



Sorensen Science Academy Mustangs Handbook



2018-19

Principal: Alicia VanDenburg

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Message to Families

August 2018

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2018-19 school year! Our entire staff joins us in welcoming your family to our school community, and all of us eagerly look forward to working with your child to provide an exemplary K-5 educational program.

At Sorensen Science Academy we work as a team of staff and families to ensure that all our students succeed. We recognize the need to build strong relationships with all of our families because we cannot do our job well without your support. We hope you will see our school as a place where you are welcome and comfortable. Working together as a team, we can help your child be successful throughout his/her years here at Sorensen Science Academy!

Our schools' academic program is both innovative and challenging. All of our instruction is geared toward helping our students meet or exceed the California State Standards. Our classrooms are child-centered and focus on the needs of each individual student to help them succeed. Most importantly, we strive to support all students as they reach their fullest potential.

This handbook was designed to share the information needed to enable you to be a successful part of our team. Our school policies and procedures, along with an overview of the school program, are provided. It is our goal to give you the foundation from which you can become actively involved with the positive and rewarding educational experiences offered. Reading this handbook thoroughly and referring to it often will ensure a successful year for your child.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time. We'll be happy to assist you.

Alicia VanDenburg
Principal

District Mission Statement

Whittier City School District will provide a safe, caring, and nurturing environment that ensures high student achievement in all subject areas, with special focus on literacy, mathematics, and the use of technology, by a quality, supportive staff.

ROCKS Expectations

Sorensen ROCKS!

Responsibility

Optimism

Citizenship

Kindness

Safety

“We are Sorensen students and we are going to college!”





2018-19 School Calendar

Regular School hours on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are:

Kindergarten-3rd Grades	8:00 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.
4th and 5th Grades	8:00 a.m. - 2:35 p.m.

Kindergarten August 16th -September 1st 8:00a.m - 12:30p.m.

All Tuesdays are Minimum Days

Kindergarten-3rd Grades	8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
4th and 5th Grades	8:00 a.m. - 12:35 p.m.

These are ADDITIONAL minimum Days for ALL STUDENTS K-5

August 30th: Back to School Night
Oct. 9th - 13th: Parent Conferences
Nov. 17th: Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 15th: Winter Break
Mar. 13th - 16th: Parent Conferences
May 16th: Open House
June 8th: Last Day of School

2018-19 School Holidays and Non-School Days

September 4	Labor Day
September 22	Non Student Day
November 10	Veterans' Day
November 20-24	Thanksgiving Break
December 18-January 5	Winter Break
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 12	Lincoln's Birthday
February 19	Washington's Birthday
March 26-30	Spring Break
April 2	Non Student Day
May 28	Memorial Day

Please visit our school website's online calendar at sorensen.whittiercity.net to keep up to date with school-wide events. The monthly newsletter, "This Month @Sorensen", is posted at the beginning of each month and includes reminders along with dates and times for school-wide events.

Sorensen Science Academy
Teaching Staff 2018-19

Kindergarten	<u>Rm #</u>	First Grade	<u>Rm #</u>
Mrs. Mercado	3	Mrs. Rizo	14
Mrs. Hurtado	1A	Mrs. Leach	2
Mrs. Rodriguez	8	Mrs. Gutierrez	13
Second Grade	<u>Rm #</u>	Third Grade	<u>Rm #</u>
Mr. Lawrence	13	Mrs. Fuentes	12
Mrs. Villa	6	Ms. Sparks	11
Mrs. Legaspi	7	Mrs. Orozco-Brown	24
Fourth Grade	<u>Rm#</u>	Fifth Grade	<u>Rm #</u>
Ms. Nava	22	Mrs. Heap	23
Mrs. Monreal	20	Mrs. Moreno-Anderson	19
Mr. Ng	21	Mr. Ng	21
Special Education	<u>Rm #</u>	Ms. Perez Pre-K (SDC)	1B
Mrs. Orton RSP	18	Mrs. S. Rodriguez (SDC)	9
Mr. Eswaran Speech	17	Ms. Hum (SDC)	10
Mr. Inman Psych			

Cotsen Coach Mrs. Roa
Science Coach Mrs. Ciaglia

Other Staff

Secretary – Angela Almodovar
Clerk – Michelle Contreras
Health Aide –Julie Ducoulombier
Day Custodian – Alfred Diaz
Night Custodian –Kevin Pedraza
Library Clerk- Nancy Almada



Academic Program

Sorensen Science Academy provides a structured learning environment conducive to the academic success of its students by emphasizing high academic standards and high expectations for all students. We provide ongoing assessment to ensure that your child's individual needs are being addressed. Sorensen provides a well-balanced educational program that includes all curricular areas. All students are expected to perform to the best of their ability.

