

# THE SILVER SANDS' NEWS



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## 2014

12/19 Half Day Attendance (Early Dismissal)  
Winter Break Begins – End of Day  
No School December 22 – December 31

## 2015

1/5 School is back in session  
**1/19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No School)**  
 1/23 All-School Picture  
 End of 2nd Grading Pd./1st Sem. (43 days)  
 Walkathon  
 PTO Meeting  
 Social Studies Fair  
 2/6 PTO Sweetheart Dance  
**2/13 Professional Development (No School)**  
**2/16 President's Day (No School)**  
 2/21 Peace Walk (Tentative)  
 2/23-27 Peace Week (Tentative)  
 3/4 Parent/Child Night  
 3/6 PTO Meeting  
 3/14 Mother/Son Camping  
 3/21 Spring Carnival (Tentative)  
 3/27 End of 3rd Grading Period (44 days)  
**3/31-4/3 Spring Break (No School)**  
**4/10 & 13 Parent/Teacher Conferences (No School)**  
 4/30 New Family Info/Moving Up Mtg  
 5/11 Muffins with Mom  
 5/13-15 5th Grade Milestone (SeaWorld)  
 5/15 3rd Grade Milestone (Valley of Fire)  
 5/16-19 8th Grade Milestone (Washington, D.C.)  
 5/22 Half Day Attendance (Early Dismissal)  
**5/25 Memorial Day (No School)**  
 5/29 Donuts with Dad  
 6/3 8th Grade Graduation  
 6/4 Last Day of School/Half Day Attendance  
 End of 4th grading pd./End of 2nd Sem.  
 Kindergarten Moving Up Ceremony  
 PTO Ice Cream Social

An updated calendar will be included with the Parent/  
Student handbook which will be distributed at the  
orientation.

*We would like to take this  
opportunity to thank you for being a  
part of our Silver Sands  
Community. We wish all of you a  
Happy Holiday Season and a New  
Year filled with Peace, Joy, and  
Prosperity.*

*Silver Sands Montessori  
Administration & Staff*

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# Principal's Corner

Dear Parents and Guardians of SSMCS:

The school year is really going fast. I have dedicated myself to visiting the classrooms and becoming acquainted with the students. I have observed all of the students in each of the classes daily. I want you to know that I am impressed with your children. This staff is doing an excellent job. The areas of concern I have detected are being addressed by me. If ever you have any concerns, please call me anytime.

The philosophy of this school requires all of the children to accept individual responsibility and to be an effective learner each day. As I go into the classrooms, I am looking to see how the children are focusing on the learning process and helping others, especially during the work periods when there is so much moving about and busy groups spread all over. Please reinforce with your children the importance of setting a good example and to be anxiously engaged in their work groups or individual assignments. The success of your child depends on them doing their part to make our school and their classwork successful.

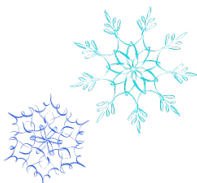
Another item I would like to discuss. There has been a concern from some parents about our grading system changing to a "Standards Based System" from the traditional grading system. The "Standards System" is used for K-5 grades only. The 6-8th grades use the standard grading system used throughout CCSD. Let me make it very clear, all Magnet Programs in Clark County know of the "Standards Based System", as it is widely used in CCSD and the Magnet Schools take this into consideration when selecting their students and they do not pick one student over another if the grading of the school they come from uses the "Standards System".

For your information, grades are not counted or archived until students reach High School in any public school system. Some 8th grade courses, like Algebra, or a Language course and in some cases Computer classes, are counted and sent with the student if they meet certain criteria and they are accepted on a student's transcript when they enroll in HS. If you have any concerns or further questions, please call me here at the school and I will be happy to discuss this with you.

Lastly, we are having an unusual number of children arriving late for school and having to check in at the front office. As per our Handbook, "students exceeding 5 tardies in a semester are subject to additional consequences". I know that the children are not responsible for being tardy, you parents are the ones who are responsible, so please work out your schedule in the mornings to make sure that your child is not late coming to school. Chronic tardiness will result in parents having to meet with the Principal and, as per our handbook, could require a daily check-in, whether you are late or not.

