



Valley of the Sun Waldorf Association
dba Desert Marigold School

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High School Town Hall

September 10, 2019

OPENING VERSE

*The healthy social life is found
when in the mirror of each human being
the whole community finds
its reflection
and, when in the community
the virtue of each one is living.*

-Rudolf Steiner

Agenda

Introductions:

Acting Executive Director * Leadership & Development Council * Facilitator * Review of Meeting Procedures

Topics:

- Parent Code of Conduct
- Leadership & Development Council – purpose, scope of responsibility, members
- Status of Policy Changes
 - Attendance Policy
 - Early Release Procedures
 - Volunteers, Visitors and School Safety
- Construction Update
- High School Retreat
- Looking ahead...

Introductions

- Acting Executive Director – Christie Kriegsfeld
- Leadership & Development Council Members
- Faculty and Staff
- Facilitator – Chris Allen

Chris Allen has been an Anthroposophist for several decades. He has served in the past as part of the Anthroposophical Society leadership colloquium on a national basis. Chris is also devoted to Waldorf education. He was one of the founders of "ACWE" Arizona Council for Waldorf Education, 25 plus years ago and was a witness to the founding of DMS. Chris served on the DMS school board for several years. He also began giving lectures in Utah about 10 years ago on "Why Waldorf Works" and has helped start and serve on three Utah school boards (for new Waldorf schools). Chris was the Board vice president of Mountain Sunrise Academy, in Utah County which was approved in January of this year. Chris is the father of 4 children and 16 grandchildren. Two of his grandchildren are students at DMS. The Allen family is very involved in education. Their attainments include Masters degrees from Harvard, Brown, ASU, NAU and a Doctorate of Education from Berkley. Mrs. Debbie Allen, Chris' wife of 43 years is a kindergarten teacher here at Desert Marigold school. Chris is here because he loves this school, as well as the people involved in making it work. He will continue to serve as a resource and guide to our school.

Review of Meeting Procedures

- **Town Hall is for informational purposes only.** *There is no one format for a town hall. This particular session is informational only. A town hall is not a forum for public comment and is not subject to the same rules as a board meeting. Please refer to the Desert Marigold School Engagement Document. This document has governed parent communications, purposes of town halls, etc. for several years.*
- **Presenter will deliver the scope of the information intended to be shared at this time with the community from Administration and the LDC.**
- **Facilitator will help manage the direction of the presentation and ensure we stay focused on agenda items.**
- **Questions are welcome.** Please submit any questions you may have about the information provided during the town hall by sending an email to the Acting Executive Director at Christiek@desertmarigold.org and/or the Leadership & Development Council at ldc@desertmarigold.org. That way, we will have the opportunity to thoroughly and thoughtfully respond to anyone who submits questions. We will also publish the questions/answers to the community.

Parent Code of Conduct

DMS' primary focus is to provide best possible learning environment for the students in our care.

As we start a new school year, please review the School's *Parent Engagement and Code of Conduct*.

Will be posted on the website in its entirety for everyone to read through. In the meantime, here are some highlights and reminders.

We are all role models – teachers, staff and parents.

Benefit to the children is immense when we speak respectfully to each other, avoid gossip, take concerns to their source, forgive readily, observe school policies and courtesies.

Parent Code of Conduct (continued)

Drug- and Smoke-free Campus. *Drugs, alcohol and tobacco may not be consumed on campus or in the presence of students.*

Cell Phone-free Campus. *Please discontinue conversations and put away your cell phone once you enter the classroom areas, i.e., once you are past the Barn and Administration Building.*

Respect the Boundaries. *Teachers are on campus to teach our students. Please respect their work. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in classroom activities; however, these visits must be pre-scheduled with the teacher and or office. Parents are not permitted to enter a classroom unannounced.*

Do not reprimand or try to discipline students. *Unless you are functioning in an official chaperone or supervision capacity, do not take it upon yourself to discipline any student. If you observe any behavior that you feel is inappropriate, report it directly to the responsible teacher so that it can be handled in a timely manner.*

Parent Code of Conduct (continued)

Speak Constructively. *We all come from different backgrounds and have differing views and tolerance levels. A comment intended innocently may be interpreted differently. The best policy is to avoid sarcastic “joking” and “teasing” and focus on constructive communication.*

