

Wile E. Coyote

August/Sept. 2009

Ventana Ranch Elementary School

Volume 6, Issue 1

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to our students, our families, and our community! It promises to be another great year on the Ranch and we are excited to have everyone back! Our school is looking great and is finally our own! Over this past summer we had some physical changes occur on our site. We had 28 portables removed, and are looking at 5 more being taken away in the next few months. The view of the mountains is great! At some point this year we will be getting a grass field in place of the portables. There are talks that it will be fake grass and about an acre big, which means year round fun for our neighborhood children. Our hope is to eventually raise enough money to place a track around it and get a couple of backstops put in place. We'll keep you informed as to all our fundraisers and what you can do to help bring this dream to reality. Thanks for all you do to make Ventana Ranch a place where our students come first!

Adequate Yearly Progress

As many of you might have read in the paper or seen on the news, we did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) this year. Every spring students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades take the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment. There are a total of 36 subgroups that are tested. We failed to make AYP by 2 students in the area of Math in our Economically Disadvantaged group. As this was such a minor miss and does not reflect the growth Ventana Ranch has achieved, I have written a letter to the State of New Mexico Education Department in an attempt to appeal our results.

We did make tremendous gains as a school. We received rave reviews by our Superintendent, Winston Brooks for not only *making* the APS goal set for us, but for *shattering* it. Our reading scores went up an average of three percentage points while our math scores jumped five and a half percentage points! This is more than some schools who met AYP were able to accomplish! I am very proud of this staff, our students and our community. Together we have made Ventana Ranch a place where student learning is a priority.



Parking Reminders

As we start a new year, there are a few things that we need to remind you, our parents, about. Pick up and drop off happens **ONLY** in the southeast parking lot of the school. Unless you have business to do inside the school, please stay in your car and drive through the pick up and drop off circle in a single line. Please listen to the duty teachers and respect them in the same manner you would like to have shown to you. They are there to keep your child safe.

We ask that you drop off and pick up your students in the squiggle area only. Please do **NOT** drop off or pick up your student(s) at the east end of the fenced area. This is a dangerous and unsupervised area and could result in your child being injured.

We have already had neighborhood complaints about parents parking in area driveways as they walk their kids to school. This is especially the case for the cul-de-sac behind the bus exit. We have informed the neighbors that they have every right to call the police to have cars towed or ticketed.

Clothing Bank

Donations will be accepted at the BCCPTA Clothing Bank on Aug. 17. Beginning Sept. 1 students in grades K-12 in need of clothing can begin picking up items at the Clothing Bank, 1730 University Blvd, just south of UNM stadium near APS Transition Outcomes. Don't forget we accept gently used clothing and financial donations. For information visit www.bccpta.org.

Possible class changes for your child

Our class sizes are on overload! At the end of the school year in May our projections for this fall were at 712. In August we had 760 registered students. As much as we would like to hire a few teachers right now, the District will not make any staff changes until the 20th day count which is September 17th. We have no control over this policy and understand your frustration when we have to make classroom changes after four weeks of school have passed. Please bear with us and know we will do everything possible to make sure your student receives the best education possible. We have a strong staff and all of us will work together to make any upcoming transitions smooth and in the best interest of our children.

No Child Left Behind – Parent's Right to Know

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed the new federal education act, titled *No Child Left Behind*. This new law includes many new programs and changes for all public schools in the United States.

The new laws permit you, as a parent or guardian, the right to request information about the licensure and other qualifications, teaching assignment, and training of your child's teacher and any paraprofessional (instructional assistants) who may work with your child. If you are interested in requesting this information, please contact Ms Sigmon at Ventana Ranch.

Bits and Pieces:

* Please do not plan to pick up your student(s) between 2:35 and 3:05 on school days. We will not release them to you during this time unless we have prior written notice. Please respect this necessary requirement so we can disrupt the educational process as little as possible.

* We will not allow phone calls changing or verifying any student's going home procedures. If a change is necessary in an emergency, you will need to fax the office at 890-4124 with a copy of your driver's license (for identification purposes), with student's name(s), teacher's name, and detailed instructions for your student's new going home procedure. We will do our best to get the information to your student, but must have the information at least 30 minutes prior to the end of the school day.

* Student information will not be given out over the phone. This includes what teacher the student has or whether s/he was in school that day. To obtain private/personal information about a student you must be physically present in the office and have a valid picture ID.

* Student absences must be reported to the office within 24 hours of the absence. An absence will be considered excused only for medical reasons. Students who are absent more than three times (excused or not) will be reported to APS Truancy office. Parents who have a child with 10 or more absences will be subject to legal action and the possible disenrollment of their child. For further information regarding attendance please call our front office at 890-7375. Thank you.

* School begins at 8:10. Please make every effort to have your child to school on time. If your child is late, please accompany him/her to the front office to get a late slip. Excessive tardies will result in a required parent and administration conference.

"Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire."

- W B Yeats

NEWS FROM THE NURSE'S OFFICE

We hope everyone is enjoying the beginning of a new school year at Ventana Ranch.

