

April 4, 2022
Denali Montessori Family Newsletter

Welcome!
Calendar Dates to Note

March 28-April 6 – AKStar & 5th Grade Science Spring Summative Assessments
April 1 – 30 Denali Rocks Fundraiser
April 14: **Family Evening with Deanna Beck**, Principal starting 2022/2023. 6-7pm
April 18- May 6: Spring Benchmark Assessments / Fastbridge & MAP & SAEBRS
April 21: Kindergarten Roundup: Meet your Kindergarten Teacher for next year 9:30-11am.
May 12: PTSA Meeting 6:30-7:30pm via zoom
May 19: Last Student Day

Denali Montessori Mission Statement

Denali Montessori promotes mindful activity within a compassionate, diverse community to develop socially responsible life-long learners.

Dear Families,

Thank you all for a wonderful kick off for our annual Denali Rocks Fund Raiser. It was wonderful to see all our families on the playground after school. You make Denali Strong. We are so proud of the culture our parents, staff, and students have created. Supporting the authentic Montessori training for our staff, both initial and on-going and for the materials that Dr. Montessori created to teach our program takes funds beyond the typical school budget. We need you to help us. We do not fund raise at any other time during the year. This is your chance to help us. Any donation makes a difference. I personally thank you and am grateful for whatever you help you can give. Stay tuned for more details.

AKStar, our summative assessments have paused due to systems glitches. I will let you know when they resume.

We are delighted to welcome Emma Manthey and Erin Arno to our Lower EI team for school year 2022/2023. They really impressed our interview team and have a background in child centered education. We will miss Nina Kirkland and hope to see her again when she returns to Alaska. After reviewing our candidates, I realized we needed Kim Baumer in Upper EI and asked her to return to take Mr. Mason's room. We wish Mr. Mason well in his new adventure as a PE teacher.

The slippery conditions on the walkways and playground have us limiting running on the equipment and ice during our slow break up this year. Please be careful.

If you know someone who is up here for the summer. ASD has a wonderful camper program on our playground. It helps keep our school safe. The campers get water and electricity hook-ups.

SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (SEM)

Camper Host Program Accepting Applications

The ASD Camper Host program is currently accepting applications for summer security at ASD schools. For more information, or to apply, go to the [Camper Host Program](#) webpage. This opportunity can be shared with all staff and the community.

Kindergarten Round Up for Kindergartners starting next fall is Thursday April 21 9:30-11am in the MPR. You will meet the teachers, ask questions, and start their registration. The children will get a chance to see the kindergarten rooms for a short fun activity with the Kindergarten Para-Professionals while you talk with the teachers.

Please, please **keep the speed limit at 20mph or below** at arrival and dismissal. We have young children crossing the streets. Please, please also **do not stop in the Barrow & 10th intersection to drop off your child**. Use 10th street on either side of the intersection. This really backs up the cars and the students trying to cross safely. Absolutely check super carefully if you back up at any time along the 10th Street arrival/dismissal zone.

Please use the crosswalk to cross 10th Street at arrival and dismissal. The large vehicles cannot see you.

Thank you all. Please let your teacher or I know if you have any questions.

Take care and stay safe.

Ruth

Website: <https://www.asdk12.org/denali>

Telephone: 907-742-4502

Email: dene_ruth@asdk12.org

Repeated Information:

I am so pleased to announce again your new principal, Deanna Beck. She has a love for Montessori. Her oldest daughter attends Denali Montessori. Deanna has taken a couple preliminary Montessori classes already to understand the philosophy of our school better. She also has a background in special education and understands trauma informed education. Her compassion and priority are on the children and teacher training focused upon student success. I've known her for years and am happy to know that Denali Montessori will be in good hands.

You will have a chance to meet Deanna Beck Thursday, April 14th 6-7pm in the gym. I hope you will get a chance to begin to know her and start the relationship that is so

important. I know I could not have done my job without the support of our families. I thank you for that. I know that Deanna is excited to meet you.

This is a message from our PTSA Denali Rocks Fundraising Team. This fundraiser is our annual and only fundraiser to fund new teacher Montessori training, continue Montessori professional development, and Montessori materials. The ASD general budget does not fund this for us.

