



Union Park School

Lauren Ghanooni, Principal

Max Wood, Assistant Principal



Science Syllabus and Expectations

My name is Teresa Sanders and I am the 8th Grade Science and STEAM teacher here at Union Park School. I graduated from UofA with my Masters in Secondary Education in 2021. Prior to that I earned my Bachelor's of Science in Healthy Lifestyles Coaching from ASU, preceded by my Associates of Science in Dietetics from PVCC. I bring a wide variety of life experiences to the classroom including an extensive background in fitness and nutrition. I have 1 son in 4th grade, and two stepchildren; one in 7th grade and one in 10th grade. My son and step-daughter have joined me at Union Park, while my stepson attends SDOHS. As a mom and a teacher maintaining a healthy school/family life balance is important to me and will be reflected in the homework that I won't be sending home with your students. My husband and I love to adventure and try to cram as many National Park trips in each year as possible. I am passionate about fitness and enjoy running, hiking, paddle boarding, and more. I believe that science is a modality that is accessible to every person and it is my goal as a teacher to foster a love and appreciation for the varied options and possibilities that exist under the umbrella of science.

Parent Involvement is all about the children. Participation in your child's education is proven to boost his or her achievement in school. We are committed to treat parents as partners while keeping lines of communication open and focused on the needs of your child. Mutual trust and respect between parents and teachers is required to maintain a positive learning experience at any school. We believe that your trust in Union Park is required to ensure your child's success.

Our Learning Trajectory:

- [Arizona State Standards](#) have not changed for Science this year.
- We will cover all of the 8th Grade Science Standards under the umbrella of 3 main storylines:
 - o First, we will explore the time of the dinosaurs discovering how we know about them and their fate.
 - o Then we will explore extinct civilizations, uncovering hypotheses about their disappearance including natural disasters. Using this knowledge, we will see how the sciences of agriculture, metallurgy and energy have shaped modern civilization and how we are still battling the forces that caused the downfall of those civilizations long ago.
 - o Lastly, we will decide if colonization of another planet is necessary and whether or not it is even possible.
- o Resources for you and parents:
 - [DVUSD Science Resources for Parents](#)
 - [What is Depth of Knowledge \(DOK\)?](#)

COMMUNICATION

- School-wide
 - [Union Park School Website](#)
 - Frequent Smores via social media, email, and texts
- Teacher website
 - o <https://www.dvusd.org/Page/78546>
 - o Items that can be found on my website



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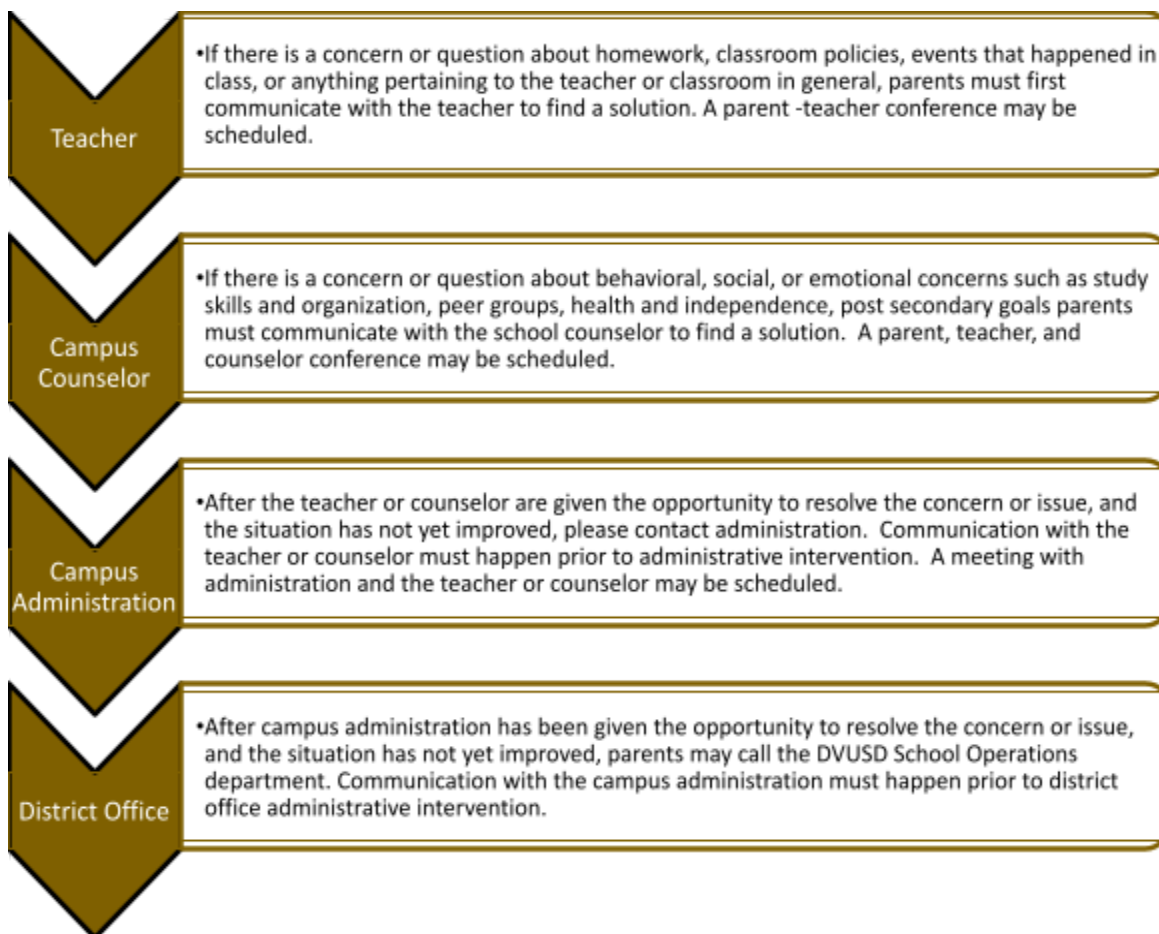
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- The links to Canvas, Powerschools, any Parent Information Forms, and the classroom Amazon Wish List.
- Any student supply lists, copies of my syllabus and expectancy sheet.
- Contact information
 - I will communicate primarily via email or Blackboard messaging.