Attendance

Good attendance directly contributes to your child's academic success. Good habits are formed early and students who attend school on a regular basis are more successful throughout their academic careers. Your encouragement and support is needed to ensure good attendance.

In the event that your child is sick, and needs to stay home please follow these guidelines:

- Call the school at (562) 789-3220. You may choose to talk directly to the secretary or leave a message by pressing the number "3".
- If a call has not been made, a written note is required.
- In case of a contagious disease, a written release from the doctor is required.

Our Community Liaison works closely with the teachers to ensure students attend school on a regular basis and encourages parent participation.

Punctuality is also very important! Students who are late for school interrupt the classroom and miss valuable instruction and work. Please make sure your child arrives at school with plenty of time to line up and get to class on time. Although school begins at 8:00, students can arrive at 7:45 to go to the playground. In addition, supervision for students who eat breakfast begins at 7:30. **THERE IS NO SUPERVISION BEFORE 7:30. PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF YOUR CHILD BEFORE 7:45. IT IS FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY.**

Doctor and dental appointments

It is requested that all dental and doctor appointments be made outside of school hours. If this cannot be avoided, we ask that a note to the teacher (giving the reason and time) be sent with your child. Parents then need to come to the office and sign their child out whenever leaving before regular dismissal.

Special Note: Please try to avoid picking up your child(ren) early as vital homework information and preparation for dismissal occurs during the last 15 minutes of the school day.



Illness or Accidents

If a child becomes ill at school, he/she is taken to the health office. If he/she is too ill to return to class, the parent is notified. Please instruct your child that if he/she is sick or hurt, to be sure to tell a teacher or the yard duty supervisor.

In case of emergency, the paramedics are called. It is very important that we have **ALL** phone numbers where parents can be reached in case of an emergency. We therefore, require Emergency Cards be filled out completely, including cell phone numbers. We must also have the names and phone numbers of people we may contact if you cannot be reached. ***IF ANY OF THE INFORMATION CHANGES DURING THE YEAR, PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER OR THE SCHOOL OFFICE. THIS WILL HELP US GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD.***

When medication must be taken at school, your child's physician must complete special forms from our office. Any medication sent to school will be held in the office until forms are properly completed. Medication must come to school in the original pharmacy container and must be marked with the student's name and classroom number. Vitamins, cough drops, and other medication that could be taken outside of school hours cannot be administered.

Breakfast and Lunch Procedures



Breakfast is served from 7:30-7:55. The cost is \$2.00. A free breakfast program is available for those who are eligible. If you choose to have your child eat breakfast at school, please make sure he or she arrives in plenty of time (by 7:45) to finish eating before the first bell rings at 8:00.

Children in grades 1st -5th are given a 45-minute lunch period. Hot lunches are available for \$3.00 a day. If a lunch is brought from home, milk may be purchased for \$.50. A free and reduced price lunch program is available for those who are eligible.

According to state and federal regulations, all school lunches must be eaten on campus. Please support us by following these guidelines. In addition, it is important that other family members visiting students during lunchtime not eat school lunches.

We strongly discourage parents from dropping off their child's lunch or lunch money in the office after school has begun or purchasing fast food to be delivered to the child, except in special circumstances. It is important that we not interrupt the classroom instructional time.

* Students are encouraged to bring a healthy snack such as granola bar, crackers and/or fruit to be eaten at the morning recess.

Cooperation and Communication between Parents and School



Parent support is critical to the success of each student. These are some ways you can help your child succeed and help us meet our goals of success for all students:

- Parent attendance at school functions
- Parent enforcement of homework and discipline policies
- Student attendance and punctuality
- Participation in parent/teacher conferences

If contact needs to be made with a child during school hours, it needs to be made through the office. Classrooms cannot be interrupted during instructional time except in emergency cases. A conference with a particular teacher may be arranged at a mutually convenient time by calling the office or by sending a note to the teacher. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's classroom teacher for both positive comments and concerns or questions.

In the event there is a concern that directly affects your child, the following steps should be utilized to clarify or address the issue:

STEP 1 Phone call/conference with the Classroom Teacher

STEP 2 If the issue is not resolved, please contact the office and Ms. Almodovar will then arrange a conference with you, the classroom teacher and principal to resolve the issue and come to a mutually agreed upon solution.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to attend all school functions. This has a positive effect on your child's academic success and shows your support and interest in the educational program. Attendance at the following functions is extremely important:

Back-To-School Night (fall)

Parent -Teacher Conferences (fall and spring)

Open House (spring)

In addition, we offer **Family Nights** designed to offer families a fun way to experience learning activities with your children while acquiring some new educational strategies to use at home. Food and beverages will normally be sold at these events.

