

2026-2027 Welcome to Fifth Grade!

We set VERY high expectations for our students and expect that all students do their best at all times. We hold students 100% accountable for their choices and students will quickly learn that not only are they the center of our classroom universe, but that all of their choices do have consequences... be it positive or negative. We will work together to create a safe, enjoyable, and respectful learning environment so that students are excited to walk through the door each day. Our class curriculum is closely aligned with the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards to ensure that your student will know and be able to do what is expected for school and in life.

The following letter provides information about each core class as well as fifth grade procedures and policies.

Math:

The Math curriculum teaches skills and strategies by using I-Ready Math as well as various projects and inquiry-based assignments. This program is also available online through the teacher website, and Parent Help Pages and Homework Helpers will be sent home with students during each Module. Grades are determined through unit assessments, quizzes, and finals. **Homework will not be assigned in a traditional sense. A student will not have homework unless they need additional time for in class assignments.** If there are any questions, please have the student come to class prepared to ask for help at the beginning of each class. Students should also be practicing their math facts as well as any assigned homework. Special projects will be given specific due dates ahead of time.

ELA:

This year we will be using the district-adopted reading and writing curriculum program, Amplify. This program is aligned with the Arizona College and Career Readiness ELA standards. Grades will be based on assessments and coursework. ELA learning will be consistently supported by whole group instruction, small group activities, and individual practice.

Science:

The Science program is aligned to the AZ Science standards. Students will be using an inquiry-based district adopted curriculum from Mystery Science, STEMScopes, and Gizmos. Due to the hands-on nature of the curriculum and project-based learning, students are expected to maintain a detailed Science notebook to support their understanding. Grades are based on assessments.

Social Studies:

The Social Studies curriculum covers American History from the American Revolution to Industrialism. The majority of academic learning will be completed in the classroom, and grades will be determined through assessments and projects. Students will also be expected to maintain student notebooks and inquiry journals.

Mr. Justin Pothast (Math):

Mr. Justin Pothast teaches Math! He is a graduate of Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. He has been teaching 4th and 5th grade since 2013. He is married with two beautiful daughters, and a Golden Retriever. He loves to grill, travel, swim, watch sports, and spend time with his family.

Mrs. Sue Piotrowski (Science/Social Studies):

Mrs. Sue Piotrowski teaches Science and Social Studies! She is a graduate of Grand Canyon University. She has been working in the district since 2007 and teaching 5th grade since 2011. Mrs. Piotrowski is happily married and has three grown children, all who have been in DVUSD schools. She loves to read, travel, swim, teach, and follow her beloved Ohio State Buckeyes!

Mrs. Grace Williams (ELA):

Mrs. Grace Williams teaches English Language Arts! She graduated from ASU. She has been teaching since 2024 and has grown up in a family full of teachers. Mrs. Williams went through schools in the Deer Valley School district so she is ready for this school year! She loves to read, drink coffee, and her favorite animals are cows!

Food:

All fifth grade classrooms are **PEANUT FREE ROOMS**. Food is not allowed in the classroom with the exception of celebrations. If your student would like to celebrate with his or her homeroom, this will take place during the first period. All food served or shared with students during the school day must be store-bought, single serving, and meet the Arizona Healthy Schools Act regulations (ARS. 15-242.01).

Practice, Coursework, Projects, and Assignments:

Yes, all fifth grade students may have homework practice every night. Practice reinforces new skills learned each day. All practice work is due the following day unless otherwise specified. Projects, study guides, and reports will be given a specific due date ahead of time. It is expected that all students will turn in their practice assignments within the first 10 minutes of class.

Grading:

Quarterly grades will be based on assessments and coursework and aligned to AZ Standards by content. Standard proficiency will also be recorded as scale of 1-4, but not affect the calculation of grades.

Grade Scale:

A =90-100%

B = 80- 89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 50-59%

Missing work will be recorded as 49% and NE (No Evidence) will be recorded for the standard proficiency.

