

Willcox High School Principal's Message January/February

Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back! I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday break. It is hard to believe that the 2016 – 2017 school year is half over! It is amazing how time flies (especially when you are on vacation). January and February is a busy time at Willcox High School. Many of our seniors are beginning to receive notifications from their respective colleges and universities; teachers and students prepare for the approaching new semester, and winter sports are in full-swing.

This is an important time for many students. As you know, it takes 24 credits to graduate from Willcox High School. Credits are earned at the end of each semester. If a student has a semester grade of D- or higher, he or she earns credit for that semester in that class. Certainly it is important for students to do their best to pass all facets of all courses they are taking. Please stress to your son or daughter not to let his or her grades slip as the end of the semester nears. Failure to earn credit for the semester may result in the necessity of repeating the entire semester. Now is the time for students to take responsibility so we are not discussing retaking courses in summer school or at an on-line school down the road.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to set some new goals with your child that will help him or her succeed academically. High school is just one step in the educational process. It is imperative that parents and educators work together to make sure that students are prepared for the next step after graduation, whether that step is college, a career, or the military.

Our seniors are beginning preparations for graduation and for all graduation-related activities. Parents of seniors, please check with your son or daughter regarding the senior class meeting, which was held Thursday, January 19. Please review the handout given to seniors, which contains a listing of important dates and exam exemption procedures.

If you are the parent of an underclassman, please begin to discuss next year's course choices with your son/daughter. A tremendous amount of preparation, time, and effort go into the scheduling process. Mrs. Singer, guidance counselor, will meet with students in February to explain the process of requesting courses for the following school year. I hope you will take time to look through the course selections with your son or daughter, and to help him or her select appropriate classes. Good decisions about scheduling now help to avert disappointments and regrets in the fall.

Parents, please continue to reinforce good attendance habits with your child. Attendance and accuracy of attendance are extremely important in school. Excessive absences result in missed work which may be difficult to make up, which may cause a loss of continuity in learning, and which may produce an irresponsible attitude toward daily obligations, ultimately resulting in failure in school.

Important testing information that will be assessed through April:

AzMERIT:

AzMERIT is a test which provides engaging questions and measures critical thinking skills for college and career readiness. AzMERIT is aligned to Arizona's state learning standards which detail the concepts covered in select courses. The test is designed to measure student mastery of course-specific skills and readiness for college or career. Arizona controls the decision making for all aspects of the tests including test content, scoring, and reporting. Arizona educators are involved in the development of AzMERIT.

AzMERIT replaces AIMS for reading, writing, and math. This means students will no longer take AIMS for these subject areas. Students will take AzMERIT End-of-Course (EOC) tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math that will test their proficiency in these subjects. The ELA tests include

a writing portion and a reading portion. AzMERIT End-of-Course tests are ELA 9, ELA 10, ELA 11, and Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Students take AzMERIT while in the appropriate course. AzMERIT goes beyond multiple choice questions. This means that the test results provide a better indicator of what students have learned during the school year. Our dedicated staff continues to work hard in preparing WHS students for the upcoming state assessments.

Civics Test:

In 2015, the Arizona legislature passed the American Civics Act (House Bill 2064). This bill will require students, beginning with the graduating class of 2017, to pass a civics test based on the United States Immigration and Naturalization civics questions. Students will be required to score 60% or higher in order to graduate from high school.

AIMS Science:

AIMS Science is a Standards Based Assessment that measures student proficiency of the Arizona Academic Content Standard in Science. A passing score on AIMS Science is not required for graduation.

All parents have received first semester report cards. If you have any concerns regarding your child's performance, contact the classroom teacher or Mrs. Singer, counselor. We encourage your continued involvement in your child's education, and we stand ready to help you in any way possible.

It is our desire that the second half of the school year be excellent for all. If you need to meet with a teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, or me, please do not hesitate to contact us. We suggest that parents call to schedule appointments before coming to school. Our goal is to be ready to meet with parents promptly. We respect your valuable time.

We look forward to seeing parents and guardians at the next parent/teacher conference night, which will be on Tuesday, February 28 and Wednesday, March 1, from 5 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

As a reminder, any visitor to the campus should report to the appropriate office (main office), sign in, and receive directions from staff about the current safety procedures and navigating through the building. The safety and security of our school is always our top priority and a responsibility we all share. We take pride in being a place that welcomes our community, yet also a place that provides a safe environment for our students and staff. We appreciate all your support.

Willcox High School will showcase our Open House Academic Frosh Fest Night on Thursday, March 9. To start the evening off, our freshman class of 2021 will meet with staff and administration for a freshman roundup! The rest of the evening will feature tours and displays explaining why Willcox High School is the place to be! The showcase will go from 5:30-7:30. Mark this highlight on your calendar.

In the meantime, I hope all Willcox families have a great new year. Together, we can make Willcox High School an excellent place for all students to learn. **Be the Best – Where Effort is Required!**

“Go Cowboys”
Jeff Thompson, Principal