Use discretion. *Be aware of the types of conversations you are engaging in. For example, it is not helpful to discuss a conflict with or concern about a staff member, parent or student in the presence of students, whether at school or in your home. What is often known as “parking lot” talk is very undermining to a healthy educational environment.*

Do not spread rumors. *Check your facts with someone who has real information.*

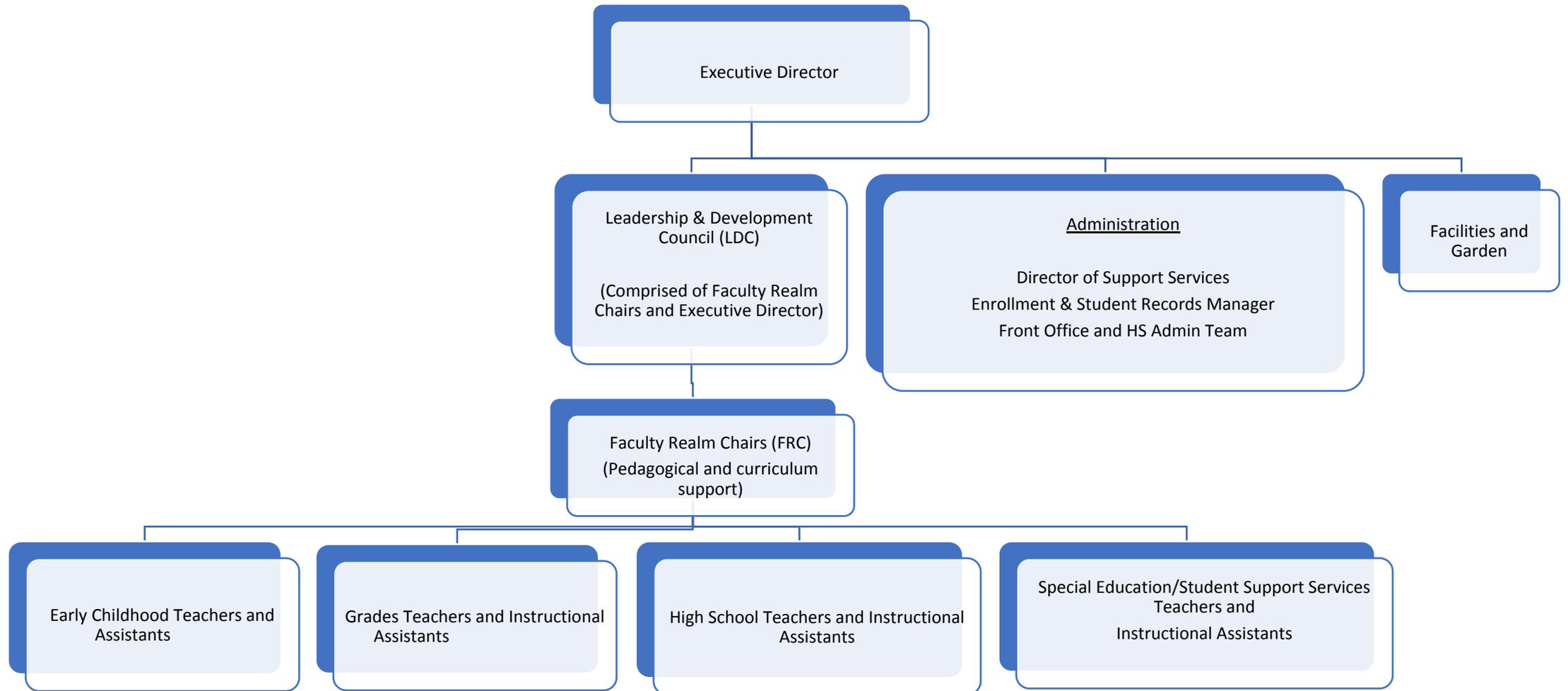
Profanity is not permitted. *It is expected that everyone interacting with students use appropriate language at all times.*

Please follow these guidelines on campus (and in the immediate vicinity) and during any school sponsored activity, whether on or off campus.