Thank you for your support of this amazing school and I wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season.

Sincerely,  
Dennis H Cobia  
Principal



# PTO Highlights



Thank you for supporting the 2014 Winter Fest! The night was a wonderful combination of classroom performances, holiday cheer and fundraising.

Please join me in congratulating:

Julianna Sudol and Abigail Fisher - the top two raffle tickets sellers. Each child won a \$150 Amazon gift card!

Mr. Johnny and Ms. Esther's classes- these classes sold the most raffle tickets. Each class was awarded an ice cream party! Mr. Rick - his basket earned the most money at the silent auction. His class won a pizza party!

Thank you for your generous spirit!

Jayne Blackburn  
PTO President

## Fundraising

**Target:** You can designate our school at Target.com/tcoe. (SSMCS School ID:152387) Then every time you use your Target REDcard® (Target Credit Card®, Target Debit Card® or Target® Visa® Credit Card) at Target® or Target.com (Target Debit Card cannot be used at Target.com), Target will donate 1% of your purchases to SSMCS. When you use your Target Visa Credit Card everywhere Visa credit cards are accepted, your school will receive one-half percent (1/2%) of your purchases.

**Box Tops for Education** and Campbell's Labels (UPC) for Education are being collected in boxes located at the entry way of the school.



**GoodSearch:** Sign up and search the web with Yahoo-powered [GoodSearch.com](http://GoodSearch.com) and they'll donate about a penny to our school each time you search! The school can also get a percentage on purchases if you shop at more than 1,000 [GoodShop.com](http://GoodShop.com) merchants including Amazon, Best Buy, Toys R Us, and other online stores.



**eScrip:** Parents, teachers, friends and families are encouraged to register their grocery club cards, and existing credit/debit cards as supporters. A percentage of all purchases made at eScrip merchants will be given back to Silver Sands. eScrip SSMCS Group ID - 500024532

# Classroom Updates



## KINDERGARTEN

*Desert Tortoises (Ms. Amy)*

Congratulations to Aaron and Ava! Both students have already completed the "1,000 Word Kindergarten Challenge"! Our entire class has been busy learning sight words to help make us better readers. At last count, as a class, we have learned over 4,000 words! The end of year goal is for all kindergartners to master 106 words. This would not be possible without your support at home. Thanks so much!

The highlight for October was definitely International Children's Day. Our classroom was transformed into a baseball stadium representing the United States. Special thanks to the Ayers family for donating the delicious apple pie for the entire school! There were many other generous donations from various families that made this FUN day a reality. Thanks, everyone!

November was a short, but busy, month. We enjoyed learning about North America and the difference between a vertebrate and a non-vertebrate. Thank you to all the parents who donated fruit for our fabulous fruit salad feast in honor of Thanksgiving. Special thanks to Lucaya's mom, who made adorable edible Turkeys for the entire class to enjoy!

In December, we are studying Antarctica and birds. Thank you to all the parents who donated a gift card for our Winter Fest basket. Special thanks to the PTO for coordinating this fabulous fundraiser for our school. We hope you liked our performance and had an opportunity to bid on our "priceless" class project. We are looking forward to our Holiday Cookie Exchange. Thanks in advance to all the families who will be participating.

I wish everyone a safe and Happy Holiday season. I hope you enjoy your child's holiday gift, made possible thanks to the photography by Checko Salgado (Lukas' dad).

## KINDERGARTEN

*JackRabbits (Ms. Janet & Mr. Dennis)*

The Jackrabbits have been hard at work and having fun! We did a science experiment with two pieces of bread. One piece was touched and the other piece was not. The bread was put into separate ziplock bags and put away in a drawer for a few weeks. On Monday we looked at the results. You can imagine what we saw! We have also been learning about 2D and 3D shapes, nouns and verbs, vertebrates and invertebrates, and birds! We have also been practicing our song, Good Ship Lollipop, for the Winter Festival. We even got to sing our song to the Middle School music class. The Jackrabbits are learning about what it means to be good friends and we often share ideas with each other on how to be a good friend. We also like to do Yoga in class for free choice when our goals are completed. We have a mom who teaches Yoga come to our class once a month to do Yoga with us for P.E. I am very proud of the Jackrabbits with all their hard work and progress! We are looking forward to a fantastic New Year.