Volunteer Guidelines

We welcome all parents on campus at any time to serve as volunteers in the classroom. However, in order to ensure the safety of all students, it is important that all adults sign into the school office before entering the campus. The following Volunteer Guidelines help our volunteer program be successful:

1. Speak to the teacher at least one day before the day you wish to volunteer. Your date and time can be scheduled by phone, e-mail or in person before or after school.
2. When you arrive on campus that day, go the office to sign in and receive your volunteer badge or pass. You must also bring a picture ID with you for verification purposes.
3. Be sure you wear your badge at all times.
4. When you are ready to leave, you will need to sign out in the office.



School/Home Information

A copy of the school monthly calendar will be sent home at the beginning of each month and available on our website. Please read these carefully and keep for future reference. In addition, a copy of the lunch menu will be sent home. Should you not receive one of these, extras are available in the school office. Notices are sent home on a regular basis as well as reminders. Check your child's backpack or folder daily to make sure you have seen these notices. As before, we will continue to use phone calls, Facebook, e-mail and the school website to communicate with families about upcoming events, emergency situations, and other important information.

In addition, please fill out the form that indicates that you prefer to receive school information via email. Your child will receive it along with the school form packet on the first day of school.

Disaster Preparedness

Safety drills for earthquakes, fires, ‘lock-downs’ and other disasters are held regularly to assure the safety of all children. Each teacher reviews these procedures with students in order for our students to be well prepared. In the event of an actual disaster, children will be kept in protective custody of the school until they can be released to parents or guardians. The school is equipped with first aid kits that include necessary supplies for emergencies.



At the beginning of the school year, a letter will come to you from the PTA asking that you supply an emergency kit for your child which contains the following:

- 2 beverages (juice box, Gatorade, etc.)
- 3 commercially packaged food items (peanuts, granola bars, beef jerky, trail mix, small can tuna, etc.) **NO CHIPS PLEASE.**
- 1 large plastic trash bag
- A brief letter from you to your child assuring them they will be safe and that you will come for them as soon as possible.
- Family picture.

Please get those to us as soon as possible so they can be put into the earthquake bin at the beginning of the school year.

Evaluation and Grading



Report Cards

Our standards based report card was developed by our district to best communicate with parents how their children are achieving. It clearly defines what is expected of each child and how your

child is progressing in relation to the grade level standards that have been established by the California State Board of Education.

Two grades are given one for achievement and one for effort. Both grades are very important. The first, “achievement”, tells how your child is doing compared to the end of the year standards in reading, writing, and math. Effort grades are based upon how hard the student works in school as well as outside of school (homework).

Achievement

- 4 = Exceeds the grade level standards
- 3 = Meets the grade level standards
- 2 = Is progressing towards the grade level standards
- 1 = Does not meet the grade level standards

Effort Grades

- E = Excellent
- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

Writing Samples/Portfolios

Students’ progress in writing is measured through the scoring of their writing. Students are given writing prompts throughout the year which are given a number score indicating whether a student is exceeding, meeting or not meeting grade level standards in writing. This writing will be shared with parents/families during parent conferences. Portfolios are a collection of samples of students’ best writing during the school year.

Standardized Testing

Once a year, public school students in grades 3rd-5th take part in the CAASPP testing which as well as the Science and PE exams in 5th grade. Testing takes place in the spring of the school year.

Field Trips



Each year our PTA works hard to raise money to send each child on a field trip. Students visit the Farm, the Zoo, etc. Teachers organize the events so that there is appropriate adult supervision for the students. It is very important that you fill out the permission form for your child to participate in the field trip and return to the teacher. Field trips or other activities away from school will be by district transportation. Notification will be given prior to any field trip in which your child participates

Homework



Homework has an important place in the educational program. It is assigned to help our students improve the skills that have been taught, develop good study habits, and become more self-reliant.