Please schedule specific times to meet with me, as we need time to communicate effectively. I often have professional duties directly before and after school hours. Please understand that I will not be able to meet or discuss issues while I am teaching or supervising students. However, I will contact you as soon as I can.



Union Park has implemented email office hours and a “curfew” to ensure that we maintain a healthy work-life balance. I will respond to emails Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 8:30am and again from 3:30-5:00pm.



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- teresa.sanders@dvusd.org
- Room# 422
- o I will communicate with students via Canvas. All student messages and coursework can be found in the Canvas course.
- o Parents, the best way to contact me is via email and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours during the times listed above. If for some reason I don't respond to you within that window please reach out to me again as it may have gone to spam and I missed it.

HOMEWORK & GRADES

- Research provides strong evidence that, when used appropriately, homework is essential for increasing and reinforcing student learning and achievement for course standards. Homework may be differentiated to meet the needs of our varied learners. The intent of homework is to practice, extend learning, and provide opportunities for students to develop critical, independent study skills and self-discipline for their life-long educational journeys.
- Grades are a reporting tool utilized to reflect what a student knows and is able to do in a content area. We measure achievement, not effort or behavior, in our grading system.
- Grades will be equitable, accurate, specific, consistent.
- A student's grade should reflect academic learning and should never be used as a punitive tool.
- Grades are for reporting the status of academic learning, not behavioral conduct
- The primary purpose of assessment and grading is to provide detailed feedback to inform and support student learning.
- Learning is a process that takes place over time and at different speeds for different students.
- PowerSchool is an essential resource for parents and students. It is not only a tool for communication regarding grades, it is a resource for our students and parents to check progress, missing work, and what is being taught/learned regularly. Please ensure that you and your child have access (separate accounts) and even sign up for the app and push notifications or weekly email updates as an option in PowerSchool.

***Union Park School was one of the ten schools in DVUSD who piloted the new grading system during the 2021-2022 school year. We will continue with a Standards Based Mindset while grading for the 2023-2024 school year with the revised Transition Plan as directed by the DVUSD Governing Board. Additional information regarding district grading guidelines can be found [here](https://dvusd.org/grading). (dvusd.org/grading)



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Highly Proficient A 100%–90%			Proficient B 89%–80%		Proficient C 79%–70%	
100–97	96–94	93–90	89–85	84–80	79–75	74–70
All 4's on standards	All 4's except for one 3	Mostly 4's with some 3's and/or 2's	Mostly 3's with some 4's All 3's on standards	Mostly 3's and 4's with a 2	Mostly 3's with some 2's	Mostly 2's with 3's and/or 4's
Partially Proficient D 69%–60%			Minimally Proficient F 59%–50%			
69–65		64–60	59–56		55–50	
Mostly 2's and 3's with a 1		All 2's on standards	Mostly 2's and some 1's		All 1's on standards	
No Evidence						
49% – 0%						