## LOWER ELEMENTARY

*Pumas (Mr. Johnny & Ms. Lorraine)*

*Roadrunners (Ms. Jena & Ms. Kiruba)*

*Coyotes (Ms. Esther & Mr. Kendall)*

*Mountain Bluebirds (Mr. Rinaldo & Ms. Debbie)*

Our International Children's Day was spectacular! Each classroom offered wonderful food and fun activities for our students as well as our main office. We all made virtual visits to Antarctica, Australia, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Germany and many more. Our children looked wonderful and were excited to try different cultural foods, music and games. The food that was provided by our PTO and parents after our travels to different countries was very tasty and fulfilling! Thank you to all that helped us make this a wonderful experience for our students! Also, during the day all of our students and staff gathered together both to acknowledge the Nevada 150th Sesquicentennial by singing "Home Means Nevada" and to set a record for the most people in an American State to sing their state song at the same time.

## UPPER ELEMENTARY

*Scorpions (Ms. Pam & Ms. Emma)*

*Mojave Rattlesnakes (Mr. Ralph & Ms. Julia)*

Greetings from the Rattlesnakes and Scorpions - your upper elementary classrooms!

We have been quietly plugging away at our yearly curriculum. It is amazing how the math has become more and more challenging over the years. Our fourth graders need to know a great deal of fractions and decimals and our fifth graders need to almost be masters in these areas.

Science has been exciting, but also challenging. The challenge in science lies in the fact that we cover life science, earth science and physical science, all in the same year. Currently we are studying earth science. The coolest thing at our grade level, is that we have a lot of parents who are scientists. Having parents come in and share in their field of expertise has been a highlight of our year. In English we are reading a book called: Out of the Dust. The book gives us incredible insight into the Great Depression and makes us feel as if we were experiencing the dust bowl first hand. We are also continuing our writing and in social studies we are covering US history and civics. One of our goals is to get to the Hoover Dam sometime later in the school year.

Thank you to all the families that continue to support us.

## Mr. Chris

*Desert Bighorns Classroom (Middle School Social Studies/PE)*

The middle school is studying many new subjects this year. The 6th and 8th grades are working on learning more about Medieval times. They are learning about the life of people during that period of time, and how the hierarchy of nobles, to knights, to vessels, and serfs determined how someone would live out their life. We are taking a look at the Crusades and how those mobile wars

# Classroom Updates, continued



shaped Europe and the fast approaching Renaissance. We are learning about Europe's rise to the center of Western Society and how it took many twist and turns to reach that goal.

In the 7th grade we are learning how the American Civil War started. We are looking into the backdrop of slavery, and the differences between the industry driven North, and the plant based South. We will see how political, and moral differences drop this country apart, and how the election of A Lincoln was that last straw.

As a whole the middle school is working on their Social Studies Fair projects. This project is due January 27th and the fair is on the 29th. The theme is "Leadership and Legacy in History". This should be a great fair and I hope to see most of you there.

## Ms. Lori

*Wildhorses Classroom (Middle School Science & Math)*



In science class we have completed all of the student projects. Sixth grade made 3-D cell models as we continue our Unit on cells. We have learned about the cellular processes of photosynthesis and cell respiration and will be moving into DNA and genetics. Seventh grade presented group projects on Lunar colonization and will be sharing these with Mr. Ralph's class. We have completed our studies on space and will now be focusing on atmosphere, weather and the water cycle. Eighth grade presented their adopt-an element projects to their peers whom voted on their knowledge of that element in order to 'adopt' it. The presentations were very creative including models, skits, and musical performances. We are moving from studying properties of elements and the periodic table to balancing chemical equations and organic vs. inorganic chemistry and their applications in our world. I would like all middle school students to bring in medium sized jars around jelly, salsa, or peppers size for a special upcoming holiday science project by Monday, Dec. 15th.