Parents can help their child(ren) develop good study habits necessary for success by:

- Setting a regular time for homework study
- Providing a quiet study area free from distractions
- Checking assignments each night for accuracy, neatness and completeness
- Ensuring completed homework gets returned

The amounts of time listed below represent the total daily **AVERAGE** for homework, which will be assigned Monday through Thursday nights:

<i>Kindergarten</i>	15 min.	<i>Third grade</i>	30 min.
<i>1st grade</i>	20 min.	<i>Fourth grade</i>	45 min.
<i>Second grade</i>	20-25 min.	<i>Fifth grade</i>	1 hour

*** Notification will be given when there is a No Homework Night due to evening school events**

In addition, all teachers assign nightly reading. We suggest that you set aside a special time for reading, perhaps before bedtime, to ensure that it happens regularly. It is important that books are available that interest your child and are at his/her independent reading level. Please ask the teacher for suggestions appropriate to your child's reading needs. Don't forget that reading aloud to children is something that serves a very valuable purpose. By doing so on a regular basis, you are doing the following:

- Modeling good reading
- Showing your interest in reading
- Encouraging your child's interest in reading
- Building comprehension and vocabulary development in your child.

Lost and Found

Clothing and items that are found on the playground or classrooms. Please feel free to check our Lost and Found throughout the school year. Unclaimed articles will be donated to various charities after Christmas and at the end of the school year. The school is NOT responsible for personal items brought to school. Please put your child's name on all possessions such as clothing, backpacks and lunch boxes.



Registration

To register a child, a record of birth (Birth Certificate), immunization records from the doctor and proof of residency is needed (current rental agreement, gas bill or electric bill). Each child is required to have a series of Polio and DPT vaccinations, plus one booster each for Polio and DPT. Also, the child will need two MMR shots, and Hepatitis B shots (series of three).

When a child is registered, parents must provide all parents' phone numbers (cell phones) as well as the name and telephone number of a friend or relative to contact in case of illness or accident. In addition, the names and phone numbers of their employer(s) are needed.

Rules and Regulations for Flow of Traffic



Please be cautious as you drop off your children at Sorensen Science Academy School. All adults need to help this situation by following the designated guidelines and working together to ensure the safety of all Sorensen Science Academy School students. When dropping off or picking up your child from school, please help us keep each child safe by remembering the following:

- **Please load or unload students next to the curb.** Remember to stay in your car when picking or dropping off your child in the NO PARKING ZONE. **Do not have your child run between cars when picking them up as this creates a very dangerous situation.**
- Parking is only allowed in designated areas. If you would like to walk your child to class or pick him/her up and there are no parking spaces available in the staff parking lot, please park on the street. **NO DOUBLE PARKING IS PERMITTED.**

- Do not park in the bus loading zone. Buses come to pick up and drop off children throughout the day.
- When walking, please stay on the sidewalks and use the designated crosswalk at all times. Buses and cars are constantly moving, making this area extremely dangerous.
- Most importantly, drive slowly through the street whenever children are present. Remember, it is illegal to drive while holding a cell phone.

School Rules

Students are expected to:

1. Follow the ROCKS expectations
 2. Respect the rights, feelings, and property of other children and adults.
 3. Conduct themselves in ways that will not endanger themselves or others
 4. Walk and be quiet in the hallways and in other areas near classrooms and office
 5. Be in supervised areas of the school and playground.
 6. Get permission before leaving the classroom.
 7. Use school equipment and materials the way they are supposed to be used.
 8. Follow directions given by the school staff.
9. At lunch time...
- a. Remain in school unless you have permission to go home.
 - b. Use quiet voices in the lunch areas.
 - c. Use good table manners.
 - d. Raise your hand when help is needed.
 - e. Remain seated until excused.

Student Recognition

To encourage all students to excel, recognition is given in many ways. Our first goal is to instill in our students an internal motivation to do their best in all things they pursue. In addition, we provide recognition in the form of awards to children who have demonstrated academic achievement or outstanding citizenship.



ROCKS Star Student of the Month

One morning a month, we take time to recognize a “ROCKS Star of the Month” from each classroom. The person is selected by the teacher, based on ROCKS expectations. ROCKS Star

of the Month receive a certificate and a yard sign and enter a raffle to become Principal of the Day.

Trimester Awards Assemblies

At the end of each trimester, we have a school-wide assembly to recognize students for academic achievement, outstanding citizenship and perfect attendance for the trimester. Parents are invited to attend the assemblies. *Each student recognized receives a Certificate of Achievement.*

Perfect Attendance

Students will be recognized for perfect attendance at each of the trimester assemblies. In addition, those students who have not missed a day of school for the entire school year, will be recognized at the last trimester awards assembly and will receive a trophy. **Students who receive the trophy must have attended school every day. If your student leaves school for an emergency or doctor's appointment, please have verification as proof. Only then, will it be excused and your child will be counted as "present" for that day.**

TWO TARDIES OR EARLY OUTS per semester will be allowed. The third tardy in a trimester WILL count as ONE absence and disqualify the student from the perfect attendance award.

