



COUGAR NEWS

Combs Middle School

School Newsletter – September 2016

Combs Middle School Beliefs

As we bring a close to the first month of school, I would like to share how proud I am of the manner with which students have strived live our CMS beliefs as we have worked to support them with their growth academically, socially, and personally. Listed below are our two important beliefs:

- CMS students will strive to treat themselves, others, and their school with dignity and respect at all times.
- CMS students will strive to be open-minded to learn.

As student learning occurs in the classroom, teachers are helping students to focus in five important areas:

- Organization of Back Pack
- Note Taking
- Asking Questions
- Studying Daily
- Bringing Appropriate Work Ethic and Attitude to Class

Please remember that there are two important tools to assist you with your child's success at school:

- JupiterGrades is an online program which allows you to monitor your child's grades, homework, missing assignments, test scores, report cards, and attendance. The program is updated automatically, so you always have access to the most current information. If you have more than one student in our district, you can create a single account, allowing instant access to information for each child. Students have their own password and are encouraged to monitor their own progress.

- All students were issued a student planner at the beginning of the school year. They use their planner for each class in order to write down daily assignments and keep track of upcoming project/quiz/test dates. Visiting with your child about what is recorded in the planner provides a great communication tool to stay abreast of the activities that are happening in class each day.

If you have any questions about the grade your child receives for a given class, please contact the teacher for that class. You may locate teacher phone extensions and/or e-mail information by going to the "Contact Us" area of the middle school section of the school website at www.combsms.jocombs.org.

Galileo Testing

Each year, schools in the district assess the success of the learning that has taken place within Language Arts (reading/writing), Science, and Mathematics through the taking of Galileo. The results of these tests are used for evaluative purposes of the students, teachers, middle school, and district.

Galileo will take place during the mid-term exams (for the first and third quarters) as well as for semester exams. The mid-term exams will take place the week before fall break and the week before spring break. The semester exams will take place the last three days of each semester. Please assist us in creating the best testing environment possible for our students by making sure your child gets a good night's sleep and eats a nourishing breakfast each morning of these testing days.

Yearbooks

Ms. Foster and her students in the Yearbook class have begun working to produce this year's middle school yearbook. This year's book is going to be a great edition! Students always enjoy looking at past yearbooks as a way to remember the experiences that took place during their middle school years. The cost of the yearbook is currently \$35. Please turn in your money (cash or check) to the front office. Feel free to contact Ms. Foster by phone at (480) 882-3510 (extension 1421) if you have any questions about this year's yearbook.

Combs Middle School PTO

The Combs Middle School Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) provides parents with a means to build community within the school setting. The primary goals of PTO are to create opportunities to interact about important school issues and host various fundraisers.

This year's officers are Molly Davenport, Michelle De Leon, Stacie Johnson, and Tara Larson. "Thank You" to our PTO officers for volunteering to serve in this capacity for our middle school community.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Staff members work diligently to create opportunities to build community with parents. One way this occurs is through the hosting of parent teacher conferences. This fall, conferences will occur on September 15th and 16th. At the middle school, conferences take place in individual teacher classrooms. Because students have six different teachers throughout the day, no specific appointments are made. Instead, parents have the opportunity to move around campus during the established parent-teacher conference time frame and interact with teachers. This setting provides the best opportunity for private conversations to take place between teachers and parents.

Fall parent-teacher conferences will take place on September 15th (2:30-7:00 pm) and September 16th (2:00-4:00 pm). Students will be dismissed at 1:00 pm on each of the parent-teacher conference days, and the middle school will follow the 1:00 pm early release schedule on these days. Breakfast and lunch will be served on these two days.

As the first quarter continues to move forward, teachers are looking forward to meeting with parents during parent-teacher conferences to share the many successes our students have experienced so far this school year.

Competitive Athletic Program

CMS is proud to share that it is participating in a competitive sports program this year. Throughout the school year, there are four sports seasons that will take place:

First Quarter

Flag-Football, Baseball, and Softball

Second Quarter

Boys Soccer and Girls Volleyball

Third Quarter

Girls Basketball, and Cheerleading

Fourth Quarter

Boys Basketball, Girls Soccer and Cheer Competition

As the fall season moves forward, preparation is occurring for the second quarter season. Try-outs for these programs will begin when students return from fall break. All students interested in participating are required to have a physical, copy of their insurance card, permission slip, and emergency contact form completed in order to participate. Packets are available in the front office and on line at the middle school web site. Students will be required to pay the sports fee (\$75) once they are selected on a team.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs. Ridge, Athletic Director, by e-mail at lridge@jocombs.org or by phone at 480-882-3519. Go Cougars!