This is a message sent earlier this week and worth repeating from the team: April 1-30 will be our annual fundraiser, Denali Rocks! In the past, Match Monday business sponsorships have been very successful. People love to donate when they know it'll be doubled. We'd love your help asking for your help in getting businesses to support our cause.

Businesses have several options:

1.) Become a Match Monday sponsor. This is the biggest gift we ask for. A business gets their own Match Monday with a match of \$2,000 and we lift them up in our publicity. Businesses can split a match Monday and give \$500 or \$1,000.

2.) Businesses can sponsor an event, such as Fall Carnival, Back to School picnic, End of Year ice cream social, etc. The business would get publicity at that event.

3.) Businesses can make a cash gift of any amount.

4.) Businesses can offer an in-kind donation for our silent auction. Families are encouraged to offer auction items as well.

Your Denali Rocks! Fundraising committee has letters and handouts to help those who wish to contact businesses. Please also let the fundraising committee know who you are contacting to avoid duplication. You can contact Denali Rocks! co-chairs Jennifer Hazen at jenniferdhazen@gmail.com or Lisa Fiegel at lisasmithfiegel@gmail.com

Monday Feb. 28, starts our ASD new mask mandates. Dr. Bishop sent home the new guidance. We look forward to a peaceful implementation tomorrow. The following are the highlights and communication guidance at Denali.

Parents / Guardians will make the choice for their children. We will not ask students about their choice. We also will not monitor that the parent/guardian choice is followed. Our focus remains on teaching and learning.

Adults, staff and parents and volunteers, will make their own choice about mask wearing. We will not ask you about your choice.

We will practice our Montessori values of respect, kindness, and graciousness regardless of our personal choices.

Sanitation at lunchtime and after school will continue. We also continue to be symptom-free at school.

Masks continue to be required on all busses at this time due to Federal Guidelines.

Spring Summative Testing is the end of March and first week of April. We have a new vendor this year. It is actually NWEA (Northwest education association) who also does our 3-6 grade benchmark assessments. In order to be sure we are testing your child's content knowledge and not their ability to navigate the program and computer, the state offers practice tests. Our teachers will also make sure they are familiar with all the tools they will need to move around the screen to answer the items. The following is an optional only choice if you would like to see what the tests are like.

[AK STAR Student Readiness Support Resources for Families - by grade - DEED:](#) contains links to quick guides by grade level for accessing the AK STAR tutorial and practice tests and includes Answer Keys and rubrics for practicing at home

School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS) Opens February 14

The survey window for the Anchorage School District SCCS opens next Monday, February 14, through Friday, March 25.

Our **annual climate survey for staff, students, and families** starts Monday. Please take a moment to fill out the survey. We pay attention to what you say, and it helps us to improve our climate for all our students and community.

Who should take the family survey? One family member per student in a school should take the survey. This can be a parent/guardian, grandparent, aunt/uncle, foster parent, other family member.

How will the family survey be administered? Family survey is taken online (each school receives a unique survey link) and can be taken on any digital device.

I first came to Denali Montessori as principal 12 years ago, my primary goal was to keep the Montessori climate and spirit thriving for students, parents, and staff. Parents are pivotal to that goal. You have risen to the needs and changing times with smiles and positivity. You are once again, volunteering in our school and for our field trips with all the prior enthusiasm. Your positive energy was exemplified at the PTSA meeting which is what I have enjoyed and appreciated so much at Denali Montessori.

I am so grateful to the staff, students, and parents for all your support over the 12 years I have been at Denali Montessori. This has been the shining culmination of my 30.8-year career. I will always hold Denali Montessori in my heart. **Yes, now the time has come for me to retire.** It's time for me to play. I had hoped to outlast COVID, but I think COVID is with us for some time to come. My last workday is June 1, 2022. Thank you all so much for everything. You are the best.

team. If you are interested, please email me. Dene_ruth@asdk12.org We generally schedule interview for after school.

Masking has been extended per Dr. Bishop's Jan. 15th message. Masks that cover the nose and mouth without gaps, are required indoor.

We are looking for volunteers to help at recess and in the morning on the playground. If you have time to help from 8:40-8:50 in the morning, we would love to have you out there so that our students can have some movement time before the start school for the day. Extra adults out on the playground will help keep them safer. Please let me know if you would like to do this one or more days a week.

Please do not turn right or left onto Barrow when children are crossing.

