August 1, 2019

Dear Sewell Families,

I am thrilled to see our students return excited to start another school year. Teachers have worked over the past few weeks (and some over the summer) preparing their classrooms getting ready for a new year. Our custodial staff also worked diligently to literally make our school shine.

As we begin the New Year I’d like to share some important points to help you and your child get off to a great start. This summer Tucson Unified adopted a new English Language Arts (ELA) series, Benchmark. Teachers have received training and materials. We are excited to get started with a more updated and current research-based language series.

Our goals at Sewell can be summarized into two categories: safety and success. Your child’s safety is a priority. Our teachers, staff, and I are vigilant in this regard. Your role in safety is also vital. You can help with this by observing a few procedures.

1. When visiting during the school day always check in with the office. If you are visiting you will be issued a visitor’s pass. This communicates to staff that we are aware you are on campus for school business. Adults without a pass during the school day will be asked to sign in and get one. Please understand that even though we know many of you, adherence to this protocol is a measure to ensure your child’s safety.

2. Students can be on campus **no earlier than 8:00 a.m.** We do not have staff to monitor until 8:00. If you would like to arrange before school care, please contact Community Extension Programs Coordinator Tamara Smith at 584-7244.

3. Please communicate to your teacher or office your after school plans for your child. Also, it is **crucial** that we have the **most up-to-date phone number** to reach you. There have been instances when there were emergency situations and we could not reach parents because the contact information had changed. Please provide this information even if you think we have your most current number.

4. When picking up your children we ask that if you are in the building please wait in the common area near the office. Do not enter the halls or wait by classroom doors. Your child will be released by their teacher and students will meet parents in this area.

5. We regularly practice safety procedures and drills so that in the unlikely event of an emergency staff and students know what to do and where to go to be safe and accountable.
Your child’s academic success is our mission. Our teachers receive ongoing and continual professional development throughout the year and over summer break. This ensures they are up to date on the latest research based instructional strategies and current curriculum. As members of the educational team parents can support their children in the following ways.

1. Attendance is crucial. Students who have good attendance have significantly better chances to succeed. Also, please be here on time and stay the duration of the day. School hours are 8:20-2:35 (1:35 on Wednesdays).

2. Talk to your child about their day, review their graded work and homework with them. Visit your account through ParentVUE, this is a valuable tool for keeping up to date on your child’s progress.

3. Set a limit on “screen time” and encourage your child to read. Read with your child and have them read to you. Research shows there is a direct correlation to the amount of time reading to comprehension, building vocabulary, and critical thinking.

4. Stay in contact with the teacher if you have concerns or questions. Your child’s teacher values parent involvement and it helps the student, the teacher, and you, the parent.

We look forward to seeing you during our **Open House on Tuesday, August 20, from 5:30-7:00 p.m.** At that time we will share more information regarding your school and you will have an opportunity to visit your child’s classroom.

I am honored to serve as your principal and know by working together we can continue the tradition of excellence that is the Sewell Community.

Sincerely,

Rob Jewett, Principal
Sewell Elementary School
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