Grades are maintained regularly and may be accessed through PowerSchool. To monitor your student's academic progress, please visit <http://ps.dvusd.org/public/>

Reassessment:

Retakes are allowed for assessments in which scores are entered into the gradebook, for full credit, if reperformance opportunities will not be available during the grading period. Retakes are not permitted for any district assessments or Unit finals. In order to earn a retake opportunity, a student must submit a completed retake contract within 5 school days of receiving the assessment score. Retake contracts are available in each classroom and may be printed from our website. Retakes may be taken during scheduled tutoring times or by special arrangement.

Late Work:

If a student is absent, they have one day to make up the work for every day that they missed. Students can also access learning activities, instructional videos, and assignments in Canvas. In order for late work to be accepted and graded, it must be submitted within 5 school days after the end of the unit. Work will be marked as 49% Missing until submitted within the deadline. If a student is absent on a date where a major project is due, they are to turn in that project the day he or she returns to class.

Communication:

Each week, students will bring home a blue **Data/Communication Folder**. This folder will have all returned assignments, graded assessments, and test data in the format of bar graphs, as well as any other pertinent school information. Please acknowledge that you have reviewed the Data Folder by signing the Parent Communication form and return any communication requiring signatures in the folder to school with your student by Monday of each week.

Behavior Expectations:

In fifth grade, we follow all school rules all the time. Please refer to the Paseo Hills Handbook and Students Rights and Responsibilities for a complete overview of school procedures. All students at Paseo Hills will adhere to PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Systems and Support). We have a philosophy at Paseo Hills:

How a Rattler ROCKS Respect Ownership Compassion Knowledge Self-control

ROCKS Stands for:

Respect: I can be kind to people and take care of things.

Ownership: I can be responsible for my thoughts, actions and words.

Compassion: I can treat others with kindness.

Knowledge: I can demonstrate the school expectations.

Self-control: I can control my words, body and actions.

Explanations of the ROCKS! Expectations and how to use them at school will be discussed during the first week of school and throughout the year. Fifth graders will use this philosophy when making decisions as it is designed to eliminate most discipline issues. All fifth graders will partake in class meetings with their homeroom to discuss the current school events and class issues.

As a positive aspect to this behavior system, students will be recognized for making good choices. ROCKS tickets may be given by any staff member to students meeting or exceeding our ROCKS! Expectations. These tickets can be spent at the ROCKStore and entered into school wide drawings for prizes.

In the event that a student's issue regarding their behavior choices needs intervention, progressive disciplinary action and natural consequences will take place. This will follow steps of the Rattler ROCKS positive behavior plan. For major discipline issues, students may be referred to Administration as needed.

- ✓ **Minor 1** is a verbal redirection and natural consequence and teacher documentation
- ✓ **Minor 2** includes a verbal redirection, natural consequence, re-reach of the ROCKS expectation not being met by student choice, as well as a written reflection, documentation and communication with the parent/guardian.
- ✓ **Minor 3** results in a teacher assigned intervention period during lunch/recess with a written reflection. Parent/guardian notification of the decisions made during our learning time as well as a signature on the written reflection will be required.
- ✓ **Minor 4** shows that the same choices are continuously being made with no effort to change by the student so he/she will be referred to Administration.

Thank you for helping your student succeed in 5th grade by encouraging him or her to do their best! Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions or concerns.

The Fifth Grade Team

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PARENT/STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please detach, sign, and return this page indicating that you and your child understand and have discussed the 5th grade guidelines and expectations for students in our classrooms.

This form must be returned to school by **Friday, August 7.** Thank you for entrusting your student to us. We will have a fantastic year learning and growing together as a community.

I have read and discussed all the information in the Fifth Grade Welcome Letter:

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Student Printed Name

In the event the Fifth Grade Team needs to get a hold of me, I prefer communication via:

Email (clearly print address(es) below)

Phone (please include area code)