Leadership and Development Council

Organizational Structure * Scope of Responsibilities * Members

DMS Organizational Structure



Current Faculty Realm Chairs & Members of the LDC

Early Childhood – Heather Whitmore

Grades – Jean Falconburg, Lisa Maynard & John Tanner

Support Services – Carol Moriarty

High School – Christie Martin & Millie Harkins

Acting Executive Director – Christie Kriegsfeld

Leadership & Development Council



Comprised of Faculty Realm Chairs and the Executive Director



Ensures that school education-related policies and curriculum align with the standards indicated in the school charter and the state board of education



Pedagogical development, support of faculty and in-service

Mentors faculty within their respective realms.

Ensures realm faculty are being provided appropriate resources and support in multiple areas, including lesson planning, mentoring, approaches to student discipline, adherence to and compliance with state curriculum standards and the Waldorf pedagogy.

- Faculty Realm Chairs are responsible for developing and advancing a blended model of the core principles for public Waldorf Education and Arizona state standards.
- Work closely with the Executive Director and Leadership & Development Council (LDC) to:
 - Support, implement, and manage the pedagogical and administrative objectives and decisions to inspire a culture of collaboration
 - Adhere to the school's vision and mission
 - Ensure that school-wide policies and curriculum align with the standards indicated in the school charter and the state board of education

Faculty Realm Chairs (FRC)

FRC Eligibility Requirements

Possess highly qualified status as defined by the State of Arizona at the time of appointment to the position.

Hold at least a Bachelor's degree, preferable in education or a related field.

Have a strong understanding of Waldorf pedagogy and/or be Waldorf certified. At least five (5) years overall teaching experience as a lead teacher, and a minimum of three (3) years teaching at Desert Marigold School.

AZ DPS Level One Fingerprint Clearance Card.

Adherence to and compliance with the school's code of conduct.

Demonstrated commitment and ability to collaborate with integrity, honesty and in a harmonious manner.

Demonstrated ability to set priorities and maintain professional accountability and appropriate documentation as required by the school and the state.

Well-organized, able to effectively manage multiple projects, and have excellent communication skills.

Maintain confidentiality of personnel and student information.

Changes to Family Handbook Policies

Attendance Policy

All students are expected to be in attendance every day school is in session. Regular attendance is essential for success in school; therefore, absences shall be excused only for necessary and important reasons. We do, however, realize that health and family take precedent, but we ask families to plan activities on days and times when school is in session.

Our attendance policy is governed by ARS 15-803 – School attendance; exemptions; definitions:

1. It is unlawful for any child between six (6) and sixteen (16) years of age to fail to attend school during the hours school is in session, unless excused pursuant to section ARS 15-803.
2. A child who is habitually truant or who has excessive absences, may be adjudicated an incorrigible child. **Absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds 10% (18 days) of the number of required attendance days prescribed in section ARS 15-803, subsection B, paragraph 1.**
3. As used in this section:
 - a. "Habitually truant" means a child who is truant for at least five (5) school days unexcused within a school year.
 - b. "Truant" means an unexcused absence for at least one (1) class period during the day.
 - c. "Truant child" means a child who is between six (6) and sixteen (16) years of age and who is not in attendance at a public or private school during the hours that school is in session, unless excused as provided by this section.

When a student needs to be absent, we ask that parents/guardians call the attendance line before 8:00 a.m. each day the student is absent. State law mandates that the school record a reason for all student absences. This greatly reduces the need to call you at work or home to confirm the absence. The absence will be unexcused if no reason is given. When calling, please leave the child's name (with spelling), date of absence, grade level, reason for absence and a telephone number where you can be reached in case we have questions. Federal law requires that we make every attempt to contact parents/guardians on the day the student is absent.

Attendance Policy

Late Arrival/Early Departure Parents/guardians picking up students early from school are required to report to the front desk and sign their student out. However, **unless absolutely necessary, signing students out is discouraged during the school day as being in school is a priority. If at all possible, parents/guardians should refrain from scheduling appointments during the school day.**

Following the distinction between excused and unexcused absences described above, DMS makes a distinction between cases of excused tardiness (e.g., due to a doctor's appointment, illness, or other family business) and unexcused accidental lateness to school (due to a student oversleeping, transportation problems, or some other late start).

The school disapproves of the accumulation of unexcused late arrivals to school, irrespective of the circumstances. Persistent first-period tardiness is highly disruptive of instruction and undermines student morale.

Any time a student arrives after the official school start time, the student is required to sign-in at the front desk. Upon the fifth tardy day/early departure, the student will be credited with one absence day. Upon the third subsequent day tardy and each day thereafter, the student will be credited with one absence day. Ten or more days absent in a semester may result in the student not being promoted to the next grade level and/or losing credit.