In all math classes things are progressing nicely as I can see strong skill growth in their grade appropriate levels. We are completing the current units and will be testing this week on Friday. Sixth grade has learned about the number line, ordering numbers, and graphing in the coordinate plane. Seventh grade has been studying unit rates, proportional relationships and percentages. Eighth grade has been concurring the difficult concepts of slope-intercept form and function. Please continue to monitor the students weekly Math-U-See packets and Khan Academy time. Some students may need an extra parental push on these. In addition, some students are still coming to math class without a calculator; It would benefit the students greatly to locate one over the holidays.

## Mr. Rick

*Kangaroo Rats Classroom (Middle School Language Arts)*



Winter break is coming and the need to focus on school work has never been higher. All of your students have been made aware that second quarter brings specific challenges, and one of them is the interruptions that holiday breaks bring. To help with that, students are using their planners to track due dates of assignments and

specific homework assignments. They should also be able to track where the class is on the class novel reading assignments. Each class reads a certain number of chapters. It may be helpful if parents and guardians will ask students to show you what chapter they should be on, and what due dates they have in their planner.

All three classes will be learning about Narrative Essays over the next three weeks of class. They will be tasked with writing a story that has a beginning, middle, and end. They will also need to include elements of story such as a minimum of two characters (fully detailed with some background), a specific setting and scene, and a detailed plot with a conflict to overcome. This week we are learning the elements of fiction. Next week will have them start to write their first draft. Over the 2-week holiday break they will write their second draft with attention to character development. When we return from the break they will be peer editing and writing their final draft. Although they will not have class novel reading requirements, they should continue to read their independent novels, and also review the chapters we have read (maybe even re-read them) in the class novel to be prepared to continue the story when we return.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

## ART Specials - Ms. Valeria

*Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, & Upper Elementary*



For Kindergarten, we have learned to make the Solar system (in order) and then moved into weather-related artwork. We learned about the elements and learned about Monet and recreated his water Lilly scene. We got to sing in the rain my mixing crayons and watercolor. We also created some beautiful 3D rainbows. For fall, we made a beautiful fall scene using warm colored leaves and made the cutest turkey using our hands as models. We got an introduction on portraiture while also integrating a rainbow in the process and learned a lot on clay by making some beautiful snowmen.

Lower elementary artists came up with creative ways to depict the elements. Their take on Monet included wax water Lillies and watercolor which were absolutely stunning. Then, they learned about zentangling. Thru their doodling, they learned about patterns and created a stunning fall scene. I was quite impressed by their skill level. We then learned about warm and cool colors and are fine tuning our coloring skills and putting a lot of love and effort in making the patterns cohesive. Lastly, we are going to create some winter holiday decorations whilst learning different techniques and using various materials in the process.

In Upper Elementary, we learned about the color wheel and did some exercises to master color theory and paint mixing techniques. They learned color mixing and impressionistic style of painting and made it quite enjoyable to me to see how well they are doing. Their take on zentangling was quite complex and the results reflect the amount of time, dedication, and concentration they put into it. They are all improving extremely fast! Lastly, we made some pinch-pot clay monster figures whilst learning some ceramic techniques and then got to paint them. They are the cutest monsters I've seen!

# Classroom Updates, continued

In Middle School, we are implementing all the different Elements of Art in all our projects. We have investigated more on Pointillism, symmetry and pattern. We created the most beautiful playing cards. Texture was a fun project where the students got to create an image using found objects. We also took zen doodling to a whole different level and created a beautiful chalk mandala by the school entrance, as well as in other media. We learned a very fun array of special effects in makeup. That was highly entertaining for all. After that, we went into portraiture and have been exploring all sorts of styles and techniques to enjoy portraiture, including pencil, oil pastels, color pencils and even made a relief of a "selfie" in clay.

All my students never cease to amaze me. It brings me joy to see them appreciate art at such a young age. May it continue and grow.