Please cross at the Barrow or the Cordova corners. Large cars cannot see our little ones crossing in the middle of the block. Also please be careful turning north on Barrow. Students cross 10th there and also cross Barrow there. Please stop and wait for our students to fully cross that intersection Ms. Davis has organized a fundraiser for our Life Skills Class to go to the Challenge Ski Event. This is expensive and so wonderful for our children. Below are links to the fundraising choices. She is also selling ice cream bars after school.

And, if you just need some food or sweet treats...we're the space to put a smile on your face (ha, that was pretty hammy).

Dr Bishop has announced revised COVID protocols. They are on the links below. New CDC recommendations as a follow-up from this weekend's letter.

- Isolation period if you test positive for COVID-19 has been reduced from 10 days to 5 days.
- We only accept molecular test results. No antigen and/or home test results.

Resources for families and staff:

- [COVID 19 Updates Home Screening Guidelines](#) (All languages may not be updated, but communications is working on this)
- [Return-to-School/Work Policy](#)

Please remember that our playground is rented until 6pm every evening during the school week. This means that it is not open for community playing or sledding. Students need to go home directly after school. Thank you for helping us keep your children safe during the transition to home every day. These dark afternoons make it even more important.

We've had more field trips planned in the coming months. See below for the chaperone information. It is different than our volunteer requirements. **We are no longer requiring vaccination on day field trips.**

Arrival & Dismissal: 10th Street is our only supervised arrival and dismissal point for kindergarten through 6th grade. Only pre-school dismisses from the front. Any students dropped off in the morning at the front parking lot, need to walk around to the ramp on 10th street to wait in the playground where there is supervision. We have no supervision in the front. Please let me know if you have any questions

Please be sure you send your child to school with gloves and boots and hats and jackets. It will be too cold to go out without winter gear. We go out until the temperature is -10 with the wind chill. Sometimes, we shorten the recess when it gets close to that temperature. The wind can whip up the park strip to us and we can really feel that wind chill during a 30-minute recess.

We go in immediately in the mornings if the temperature is at 0 degrees. This is due to the dark and early morning that the temperature is different than from recess.

We have a **volunteer box** in the teacher workroom for anyone with a few minutes time to help out our teachers. You need not have a child in that teacher's classroom to help out. We appreciate our families and are enjoying your support in our school once again this year. Please remember, wear a mask and be symptom-free when you are in our school.

PTSA reminds us that it's never too late to join. We cannot do it without you. PTSA funds our Montessori training that keeps us a viable member of the American Montessori Association and provides much of the authentic materials needed to teach Montessori curriculum.

Julia Kentch, our new PTSA president sends this link: We are encouraging parents, students, and staff to join PTSA using Memberhub. The address is denalimontessori.memberhub.com

We are part of the Thursday Fruit Day. Thursday mornings fruit will be delivered to everyone to their classrooms. The specific fruit varies each week.

We continue to have free lunch and breakfast through December from our CARES monies. However, you still need to renew your Free & Reduced lunch application. There was some confusion about this when letters went home. It was the qualification for Free and Reduced lunch that expired. Milk money can still be bought separately and you can establish an account for this. Email denali_cafe@asdk12.org if you have questions. Elizabeth has been wonderful about reaching out to answer questions.

Students who have been waiting to be assessed for our IGNITE program will be tested by a team at our school October 18 & 19. **All 2nd graders will receive a group screening to see if they are potentially eligible.**

Starting October 24 all phone calls need to use 10 digits. This includes the area code.

Please note our calendar dates through our first semester. Let Alicia or Keiarra know if you are out for a planned absence. This should avoid the automatic call.

Latest COVID Guidance:

1. If you have symptoms, you have three choices regardless of Vaccination status;
 - a. Get a doctor's note indicating cause of symptom and that it is not COVID related
 - b. Quarantine for 10 days
 - c. Get a COVID test
2. Nurse Marissa has been trained now to **administer COVID tests to staff, students, (with parent permission), and parents.** The tests will go to the testing facility every day via school bus at 3:30pm. Nurse Marissa can now test if you have any symptoms or if you simply want to check that you are COVID free. The registration process is somewhat lengthy. See Nurse Marissa for information about how to register. A flyer will go out soon with this information. I've been getting my result back that evening, so it is fairly quick.

