



WELCOME TO CASTLE DOME M.S.!

Parents and Guardians of incoming 6th grade students,

I had the pleasure of meeting your student today and beginning our transition from Elementary School to Middle School. It is my goal to make the change of schools as exciting and free of anxiety as possible for both you and your child. Starting now, your child is enrolled as a 6th grader at Castle Dome Middle School for the 2015-16 school year. Welcome to the Home of the Knights!

"March to Middle School" began today with a presentation to your child. During my hour, I shared information on:

- **Rotating Bell Schedule** – we currently have 6 classes a day, with 6 different teachers. While our overall bell schedule is subject to change prior to the new school year, it is anticipated that we will continue to rotate our class periods AND that your child will have at least 6 different teachers during the day. There are 3 minutes for travel between each class.
- **Classes every 6th grader has** – each student has Math, Language Arts, Social Studies and Science every day, unless scheduled in the English Language Learner 4-hour block due to AZELLA results and English Language Proficiency levels.
- **Elective Choices!** – 6th grade students may choose any combination of the following elective classes (choose 2)
 - **Band** (full year)
 - **Choir** (full year)
 - **AVID** (full year, must be recommended, apply and interview)
 - see brochure on AVID for more information
 - **Computer/Study Skills Wheel** (each course is half year, but paired together are a full year combination)

- **PE/Music/Art Wheel** (PE is all year every other day. Music and art are half-year classes every other day.)
- Additional electives may be offered based on staffing. Text alerts and phone calls will be sent home if/when new electives are created as options for 6th grade students.
- **Classes are by grade** – 6th graders are with 6th graders in core classes, electives and at lunch. Our 100 building is home to our 6th graders and offers a very nurturing, elementary environment to help them transition to middle school.
- **Academic Enrichment** – In order to provide the best learning opportunities for all students, CDMS offers academic remediation and advancement for all students before, during and after the school day. Advanced Math, Advanced Language Arts, Math re-teach and Online Enrichment are just some possibilities for your learner. Assignment in these courses will be based on teacher recommendation, Galileo data trends and parent/student input.
- **Recess?** – Kind of. During breakfast (currently 7:45-8:12) students often play pickup games on the field. During the 30-minute lunch, many students play basketball, soccer, touch football, 4-square, tag or a game of checkers in the library! There is no formal recess, but remember they do move to a new class every hour to ensure they aren't sitting too long.
- **Locker Rooms?** – Yes, for those in PE. Students in PE are expected to change into gym clothes in order to participate. PE Uniforms may be purchased for \$15. The only lockers on campus are for PE. **Practicing with a combination lock is most helpful!**
- **Dress Code** – A Castle Dome Middle School Uniform Poll completed in Feb. 2015 informed us that our school community does not see a need nor desire formal school uniforms. We are a dress-code campus. As you shop, it is recommended you keep a copy of our dress code with you. Shorts 3" from knee minimum and shirts with sleeves that cover the shoulder may be added to our dress code this spring.
- **Technology** – We are blending online resources and learning tools with students taking the lead with GenYes (google it!).
- Go to www.castledome.yuma.org for regular updates and school information.

March to Middle School Important Dates and Events:

I want you and your child to have as much exposure to Castle Dome Campus as possible prior to the first day of 6th grade. While not all dates are set yet, watch for the following events online or via text/phone messages. If you would like a formal tour of our Campus, we will have scheduled tours every other Friday until the last day of school. To schedule a tour, simply call 928-502-7300 and ask for Mrs. Holland.

- ♦ **First Week of March** – Mrs. Sheffield visits elementary schools
- ♦ **March 18th** – Castle Dome Fine Arts Extravaganza – 5th graders and parents are encouraged to attend this open-air concert and academic showcase. Listen to band and choir perform, meet all teachers, view samples of exceptional student learning in all curricular areas, learn about AVID, meet our PTO and become familiar with our campus. 5:00-dark, bring a chair to listen to concerts or just walk around and enjoy! PTO selling hotdog dinner combos.
- ♦ **March 16-March 20** – BOOK FAIR in library open to all, just one more reason to swing by CDMS!
- ♦ **March 19th** – AWC admissions presents “Being College Ready – What Parents of College-Bound Students Need to Know” in library 6:30 PM.
- ♦ **Tentative**- week of March 23-27 – online course selection or paper-based elective course requests – communication will be sent by March 18th on this.
- ♦ **Date TBD** – within the last week of March, we will have a 6th grade Student/Parent Night hosted by our 6th grade staff and guided by our 6th grade AVID and Student Council students. Tours of campus and teacher presentations will be combined with time to answer any and all questions you may have. Information will be sent home by March 18th.
- ♦ **April** – consider scheduling a school tour! IEP Transition Meetings will occur in April, AVID interviews will be completed in April.
- ♦ **MAY** – Date TBD, students from Desert Mesa, Price and Otondo will tour Castle Dome Middle School during the school day. Rolle and open enrollment students may have a tour as requested. Dates will be send home in late April, early May.
- ♦ **JULY** – Anticipated “Gear Up for Middle School” 3-day summer day camp. Info to come!

Questions? Ideas? Your feedback is always welcomed. Email Lori Sheffield, Principal at lsheffield@yuma.org or call Castle Dome MS at 928-502-7300 to make an appointment!