

# The Coyote Howler

Cactus Middle School

October 2018

## Principal's Message

## October Events

Fall is upon us! It is a wonderful time of year as the temperature begins to drop and the joys of living in Arizona become even more evident. I also love this time of year because the newness of the school year has faded and the students are demonstrating through their learning and actions that they are ready for so much more. Throughout the month, we will be starting several new activities (sports and extracurricular clubs) and enjoying a well-deserved break. Please check out the school calendar for a complete listing of all of our school events and activities.

In addition to a shift in academics and extracurricular activities, we will be adjusting to the next of our 7 Mindsets. We are moving from "Everything is Possible" to "Passion First." This means that students will be participating in lessons and activities that will focus on exploring interests, focusing on strengths, taking a stand on core values, and being authentic and true to themselves.

Among our many important events, perhaps the most important is Parent/Teacher Conferences. This is an excellent opportunity for us to connect with one another and discuss the tremendous growth and progress that we have already been able to see. As we have done in the past, we will host student-led conferences but you will have the opportunity to talk with teachers to address any concerns or share any celebrations that you might have as parents. Being a part of your child's education is extremely important and attendance at conferences only demonstrates to your child that you feel the same way. It shows them that we are working together and we are holding one another accountable for their success. Don't forget to reserve some time in your calendar on October 18 & 19, so that you can spend time with us at Cactus Middle School for conferences.

Another way that you can connect with the school or offer support is to help us identify any guest speakers that might benefit our students and their new learning in Academic Lab enrichment classes. As our year presses forward, we are hoping to connect with our community even more. We have some great things happening on our campus and there are so many talented people in our community, we want to pair them up! We are in search of people that can showcase their skills and knowledge while enriching the lives of our students. If you are skilled in any areas related to our Academic Lab Enrichment classes, please contact our school office so that we can partner you with a teacher to help create authentic learning opportunities for our students. Some classes include: coding, bike shop, theater, writing, journalism, health, nutrition, fitness, game theory, broadcasting, and so much more! If this is something that interests you, please contact our school office.

Don't forget that Fall Break is also in October. Students will not have classes October 22 - 26. While this is time for your children to relax and recharge after working hard throughout first quarter, I would also suggest that you find time as a family to practice and incorporate any newly learned skills into your daily activities. Students should begin making connections to the things they have been learning in their classrooms. As parents, you can support our mission to show students how important it is to apply classroom learning to "real world" concepts and problems.

Thanks for staying connected with us. If you are looking for other ways to stay connected, please be sure you are signed up with SchoolMessenger to receive regular updates. We also have a school Twitter account and you can follow us @CactusCoyotes. If you prefer to get connected in a face-to-face manner, we are always looking for positive volunteers to spend time on our campus. Please contact the school office for more information.

*Robert Quinones*

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Fall Picture Day  
Season #1 Sports - Playoffs @ TBD  
Drama Club (4:00 - 5:15)  
Strong Families (6:00 - 8:30)

3

Early Dismissal

4

Season #1 Sports - Championships @ TBD  
Drama Club (4:00 - 5:15)  
7 Mindsets Paint Night (6:00 - 7:30)

8

Cross Country Practice Starts  
Girls Soccer and Flag Football Tryouts

9

Builder's Club (4:00 - 5:15)  
Drama Club (4:00 - 5:15)  
Strong Families (6:00 - 8:30)

10

Early Dismissal

11

Drama Club (4:00 - 5:15)

13

Music at the Mall (9:00 - 12:00)

16

Drama Club (4:00 - 5:15)  
Strong Families (6:00 - 8:30)

17

Chess Club Practice (3:50 - 5:15)

18/19

Early Dismissal - P/T Conferences

22-26

No School - Fall Break

30

Builder's Club  
Drama Club (4:00 - 5:15)  
Season #2 Sports - Stanfield @ Cactus

31

Chess Club Practice (3:50 - 5:15)  
Season #2 Sports - Sacaton @ Cactus

# Grade Level News

## Sixth Grade News

The quarter is now in full swing as students are enjoying their new Academic Lab classes! They were able to choose from: American Sign Language, Game of Life, Playwriting, Community Planning for Homeless, TV History & Society, Bugs, Coding, Creative Writing, Healthy Eating, Interior Design, Crochet & Knitting, and Personal Fitness. We are excited to see the progress the students are making already this year. We look forward to seeing every parent/guardian at conferences in October so that the students may show and share everything they've been creating and learning about this year! #6thgradersaregreat

## Seventh Grade News

The Seventh Grade teachers are really enjoying getting to know our students at Cactus Middle School. This month we would like to introduce Mrs. Batina and Mr. Anderson. Mrs. Batina, in room C8, grew up in a military family and lived in many places but calls Texas home. She strives to make history interesting and enjoyable for all students.

Mr. Anderson in room B7, grew up on a farm in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. He is a historian and wants to create a community of life-long learners who enjoy reading and school. He is currently reading "Grant" who is one of his favorite historical figures.