Please label your students' gear. Make sure they are dressed appropriately for the weather. I know I check my weather app before I decide what coat I am wearing for the day. Hats, gloves, snow pants, and boots will be a necessity soon. As our kindergarten team noted, we all shop at the same places, so **label, label, label.** We pick up stray clothing after each recess and put it into our lost and found by the playground door. You are welcome to check it as soon as you notice a clothing item missing.

Introducing ASD Flex: Custom design an education program that works for you

ASD Flex enables students to combine both in-person and online learning to create schedules that are flexible, explore new abilities and interests, and offer new levels of opportunity for the upcoming school year.

From family-driven homeschool learning to individual learning plans with online and in-person support, ASD Flex allows families to rethink how their students do school.

Elementary and middle school ASD Flex opportunities

In-Person full time: Onsite classroom environment at various locations, (**Denali Montessori**)

ASD Virtual: Allows for student-driven online learning with remote teacher support
ASD Charter Homeschool: Family-driven learning with multiple learning environments
PAIDEIA Custom Design: Customizing students' educational plans for their success. A
homeschool correspondence with online and in-person options driven by individual
learning plans

Click here for more info: <https://www.asdk12.org/Page/18490>

Due to rising COVID numbers, We are resuming lunches in the classrooms again. Two and only two classes will be allowed in the MPR for lunch on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. They will be spread out over at least two rows of tables. Seating charts have been and are still required for eating times. There is no freedom of movement during eating. We are teaching the student to use intermittent masking during eating times. This means that students lower their masks to take a bite or drink, then raise them masks back over their nose to chew or swallow. This will reduce the actual time unmasked. We continue to sanitize after lunch and at the end of the day. Students continue to sanitize or wash their hands with soap and water upon entering the classroom or specials. Please call me or email me if you have questions. 907-742-4502. Or dene_ruth@asdk12.org.

Field trips have resumed. For driving field trips, parents do need to fill out the drivers and insurance forms. Alicia collects that information.

Safety Drills

Monthly Drills

Evacuation/Fire

To the playground designated places

Quarterly Drills

ALICE (intruder)

These are not surprise. The drills are talked through by me as a calm scenario always advising students to look to their teacher to keep them safe. One drill a year, usually in the Spring, will include an evacuation to an alternate location.

Semester Drills

Stay Put – Unsafe person/event in the neighborhood

All doors are locked, learning continues.

Lockdown – Unsafe Person/event on the property

All doors are locked, and Teachers keep students in a safe place in the classroom.

Earthquake

Duck and hold

COVID Test Sites

Any of these are recognized by ASD

ASD has contracted with Beacon to provide walk-up, PCR Covid-19 testing
Hours: 8am to 4pm, Monday-Friday: Closed Holidays.

Beacon Testing Sites

- Abbott Loop Elementary
- Chester Valley Elementary
- Chugiak High School (COMING SOON)
- North Star Elementary
- Russian Jack Elementary
- Tyson Elementary

Non-Discrimination Statement

The School Board is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs and activities shall be free from discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, physical or mental disability, Vietnam era veteran status, genetic information, good faith reporting to the board on a matter of public concern, or any other unlawful consideration. The Board shall promote programs which ensure that discriminatory practices are eliminated in all District activities.

Student Behavior

Denali Montessori will follow School Board Policy BP 5030 School Discipline and Safety - <https://www.boardpolicyonline.com/?b=anchorage>

Classroom Managed Behaviors

- Talking that is disruptive
- Inappropriate movement in the classroom
- Disrupting learning
- Refusal to follow directions
- Unkind language,
- Disrespect
- Minor bullying
- Inappropriate language

Classroom Student Behavior will result in the following:

- Teacher will have quiet meeting away from others with student to reteach behavior
- Teacher will have family meeting for repetitive behavior
- Students will be allowed to reset in the Peace area or Buddy Room with clear directions about time and tasks while there.
- Any repetitive, violent, or unsafe behavior is addressed with the principal who will meet with the student, provide reteaching, determine the consequence, and let the teacher and parent know.

Remember you can always contact your teacher, or our front office, (907-742-4500), or me, Ruth, (907-742-4502) if you have any questions.

Arrival and dismissal are going much more smoothly, I'm happy to say.