## **SPANISH Specials - Ms. Valeria**

*Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, & Upper Elementary*

In Kindergarten, we have been learning about numbers, colors and the alfabeto. We even made an entire alphabet book in Spanish! We are enjoying coloring to learn our colores.

In Lower Elementary, we are learning classroom vocabulary, la familia (the family) and clothing items. We even had a fabulous fashion show. It was very fun.

In Upper Elementary we have been diving into expanding our vocabulary which includes colors, classroom objects, family members, and clothing items. Their fashion show was quite glamorous!

In Middle School, we have learned enough vocabulary, adjectives and verbs, that we are writing full sentences. We have watched a few videos in Spanish to get adjusted to listening the Spanish language spoken. I am more and more impressed by their progress every week.

## **MUSIC Specials - Mr. Karl**

*Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, & Upper Elementary*

With the Winter Fest behind us, it has given me a chance to reflect on the student's performance and to assess areas where I can improve my instruction. Overall, I thought the students did a great job, but I've identified two main areas that we need to work on.

For the upper and lower elementary, I want to work on their ability to keep a steady beat and to get them used to following a conductor. I found that, especially with the younger students, there's a tendency to play or sing faster as we progress through a song. My plan is to teach them how to internalize the beat through such activities as dancing, stepping, marching, clapping, etc. Also, I'll incorporate conducting with my "magic conducting wand" every class to get them used to watching me when they perform music as a group.

For the middle school, singing with pitch accuracy is the area I want to work on. The challenge I have with singing

and the middle schoolers is that if single out one student to correct their pitch, they suddenly become the center of attention of the whole class and they'll clam-up. For the Winter Fest performance there were some pitch problems, but I was happy that they were singing. My plan is to build on their confidence gained from the Winter Fest performance, and then focus on teaching them the mechanics of how to improve their pitch and vocal quality, such as: correct posture, proper breathing, and singing simple scales.

My goal is to hopefully instill in the students an appreciation for music and personal musicianship.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

Updates and Happenings- written by Ms. Marlo

Campfire Fun at Zion: Student Council and their families joined other Silver Sands families in the school's annual family camping trip to Zion. On the first night, the Student Council visited each campfire to hand out little flashlights and a treat, and tell "Spooky" campfire stories. The second night, they visited all the campfires again, but brought their funniest campfire songs to sing. A fun time, so if you didn't join us this year, make sure you join us next year!

Box Tops: Student Council was busy in October sorting through, counting and sticking box tops, but it was all worth it. Our Fall Box Top Drive earned \$677. The first floor winning classroom for the Fall Box Top Collection was Mr. Johnny's Pumas, who collected \$179.40. And the second-floor winning classroom was Mr. Chris' Desert Bighorns, who collected \$50. They both enjoyed a Popsicle Party. The Winter Box Top Drive is already under way- so, keep cutting! Our goal is to raise \$1000, and we are already over half way to meeting it- Great Job Silver Sands!!! Big "Thank You" to Ms.Val for organizing this fundraiser with Student Council, and to the Student Council Moms that helped with the counting and sticking, too!



Thanksgiving Food Drive: THANK YOU, Silver Sands!!! The Las Vegas Rescue Mission (downtown Las Vegas) was very appreciative when we delivered 6 cases, plus 15 grocery bags full of dry goods and canned foods.

Your generous donation goes to help the Mission serve approximately 30,000 meals a month to homeless men, women and children in the city. Thank you to our Student Council Secretary, Anastasia, for organizing our first school service project this year and Ms. Rachael (Anastasia's Mom), for helping us with the delivery of the donations.

Winter Spirit Week: To help kick-off the Winter Break, Student Council planned a Spirit Week to make things a little more "Merry and Bright!" Mis-match Day, Twins Day, Wacky Hair, Pajama Day and Fancy Friday are creating fun times and memories for all the classrooms. We added a special event, to go with Student Council's theme this year ("Learning from Our Past, to Make a Better Future"), they are celebrating the Jurassic period with a Movie Night showing two dinosaur themed movies, "Land Before Time" and "Jurassic Park". No, they are not documentaries, BUT are a lot of fun to watch with friends!