FAMILY VACATIONS

All family vacations should be scheduled during school breaks. Absences due to vacations will be considered unexcused absences. An unexcused absence longer than ten consecutive days will automatically result in the withdrawal of the student from the school. **Unexcused absences will automatically result in excess of eighteen days will be considered to be truancy. Special consideration will be made for absences due to bereavement. The school is not obligated to modify or accommodate curricular requirements due to unexcused absences. Unexcused absences are not a waiver of work responsibilities.**

BEREAVEMENT

Special considerations will be made for absences due to bereavement.

Early Pick-Up Procedures

Notification:

If your student needs to leave before the end of the school day for previously scheduled appointments, please follow the following procedures:

- Call the DMS Attendance Line by 9:00 a.m. the morning of the early pick-up. Please leave a message with your name, your student's name, your child's teacher, and the time by which you will need to pick up your student.
- Our Front Office will notify your student's teacher and instructional assistant of the time by which the student needs to arrive at the front office for pick up by the parent/guardian.
- If you do not have a previously scheduled appointment but need to retrieve your student on an urgent basis, please try to provide us with 1-hour notice, if at all possible, so we can have your student ready.

This procedure is necessary to ensure the safety of our students on campus and to minimize disruption to the class of a student who requires early pick-up.

Volunteer Policy, Visitors & School Safety

- **As we continue to focus on improving the security of this beautiful campus to protect our teachers and our students, we have made changes to the way in which visitors may be on campus.** *These changes are being driven, in part, by new legislation that requires schools to develop and post a safety policy on the school's website by January 1, 2020.*
- **All visitors must check into the front office to sign in/out and receive a visitor's pass.** *No visitor can directly proceed onto the campus grounds without first checking in at the front office. This rule includes families who are dropping off things for their students, picking up their students early or dropping them off late to school, or volunteering anywhere on campus, including the garden.*
- **Any faculty member who is expecting a parent visitor, whether it be a volunteer or otherwise, will inform our Office Manager, Tami Hendrix, in advance of the visit.** *Please ensure that you are signed into our visitor log-book at the front office and receive a visitor's pass before proceeding anywhere on campus.*
- **If parents/guardians come to the office to request early release, due to doctor's appointment, illness, etc., they are not permitted to go directly to the classroom to retrieve their child.**
- **Please come to the front office to sign your child out of school and wait up front.** *An assistant, teacher, or other administrative employee will bring the student to the front office for pick up. Similarly, during late drop-off, please check your student into the front office. Students are not permitted to walk directly to their classrooms after the 8:15 a.m. bell without first checking into the front office. Parents are not permitted to walk their students directly to their classrooms at any time.*

Construction Update

Construction - work is currently underway in the High School to provide a larger classroom for our 9th Grade.

- Impacts the former HS Admin office, the support services space, and the current 9th grade space.

Anticipated completion – end of Fall Break. If there are changes to the completion date, we will let everyone know.

HS Pick Up Space – Plans underway to provide the students with their own shaded space near the entry of the garden. Students will be visible to the parents as they drive up so they can be retrieved more efficiently with the assistance of a HS staff member.



High School Retreat

The all-grades HS trip was a success, with the theme of sustainability and water conservation in Arizona running throughout the trip. The students, hiked, canoed, and gained community service hours. They enjoyed a guest speaker from Viva La Verde, watched “The Biggest Little Farm,” and visited the Prescott / EC OSA campus.

Looking ahead...

Interim Assignments

Christie Martin- High School Lead

- Provides leadership and support to the High School students, faculty and staff with the assistance and support of the LDC.
- Leads the high school faculty meetings
- Keeps staff abreast of changes that impact and moves us positively towards that change.
- Introduces new families to our school through communications and tours.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to evaluate how best to fill other administrative responsibilities, including outreach, marketing, scheduling, and academic counseling.

We believe we have a highly capable staff ready to take on new roles and we just need a little time to solidify these roles.

Priorities

- Increase enrollment
- Improve academic achievement

CLOSING VERSE

*The healthy social life is found
when in the mirror of each human being
the whole community finds
its reflection
and, when in the community
the virtue of each one is living.*

-Rudolf Steiner