- Pre-school parents are meeting their children out front on the red curb at 3:30pm
- Kindergarten parents are meeting their children on the kindergarten playground at 3:20pm.
- Lower EI parents are meeting their children on the basketball court at 3:25pm
- Upper EI parents are meeting their children on 10th Street at 3:30pm.

I appreciate everyone's feedback. That helped us make this work.

Montessori meets the child where they are at. This will help us individualize our instruction to match your child's needs.

The days are getting chillier. Make sure your children come to school with the appropriate weather gear. We do go out when there is light rain. We also go out to -5 or -10 degrees below 0 including the wind chill. Those days are sure to come this winter.

Denali PTSA

We need you to help Denali PTSA make this school year fantastic.

Join the PTSA at www.denalightsa.org

If you want more information or just to let us know, email us at denalightsa@gmail.com

School Goals

Our school goals this year center around conscious equity for all. Denali Montessori is very proud of our diversity. Diversity is one of our strengths. Our Montessori focus as always is to meet the child where they are at, socially, emotionally, and academically. We will be meeting regularly to look at student Reading and Math progress data and determine if our instructional plan for our children needs to be tweaked. We will be developing our interventions and our year-long program with an equity lens. Please contact your teacher or me, (907-742-4502), if you have any questions, or suggestions.

Denali Montessori PTSA

Please contact our Denali Montessori PTSA for membership and for Community Schools. Denali Montessori could not thrive without our active PTSA that fundraises for our teacher Montessori training and authentic Montessori Materials for our program. This keeps us viable members of the American Montessori Association. Our Community Schools Program is so important to our families as a fun and enriching before and after school option. It is our PTSA board members who work hard to run this program for us.

Denali PTSA

Get a jumpstart on the year and supporting Denali. Join the PTSA at <https://denalimontessori.memberhub.com/store>

Denali Community School.

Denali Community School offers before and after school programs from 7:45-8:30 AM and until 5:30 PM. We are currently enrolling students. For more information, see www.denalightsa.org/dcs

Denali Community School needs a new parent/family member to serve as Program Manager. This is a volunteer position with a stipend, with a significant discount for before/after school care. 4-8 hrs. per month. Job includes working closely with Coordinators on program development and operations to offer a parent perspective and serve as a liaison with Denali PTSA. *Current program manager will mentor you to take over fully for 2022-2023 school year.*

If you are interested in any of these positions, email us at denalightsa@gmail.com



Website



Denali PTSA

Denali Montessori School Day and Arrival /Dismissal Protocols

The School Hours are 9:00-3:30

Parent pick – up and drop- off will be from 10th Street only.

There is **no free play allowed** on the playground at this time due to the playground in use then for our before and after childcare programs. They don't have the staff to supervise more children.

8:30am Breakfast starts. Children should enter the front of the school and go to the MPR

8:40-8:50am Students may arrive on the supervised playground.

Kindergarten students will wait on the kindergarten playground outside their classroom door.

8:50am Teachers will bring their students into the classroom.

3:20 PM Kindergarten will be dismissed with their older siblings from the Kindergarten Playground to parents.

3:25 pm: Lower EI will be dismissed with their older siblings. Teachers will lead them to the basketball court on the playground for you to meet your child.

3:30 pm Upper EI will be dismissed to their designated spots on 10th Street.

3:30pm Pre-School and their older siblings will be led out to the front of the school by Ms. Leah and Ms. Kim. You will meet them by staying in your car on the red curb in the parking lot.

The ramp gate will close at 9:00am and 3:40pm

If the gate is closed in the morning or afternoon, go to the front of the school to enter through the office.

Community Schools will enter through the office and will be met by Community Schools staff to help them to their room.

Campfire will enter through 9th Street and be met by Campfire staff to guide them to the MPR.

Recess:

Kindergarten – 11:15-11:45pm

Lower EI – 11:45-12:15pm

Upper EI – 12:15-12:45

Pre-School - 2:30-3:00pm

Lunch:

Kindergarten – 11:45-12:15

Lower EI – 12:15-12:45pm

Upper EI – 12:45-1:15pm

Work Sessions:

Kindergarten: 9:00-11:00

Lower EI: 9:45-11:45

Upper EI: 1:15-3:15

6th Grade Band & Orchestra – Wed. Thurs. & Fri. 9:10-9:55am