage you to join the Parent Teacher Organization to receive their newsletter with ways for you to get involved in your child's school.

We have been diligently working on your student's schedule. If there is an error on the schedule, "Schedule Change" forms are available. A schedule change will only be made for the following reasons: 1. An Incomplete schedule, 2. Elective/enrichment course that they did not sign up for, and/or 3. Missing a lunch period. Schedule change forms require a parent signature before submission to the office for consideration. Your student's counselor will review the form and call your student to the office to make changes where/if possible. Generally, it takes the first two weeks of school to complete all necessary changes; your patience is greatly appreciated.

**First Day of Class is Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.** Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and comes to school with their **ID clearly visible to staff at all times**. District policy mandates all Middle and High School students to wear their ID at all times including on the school bus.

**Sixth Grade Parents Orientation, Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at 5-6 pm.** Sixth grade parents and families who are new to DCMS are welcome to listen and ask questions about DCMS, the curriculum, and how to succeed in middle school.

**Parent Open House (Curriculum Night) on Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 pm.** Parents will follow their child's schedule to meet their teachers and listen to the course expectations.

DCMS follows the SUSD Gate-to-Gate Safety Policy. Campus supervision will be provided starting at 7:20 am. Do not drop off your child before 7:20 am as they will not be able to enter the campus unless they are going to tutoring opportunities. Gates will open at 7:20 with staff supervision. **ALL gates close at 7:40 AM so that teachers on duty can report to their classrooms and start school promptly at 7:45 AM. AFTER 7:40 AM, please proceed directly to the front of the school so that your student can be checked in at the front office.** It is important that each student arrives to each class on time. Attendance is the number one indicator for student academic success. Ever Minutes Counts.

This year we are asking for your help. DCMS will strictly enforce the Bring Your Own Technology agreement (SUSD Code of Conduct). Students must turn-off or silence their phone when they enter the campus and put it away until the end of the school day. Students may be allowed to use their phones if it's for academic purposes and with teacher approval. We hope to take away this distraction so that students can focus on learning and communicate one-on-one in person. More information is available in the student's agenda books.

If you have any questions about school events and/or policies, don't hesitate to call us at 480-484-4600. I'm looking forward to meeting each of you as we start this new and exciting year together!

Best Regards,



Mr. Robert Akhbari  
Principal