



August 2, 2021

Dear K-3 Parents & Guardians,

In Desert Heights Charter School our focus is on providing the best high-quality reading instruction to all students each day. Through a process called Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), all kindergarten through third grade students are screened for reading difficulties and characteristics consistent with dyslexia in the fall, winter, and spring using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), 8th edition. This universal screening process includes our English Learners and those who have a 504 and/or IEP. A universal literacy and dyslexia screener informs teachers of students on-track to meet the next grade-level benchmark and students who need more instruction in order to be on-track.

For students who need more than the Tier 1 (core) instruction, a deeper diagnostic assessment is given as soon as possible. Tier 2 interventions are started right away, working to close the gaps. A change in intervention curriculum, group size, frequency, duration and level of intensity may be needed. This Tier 3 (intensive) intervention may or may not be provided by the classroom teacher. The progress of all students receiving intervention is closely and frequently checked. Parents are essential to this entire process. Following the universal literacy and dyslexia screener and diagnostic assessments, you will be notified if your child is not at benchmark.

Despite the best efforts of schools to remedy students' area of need, some students may not be able to attain the skills needed to make adequate progress in the general curriculum. If a disability is suspected as the underlying reason for this, a student may be referred for an evaluation. At any time, a parent can request an evaluation if they believe their child has a disability and requires specially designed instruction.

Arizona's Move on When Reading (MOWR) legislation places great importance on this process beginning in kindergarten to ensure all students remain on track to be reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. Arizona Revised Statute §15-701 states that if a student scores below the cut score on the reading portion of the 3rd grade statewide exam, he/she will not be promoted to the 4th grade until the student makes sufficient progress in reading proficiency. It is understood that each child is unique, therefore exemptions have been established for students to be promoted to 4th grade. Those exemptions are available at www.azed.gov/mowr.

A variety of factors, in and outside of school, can influence a child's educational path and progress. It is important for parents to share in the educational journey, through constant communication and involvement. We encourage you to continue to highlight and celebrate your child's strengths and share difficulties if they occur. Please reach out to us if you have any questions and we look forward to a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Katherine Miller, M. Ed., Principal

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