Here are a few reminders of procedures to help keep students happy, healthy and safe while at school:

- If walking to school or home from school, review safe routes to follow and always stay in groups.
- Keep the Nurse's office updated on all new phone #s for parents, guardians, and emergency contacts in case of severe student illness or accident.
- Inform Nurse's office and teachers of all existing and new health conditions which could affect the student during the school day. It is extremely important that appropriate medication such as inhalers for asthma and Benadryl/Epi Pen for allergic reactions be available if needed. New doctor orders are required each school year
- All student medication must be brought to the Nurse's Office by a parent in the original OTC or prescription container. A parent signature is needed; APS Medical Forms are initiated & faxed to the PCP for orders as needed.
- Please bring in updated immunization records which were requested at registration. Students who are not up-to date will be dis-enrolled as requested by the NM Department of Health. Information on local Shot Clinics is available through the School Nurse.
- A change of clothes kept in the backpack or in the classroom is a great idea in case of a spill or accident. It may save parents a trip across town. Packs of new underwear donations for the Health Room are welcome.
- Because stomach aches are the #1 student complaint, donations of plain crackers are always appreciated.
- Encourage water bottles to prevent dehydration during these last hot days of summer and teach frequent good hand washing skills to prevent illness at home and at school.
- To prevent the spread of illness, please keep your child home with fever 100.00 degrees or above. They should not return to school until they have been without fever for 24 hours (without needing fever medication). They may return to school after being on an antibiotic for 24 hours. Please keep children home with any vomiting, diarrhea, frequent cough, or undiagnosed rash, and follow-up with Healthcare Provider as needed.
- It is our goal to work as a team with parents and school staff to keep students healthy and in class as much as possible... to be as academically successful as possible.

We hope everyone has a wonderful year. Please stop by the Nurse's Office with any questions or concerns.

Jan Torres RN, School Nurse 890-7375 ext. 11025

Norline Garcia, Health Assistant ext. 11066

Entertainment Books are on the way!!!

It's that time of year again! Our annual Entertainment Book fundraiser will kick off on August 24th and run through September 7th! Our goal is to raise \$12,000 to help fund student and staff needs. If every student sells a minimum of 2 books each, Ms. Sigmon and Ms. Dooley will dye their hair purple and grey – our school colors! Your student will be coming home with an Entertainment Book to use as an example. It is NOT a free book, but a way to help your student get as many orders as possible. Unsold books must be returned by Sept. 7. Student incentives are also available. Be sure to check your student's backpack for more information. Thanks for all your help in making this fundraiser a success!

New Assistant Principal joins Ventana Ranch staff!

We'd like to take a moment and welcome Drew Dooley as our new Assistant Principal! Formerly our Dean of Students, Drew is here to help enhance our strong learning environment and give Ms. Sigmon the much needed help she deserves. Welcome Drew!

Counselor's Corner
By Lynne Mitzelfelt, MA, NCC

The Role of a School Counselor: The Professional School Counselor is a certified/licensed educator trained in school counseling. Professional School Counselors address the needs of students through the implementation of a comprehensive, standards-based, developmental School Counseling Program. Professional School Counselors work with **all** students, including those considered at-risk and those with special needs. They are specialists in human behavior and relationships who provide assistance to students through four primary interventions: counseling (individual and group), large group lessons (classroom), consultation (parents and staff), and coordination. Here are a few services offered by the counseling program:

Classroom Guidance: The Ventana Ranch Counseling Program's standards-based curriculum is delivered to **all** students at the prevention level by offering classroom guidance lessons in **all** classrooms. The counselor will be in each classroom approximately six to eight times throughout the school year. Areas addressed in classroom guidance lessons include identifying feelings, friendship skills, conflict resolution, bully proofing, harassment issues, drug awareness, building teamwork, positive communication, learning styles, study skills, and career preparation.

Group Counseling: Counseling groups include, but are not limited to: friendship and conflict resolution skills, anger management, grief/loss issues, attendance issues, anxiety & stress, and divorce and changing families. Group topics are determined by need. Games, sand tray therapy, and art therapy approaches are utilized along with traditional techniques. Group counseling consists of six to eight weekly sessions. Each session is 30 to 45 minutes in length. These sessions occur **during** the regular school day. Please contact the counselor, Lynne Mitzelfelt, at 890-7375 ext. 3 for more information or to register your child for one of the counseling groups. Groups will begin in September.

Individual Counseling/Crisis Intervention: Any staff member, parent, or student may request an individual counseling session. Individual counseling is offered on a short-term, temporary basis. If the issues are chronic and/or acute, the counselor will provide resource/referral information.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent: Confidentiality within the group and individual sessions is maintained. If there are any concerns at the conclusion of a session, I will contact you. There may be circumstances when it is necessary to release confidential information regarding a child. State law requires that any suspicion or evidence of child abuse/neglect, elder abuse, or knowledge of a minor engaging in dangerous or illegal behavior be reported to the appropriate agencies or authorities. Furthermore, if a student poses a serious danger to him/herself or others, school personnel are required to intervene.

For further information, please contact Lynne Mitzelfelt at 890-7375 ext. 3

Just a Reminder.....

Due to limited stores of paper and toner, and in keeping with the Green theme, we will not be printing a hard copy of the parent newsletter to be sent home. Our newsletter can be found online each month at our school website. If you need a hard copy, please stop by the front office and we will be glad to print one for you.

Thanks for all your support!

<http://www.aps.edu/aps/ventanaranch/index.htm>

Calling All Parents!!

Support your school and join PTA!

See what you can do by visiting our
website at;

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group.VRE_RO
ADRUNNERS](http://groups.yahoo.com/group.VRE_RO_ADRUNNERS)