Food Service Program

The Food Service Department would like to remind parents and students that menus are available on the district website at www.jocombs.org. Parents have the option to send money with their child for lunch or go online and create a lunch account for their child. In addition to putting money on an account, parents may also monitor the purchases that are being made. Two lunch choices are available daily with five components - meat/meat alternate, grain, dairy, fruit and vegetable. As part of a reimbursable meal, each student must take three of the five components with one of those components being a half-cup serving of fruit or vegetable. The fruit and/or vegetable selection must be made as the student enters the lunch line. The cafeteria staff provides a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from which your child can choose from daily.

The district participates in the National School Lunch/Breakfast program. All meals served meet guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Applications are being processed in five-to-ten days. Please contact the food service office (480-987-5312) with questions about the status of an application.

Meal application FAQ's for parents:

- Is my child's account identified differently than paying students?

Each student receives a lunch pin number to enter at the point of sale whether the student is a full paying, reduced, or free lunch participant. The pin pad process and identification is the same.

- Is my child's lunch choice or presentation going to be different from any other student's lunch?

Every lunch participant whether full paying, reduced, or free receives the same lunch choices daily.

- Does the cafeteria staff, school staff, or any of my child's peers know my child's lunch status?

The cashier knows that there will be no money collected. The application process and results are completely confidential and private from all other staff.

Several students who have been approved and are eligible for free or reduced meals have not yet begun getting breakfast or lunch. The food service staff hopes this article will dispel any myths and encourage students to utilize their meal account to purchase breakfast and lunch daily.

Child Find

The J.O. Combs Unified School District offers Child Find screening to locate, identify, and evaluate all children who may have a disability. If you know a child who has a disability or one you suspect may have difficulty with learning, communication, vision, hearing, behavior, or motor control/coordination; please contact the special education department at your local public school district or the charter school the student attends. The J.O. Combs Unified School District screens children from preschool through high school. Infants and toddlers with disabilities are referred to the Arizona Early Intervention Program for evaluation and services. All Child Find referrals are considered confidential, and services are provided at no cost to the family. For more information, contact Jeremy Scherer at (480) 987-5321.

CHS Family Night

Combs High School will host Family Night at the CHS football field at 7:00 pm on Friday, September 9th. Once again this year, CHS is hosting a competition amongst district schools with the winning school receiving a pep assembly hosted by the high school. To be counted towards the district competition, students must bring their school flyer and a canned food donation to the game. I'd like to encourage everyone to attend Family Night at CHS to cheer our Coyotes on to victory and win the pep assembly hosted by the high school for the greatest attendance and participation. Go Cougars! Go Coyotes!

Parent University

Mark your calendars for the First Annual Parent University which will be held 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at Ranch Elementary School on October 22. Parents can select from a variety of sessions such as Understanding the IEP Process, Drug Prevention for Youth, or Navigating Puberty. Free child care will be provided.

Community Health Fair

The J.O. Combs Unified School District will host a Community Health Fair at Combs High School (6-8 pm) on Tuesday, September 20th. Many activities are being planned for this event including free blood pressure screenings and a bike rodeo to teach bike safety. Rodeo participants will be entered into a drawing for a new bike and must have their own bike and helmet to participate. This community building event is being sponsored by the Combs High School CTE Medical Professions Program. For more information, contact Susan Belshe at sbelshe@jocombs.org.

Finance Department

Karla Slovitsky, the Director of Business Services for the Combs School District has been awarded the Award of Financial Reporting Achievement and the Business Office has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. These awards are the highest forms of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and finance. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the J.O. Combs Unified School District's students!

Gifted Testing

Mark your calendars for Gifted Testing dates:

Fall Testing: October 24-28

Winter Testing: January 23-27

Community Education:

Combs Community Education is excited to announce the opening of a Kinder Prep classroom at Ellsworth Elementary. Kinder Prep is for children ages 4 - 5 and will help prepared them for Kindergarten in the 2017-2018 school year. Don't forget to sign you child up for Combs Kidz Before and After School care. It's a great place for students to spend time getting homework done and playing with friends.

Job Openings

The J. O. Combs Unified School District has a variety of job openings to match your skills and schedules. Openings include food service, custodians, paraprofessionals, and high school coaches to name a few. All job positions can be viewed online at www.jocombs.org under the Employment tab.

Calendar

September

1-2 STUCO Election Campaigning

2 STUCO Election Speeches/Voting

5 Labor Day (no school)

15-16 Parent-Teacher Conferences (1:00 pm dismissal)

22 Fall Bus Evacuation Drill (9:00 am)

22-29 Fall Book Fair ("Go Wild about Books" - Jungle Theme)

Note: Open until 7:00 pm on Tuesday, September 27th

26-27 Fall Music Concerts

October

10-14 Fall Break (no school)

17 Professional Development (no school)

18 Second Quarter Begins

Important Numbers and Information

Main Line: 480-882-3510

Fax: 480-888-8049

Attendance Line: 480-882-3510 ext.1402

Food Service: 480-882-3514

Transportation: 480-987-5309

Health Office: 480-882-3513

Web Address: www.jocombs.org or www.combsms.jocombs.org