

## Jack G. Desmond Middle School



November 2020

### A Message From The Principal

#### Longhorn Families,

It has been great to drop in and observe so many of our students in their distance learning classes. I am always amazed at the resilience of our students and how adaptive they are. I have seen so much improvement adapting to this format of learning from our teaching staff and our students since we first started in August. It is really great to hear students now engaging in discussions in class and participating in the great lessons our teachers have prepared. Parents, we appreciate the support that you are continually providing to your children. We realize that the education of our students is a team effort, so thank you for all you are doing. If you have any concerns about your child's education please feel free to call the office so we can assist you.

Carry Gassett, Principal

### Upcoming Events

**11/4/20** 11:00am-12:30pm  
Food Distribution

**11/4/20** Spanish Proficiency  
Test

**11/12/20** 11:00am-12:30pm  
Food Distribution

**11/18/20** 11:00am-12:30pm  
Food Distribution

**11/20/20** 2nd Quarter  
Progress Sent Home

**11/25/20** 11:00am-12:30pm  
Food Distribution

### Event Highlight



This past month we have implemented our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system throughout our school. Teachers have been awarding students with tickets for displaying a characteristic of our P5s which include positive, productive, prompt, prepared, and polite. Students who receive a ticket are entered in a drawing to earn a prize each week. Winners are announced on Instagram Friday afternoon. Our

safety officers have been personally delivering prizes Friday afternoon to the winners that were selected. Join us in celebrating winners from this past week!

Families, keep encouraging your child to log into class each and every day! Their participation in class is greatly appreciated! We understand how hard this is for them, but we are hoping that our incentives are helping students to continue to be

motivated

Keep up the hard work,

Longhorns!



## After School Program

Our after school program is up and running. Tutors are available online to support students with their academics. If your child is struggling with class, by not understanding how to do homework or even if they need to be retaught the skill that was presented. Our tutors are there to provide support. They have access to all content material that 7th and 8th grade students utilize. Please direct your child to join the Zoom Links on the [After School Program Website](#). If your child wants to be challenged in class, the after school program has the resources as well. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [josebarrigamagdalenom@mderausd.org](mailto:josebarrigamagdalenom@mderausd.org) who is the ASP site lead for Desmond.

## Cameras

We understand that it is not mandatory for students to have their cameras on during their live class session, but we strongly recommend that students do.

Data is showing that there is a correlation between students who turn their cameras on and their grades. Students that are receiving passing grades during distance learning are mostly the students who have their cameras on, and are actively participating in the classroom discussions. Students who have their cameras off are often disengaged and are earning poor grades.

- Teachers and students also feel more connected to the classroom environment when cameras are on and can build positive relationships, which will enhance the students ability to do well.
- Families, we appreciate your support with helping us provide the best possible educational experience for your child.

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# Attendance

## Attendance

- Daily attendance will be taken and is required
- Wednesday attendance is required. Students should log into their classes and complete the google form to be marked present and then complete the assigned tasks independently.
- Attendance codes will reflect student participation in both live learning settings and during independent work settings
- Attendance during distance learning will include the following codes:

R = (DL PART LV) - Student in distance learning participates in (synchronous) live instruction (Excused)

Q = (DL COMP / ATT) - Student in distance learning attempts assignment (Excused)

Y = (CON PARENT) Contact is made with parent/guardian and/or student (Excused)

N = (DLP NOT EN) Student in distance learning was in the session, but did not engage (Excused)

D = (DL NOT ENG) - Student in distance learning did not login to session (Absent - Unexcused)

- If a student is unable to log in to class, please notify the teacher and attendance office
- Report absences as normal to attendance (illness, doctor's appointments, etc.)
- After 10 or more absences, a re-engagement process will be activated (SARB)

# Counselors

Hello Parents,

The Counseling team here at Desmond wanted to give you an update on some of the work we have been doing over the last month, and also some of the things that we have planned for the near future. We hope you all are well, and we want you to know that we are here to support you and your students. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns about your child's education.

Recent activities:

- Counselors have been collaborating with our Safety Officers to make home visits to students with technology needs and low attendance. We love to be able to see our students and problem solve with them in this way.
- Counselors have also been collaborating with attendance staff to help reach out to families by phone when students miss class.
- Counselors have been assisting with both English and Math testing for the NWEA exams held last month.
- Counselors have been collaborating with administration as first quarter grades have come in to discuss how to best assist students in improving their academics.

Upcoming activities:

- Counselors are preparing to administer the Spanish Exemption Exams on November 4th for 8th grade students who may be able to accelerate their foreign language classes in high school due to their current fluency in Spanish.
- Counselors are preparing academic interventions for students based on their performance in the first quarter.
- Counselors continue to collaborate with safety, attendance, teachers, and administration staff to help our students achieve academic and social emotional success

## Student Health Wellness

### Using Digital Screen Devices In An Eye-Friendly Way

Children are spending more time than ever looking at screens. This makes it especially important to take steps that can help prevent tired, sore eyes in children.

Staring at a screen for long stretches without taking breaks can cause symptoms such as:

- Eye fatigue. Muscles around the eye, like any others, can get tired from continued use. Using screen devices where lighting is less than ideal can lead to fatigue from squinting.
- Blurry vision. Gazing at the same distance for an extended time can cause a child's vision to blur when he or she looks away from the screen.
- Dry eyes. Studies show that people blink significantly less often when concentrating on a digital screen, which can leave eyes dry and irritated.

You can help by:

- Encouraging your child to take frequent breaks. The American Optometric Association recommends the 20/20/20 rule: look away from the screen every 20 minutes, focus on an object at least 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds.
- Reminding your child to blink. Staring at a computer may cut blinking rates by half and cause dry eyes. Encourage your child to try to blink extra, especially when they take breaks.
- Help with screen positioning. Make sure the screen on your child's desktop or laptop computer is slightly below eye level.
- Watching room lighting. To cut down on glare and eye fatigue with computer use, try reducing the level of lighting in a room roughly in half what it would be for other activities such as writing on paper or working on crafts.
- Take your child for regular vision screenings.

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