

**In This Issue**

- Principal's Message
- Superintendent Message
- Revised Calendar
- DMS Phone List
- Student Expectations
- A School Day View
- On Site Support
- Site Council

**School Information**

9850 E Rankin Loop  
Tucson, AZ 85747

Office: 520.879.2702  
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Attendance:  
520.879.2702

**Office Hours**  
7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Principal**  
Katie Dabney

**Assistant Principal**  
Rebecca Marsh

**Site Council**

Jon Carlyon  
Amanda Jensen  
Kiki Ngo  
Karleene Talley  
Sheri Aken  
Ming Chen  
Abby Jackson

**Quick Links**

PK-8 Student Calendar  
2019-2020

**Principal's Message**

Dear Desert Sky Parents and Families,

Welcome to the first edition of our monthly newsletter, the Cougar Call for the 2020/2021 school year. The Cougar Call is usually emailed out within the first week on each month. It typically includes important information, upcoming dates, student recognitions, and volunteer and PTO news. During Remote Learning it will look a bit different as our typical events and information are a bit different.

I would like to thank you all for your incredible support as we remotely started a new school year this past Monday. This start has been unlike anything we have ever experienced in Vail. Like school districts across the country, we are grappling with challenges that are without comparison in modern history. Your grace and understanding during this time has been nothing short of amazing. We appreciate your partnership and feel that our DSMS motto has never been truer....at Desert Sky Middle School we are Building a Community of Learners. This has truly been a community effort. Thank you!

I hope your student is enjoying his/her online learning experience and getting used to his/her daily routine. As time marches on, that routine will become more familiar and Schoology will become easier to navigate. Our students are already doing a wonderful job tuning in to their Live Teacher Conferences and completing their Remote Learning Schoology lessons. I have to share that our school wide attendance has been fantastic. Way to go Cougars! Keep up your great work!

I'd also like to share that our Specialty Classes (Art, STEM, and PE) will virtually begin on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure that your child checks his/her Powerschool schedule to determine what Specials class he/she will have for Quarter 1. During the Specials period, students will have either Art with Ms. Novelty, STEM with Mrs. Costa, or PE with Mr. Rodriguez or Mrs. Hunter. The Specialty classes will follow the same Remote Learning structure as your child's other classes. The only difference is Specialty classes are 40 minutes in length (core classes are 60 minutes). The first ten minutes will be live via the teachers Schoology Conference. Feel free to reach out to your child's specialty class teacher if you have any questions. Our office staff is also happy to help!

Thank you again for your continued support, partnership, and understanding.

Sincerely,

Katie Dabney, Principal  
Desert Sky Middle School  
[dabneyk@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:dabneyk@vailschooldistrict.org)  
520-879-27004

## Letter from the Superintendent

August 13, 2020

Dear Parents,

Remote learning will continue to be in place on Monday, August 17th.

Tuesday evening the Vail School District Governing Board voted to utilize public health benchmarks developed by the Arizona Department of Health (ADHS) and Pima County Department of Health to guide the district's decision on when to safely return to in-person instruction.

One key component to reopening school buildings for in-person instruction is tracking the level of COVID-19 spread within a community. The ADHS benchmarks track this across three metrics which are updated every Thursday. You can follow these benchmarks by clicking [here](#).

Currently, the benchmarks have not been met. Utilizing the ADHS benchmarks and in consultation with Pima County Health officials, it is estimated that it will take an additional five to seven weeks before the criteria for opening schools are met. The Vail School District is targeting a transition from remote learning to occur sometime between September 14th and October 5th. We will continue to utilize these public health benchmarks to refine the exact date.

We intend to provide parents with at least a two week notice for when the transition will occur.

We are committed to opening schools as soon as it is reasonably safe to do so. We share the belief of many parents that having students in school is best for children and their families.

Please [click on the video](#) for additional information.

John Carruth  
Superintendent

## **Revised 2020–2021 Calendar**

## **DSMS Staff Phone List**

## **Student Expectations During Online Learning**

Last month, we rolled out our new updated newsletter. This month,

we are proud to announce the new name that was voted on by students. We hope you enjoy the new "The Cougar Call" as much as we do!

## A School Day at Desert Sky

When school is physically open for in-person learning, we will be implementing new safety and wellness procedures. These procedures can be found on the Desert Sky Middle School webpage under the "A School Day at Desert Sky" tab. You can check it out [here](#).

## On-Site Support

On August 17, 2020 the Vail School District will start providing On-Site Support Services for students who will most benefit from these opportunities. Site administrators are making direct contact with families of students who have been identified to have a critical need. Categories that are being prioritized include - students with disabilities, who receive free/reduced lunch services, designated English Language Learners (ELL), and those in the care of Foster Care/Arizona Department of Child Safety.

Due to health and safety, space, and staffing considerations the number of students served must be limited. If requests for on-site support services is greater than a school's capacity, principals will prioritize based on the level of need.

Full-time fee based childcare may be available through Community Programs. Please contact our Community Programs Director Linda Kubiak for information on childcare at 879-2032, [kubiakl@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:kubiakl@vailschooldistrict.org), or [www.vailkids.org](http://www.vailkids.org).

If you have not been contacted by your site and believe your child has a critical need for services, please click [HERE](#) to join the waiting list.

## DSMS Site Council Openings

Parents, if you are interested in serving on the Desert Sky Site Council, please let me know via email at [dabneyk@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:dabneyk@vailschooldistrict.org) . We have two openings for parent representatives.

We hope you have enjoyed the first Cougar Call of the 20-21 school year. Please look for our next edition!

**Sincerely,**  
DSMS News Crew