Special Programs

Sorensen Science Academy Elementary is dedicated to educating every child. This includes providing appropriate instruction for each of our students based on individual needs which may include instructional interventions and tutoring, speech and language, and/or English language development.

Resource Specialist

The Resource Specialist works individually and/or in small groups with students who have been identified as having learning disabilities. She services students on a pull-out basis to meet individualized objectives. Parental approval is necessary for placement in this program. Annual reviews are held to review the students' progress and set new goals.

School Psychologist

The school psychologist fulfills state requirements related to special education. The psychologist tests students referred for academic concerns as well as those referred for testing for the GATE Program. In addition, the psychologist meets with parents and teachers to discuss results of the testing and suggests appropriate placement. She is also available to consult with staff and parents concerning special problems related to students. The psychologist is scheduled to be on campus one day a week.

Language, Speech and Hearing Specialist

The Speech and Language Specialist works with students who qualify for assistance in the areas of language and speech. The specialist also screens students as recommended and maintains a pull-out program for students who qualify.

English Language Learners

Parents of English Language Learners are invited to attend a meeting at the beginning of each year to hear about the program placement options for their child. Regardless of the program selected, all students who are English Language Learners receive additional specially designed instruction to increase their English language skills. All English Learner students are tested yearly to monitor their growth in learning English.

Reach For The Stars Program

Our after school Reach for the Stars is open to students who need a safe place to be after school where they can grow and learn. The only requirement is that students must stay a minimum of 3 hours each school day. Activities include homework assistance, reading and math intervention and many enrichment activities such as music, art, drama, chorus, science, dance, sports, etc.. This program is free and all students are eligible as long as there is room. Applications are available in the front office.

Leadership and School Organizations



We at Sorensen Science Academy School believe that, in order to design a program that meets the instructional and emotional needs of its students, we need the input and sharing of staff and parents. Staff and parents can share their ideas for improving our instructional program in a variety of ways.

The School Site Council (SSC) is a committee made up jointly of parents and staff members whose primary function is to monitor the implementation of our School Improvement Plan. They also approve School Improvement expenditures. The parents and staff on the committee provide valuable ideas to guide school personnel in developing programs and meeting the needs of students and parents. Meetings are held once a month and elections are in the fall of the school year. All parents are invited to attend these meetings.

The English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC) is a committee made up jointly of staff and parents of students who are English Language Learners (ELs). The primary function of this committee is to give ideas and suggestions into the instructional program offered to ELs. Members also give advise on how the EIA/LEP funds will be spent to benefit these children. Meetings are held once a month and are conducted in Spanish. All parents of English Learners are invited to attend.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) involves both parents and staff in providing information about techniques designed to assist children in learning at home. They also sponsor fundraisers throughout the school year to raise money for field trips, rewards for students, etc. Meetings are held once a month and all parents are invited to attend.

Staff Development Calendar

In order to maximize student achievement, our teachers participate in workshops and inservices in which they learn about the newest and most effective educational practices. Minimum days are invaluable opportunities for staff professional growth and development. These days must be approved by our District Board of Education. Topics for these days' support curriculum and instructional needs as evidenced in our School Improvement Program Plan.



Student Birthday Parties

We love to celebrate at Sorensen Science Academy Elementary School! Each child will have the opportunity to participate in many celebrations such as a Trick or Treat Event, a December Holiday Party, a Valentine Party and an end of the year party. However, we ask that parents, PLEASE do not send cupcakes and cakes to school for birthday parties. Celebrating each child's birthday can be time consuming and takes away from essential classroom instruction. On your child's birthday, we suggest that you donate a book to the class or the teacher can read the child's favorite book to the class. If you like, your child may send a goodie bag with non-food items to send home with their classmates on that day.

Uniform Policy

All students are expected to wear a school uniform. The uniform consists of blue or khaki cotton pants, jeans, shorts, skirts or jumpers and a polo shirt or shirt with a collar in any color. Sweat pants and turtleneck sweaters are appropriate for cold winter days. Students not in uniform will be sent to the office to change or will be sent home. Waivers are available to families that can demonstrate a financial hardship. Parents are to submit the waiver by Friday, August 25, 2017. However, students' clothing must adhere to the dress code. Please ensure that any logos on shirts are appropriate! No hair coloring and/or mohawks are allowed at the elementary school. You can purchase uniforms at any department store, Target, Kohl's, etc. Parent support is critical to the success of the uniform policy.

Sorensen Science Academy T-Shirts/Sweat shirts are sold by the Parent Teacher Association at special events and may be worn on uniform days. Please check in the office to see if any are available for purchase.