## Eighth Grade News

8<sup>th</sup> Graders have been diving in feet first to their new Academic Lab classes, letting their true passions shine. Students in Mrs. Johnson's and Mr. Rust's classes are enjoying some great Social Emotional Learning in addition to studying game mechanics and application of Game Theory. In Mrs. Batina's Academic Lab they are grasping the basics of true storytelling and looking forward to creating their own comic book heroes! Cheerful cries of "Nǐ hǎo" can be heard around the pod as Ms. Battaglia's students practice their Chinese language skills while others listen to inspirational stories and learn about tolerance through the lens of the Holocaust in Ms. Weisberger's class. There are plenty of other high interest activities to be had in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and the students (and teachers) are loving every minute of it.

# Department News

## Mathemat-

We have been having a great year so far in math and we are more than halfway through the grading period. Please continue to encourage and remind your children that doing math is possible. Paul Halmos, a Hungarian born mathematician said. "The only way to learn mathematics is to do mathematics." If your children need extra practice or help, reach out to your math teachers, we are always here to help.

## Science

The Science Department is busy getting students ready for competition season for Science Olympiad and Robotics. Students are working diligently to get their robots programmed in Robotics class and Science Olympiad students are working on memorizing facts, building structures to be tested and programming computer games. Good luck to both teams this year!

## Social Studies

The Social Studies department is currently in the process of implementing our new curriculum. In your students classes you will be hearing about a variety of instructional methods that students are participating in and a vast variety of curriculum. 6<sup>th</sup> grade is beginning their understanding of Ancient civilizations with Early Humans and the River Valley Civilizations of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade is focusing on comparing the culture of the North and the South before the Civil War, to understand the differences in the regions that will eventually go to war with each other. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade is working on the formation of our country and government with the American Revolution. Overall, it has been a great start to the year and we are glad to have our students at Cactus.

## English

Language Arts classes are in full swing with reading and analyzing texts! All 3 grade levels have been reading different types of literature, focusing specifically on plot elements (characters, setting, plot, conflict, theme, etc...).

6<sup>th</sup> grade students have been reading short stories to help learn and analyze the elements of plot. They have also been conducting some mini-research projects to enrich and extend the topic of the different stories they've read. This connects the fiction and non-fiction pieces so that students see how literature fits into the real world.

7<sup>th</sup> graders have also been reading short stories and analyzing the literary elements of each story. They have been specifically focusing on finding and citing specific evidence from the text to support their reasoning. A short introductory unit on poetry will be coming up next!

8<sup>th</sup> grade classes are currently reading novels, such as Holes, The Wave, and Percy Jackson, as they dive into plot. The use of a plot diagram helps students analyze these elements, and shows how the story unfolds. Ask your student what is happening so far in the book and what they predict will happen next!

EL The English Language learners have been hard at work as well! In learning about elements of plot, they have focused more specifically on types of characters. Understanding characters will help give a deeper understanding of what is happening in the book and give additional meaning to the story. They have also been working on grammar and writing skills, such as understanding types of sentences and how to strengthen their own writing.

# Extracurricular News

## Electives News

### Physical Education:

PE is steadily learning the muscles and bones of the body. Ask your child to name some muscles and bones for you, as it will help them remember. We have each completed one unit and are starting on our next one.

We will be having a midterm on the muscles, bones, components of fitness, and structures of the body. Please make sure your child is looking over the papers in their portfolio and practicing at home. We also have homework that the students should be doing every night. We ask that they practice and hold a plank for at least one minute. They do this as part of their fitness in class daily. Practice with them. It is a great overall core and body strengthener!

Hope to see everyone at conferences.

Mrs. Dill

Mr. Limon

Mr. Phillips

### Band & Choir:

Wind Ensemble and Choir will be performing on October 13<sup>th</sup> for Music at the Mall! Their performance will be at 9:00 AM in front of Dillard's at the Promenade! They have been working diligently since the beginning of the year, and they are excited for their first performance! Hope to see you there!

## Nurse's Update

The days are speeding by! It is *urgent* that your children get up to date with their immunizations. Many 6<sup>th</sup> graders still need the shots required for middle school. A reminder that the State of Arizona by law requires all 6<sup>th</sup> graders who have turned 11 to have a meningitis vaccination and a Tdap vaccination. These can be obtained at the local health department or from your family health care provider. You will need to provide a signed copy of the record to the nurse or front office. Please call Nurse Dawn to check on your student's status or with any questions at (520)876-3745. This is very important as the shots are required for your child to remain in school, suspensions will occur until the shots are up to date. Suspensions will begin this month. Don't let your child miss any school, every day is important. It is the parent's responsibility to provide proof of immunization. The state registry is often behind with its records. State law also allows parents with medical, religious or personal beliefs to sign an exemption form. That form must be on file every year. Please don't wait, the lines get longer and the appointments are harder to get. Thank you! You can call the local health department at 1-866-960-0633 for hours and directions and for any questions you may have. We want your child to be in school and involved with all the learning that is happening!