WHY STANDARDS BASED MINDSET?:

Parents:

- Progress reports are less mysterious and have more meaning
- Parents are aware of exactly what their child knows, is able to do, and next steps for progress
- Parents know in what areas their child needs more support
- Parents are empowered to increase their child's confidence and help their student set goals

Students:

- Learning targets are clearly defined and aligned with state standards.
- Students are offered multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency
- Students monitor their own progress toward the achievement of specified targets
- Specific feedback on progress helps build self-esteem, pride, and motivation

Teachers:

- Teachers know exactly where students stand in their progress toward learning targets and what support needs to be provided
- Teachers of the same courses have aligned expectations and standards
- Assessment results help teachers determine when students need extra help and when they need more challenging work

PROCEDURES FOR RE-ASSESSMENTS AND LATE WORK

- Students needing extra help will receive it from their teacher during Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in class.
- Students choosing not to complete work, but who are able to do so, will complete work with support during Toro Time.



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- In order to accurately reflect a student's academic performance level, teachers will accept late work and missing work for full credit if the work is submitted within the timeframe and procedures developed by the school and before the end of the grading period.
 - *7th & 8th: A 49% or "F" will be entered in the gradebook until the work is submitted. A notation of "M" for missing or "L" for late work will also be denoted in the gradebook.*
 - *7th & 8th grade grading windows will be reflective of a unit of study.*

Students will still be responsible for turning in late work in addition to their current coursework, which results in the natural consequence of a heavier workload. The primary consequence for students not completing the work is to complete the work.

Students may request up to two retakes of any tests. Test make-ups must be scheduled with the teacher at student request. Retakes can be scheduled with me *before or after school Tuesday or Thursday*. Students may opt to use recess time to redo or make-up a test. All make-up or re-attempts must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. If none of these options work for a student they may contact me to coordinate retaking the test during Toro Time.

Late work will be accepted up to **10 school days** after a Unit of Study Concludes, at which point the modules will close and students will no longer be able to turn in late assignments.

Gradebooks officially close 1 week prior to the end of the quarter, these deadlines are not flexible and late work will not be accepted for credit after the quarterly deadline.

- *Learning is a journey that is often not linear. Some students learn content and skills quickly while others may require more time or feedback in order to learn. The primary objective of grades is to report where a student is in the learning process, regardless of how much time or effort the student needs to get there.*
- Students will be afforded extra time for learning; however, there is an ending point for each course in which final reports on a student's learning must be conveyed.
- Final assessments or end of term capstone projects and performance assessments will not be eligible for retakes.
- Assessments/assignments may be in an alternate format for reassessment.
- Students are required to show evidence of learning and applying the teacher's feedback in order to earn a reassessment opportunity. This includes completing any missing assignments for a unit of study in order to be eligible to retake the assessment for that unit.

STUDENTS ROLE IN LEARNING

Students become self-directed in learning about themselves as a learner. They have to analyze their own study habits to figure out what actually works for them, this helps students retain knowledge.

- Missing or Incomplete formative assignments will be identified as a 49% and be indicated as missing in the grade book. I will not input 49% in the gradebook for any other reason.
- Retakes must be student initiated; parents should acknowledge awareness of retake. Reassessments will be permitted following proof of practice and relearning, per teacher discretion.
- Retakes and late work must be submitted within **10 school days** of receiving assessment scores.
- **No "extra credit" will be given at any time.**



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TORO TIME

Toro Time is a before or after school opportunity for students to maximize their potential success. Learning and completing work at Union Park is required. Toro Time is offered to all students who have not shown proficiency in their current learning progressions or classwork. Toro time will be assigned to students to attend for extra help, assistance, or when a student needs to complete his/her work. Without completing their work, it is hard to know if a student is progressing towards mastering the standards we are teaching in class. We ask for parent support and cooperation in transporting students to or from their assigned Toro Time so that they are not falling behind or simply given the opportunity to opt out of their work.

GRADE BOOK

Grades will be a combination of coursework that has been assigned as well as any class assessments. They will all follow applicable tiers for the standard being assessed. Grades at Union Park will not represent behaviors, such as turning in work on time or choosing not to do it at all (which is no longer acceptable). We focus on quality rather than completion and proficiency versus behavioral attributes for work completion. However, students will be held accountable for appropriate academic behaviors. Therefore, missing work will need to be made up in a timely manner (See Toro Time).

Using the grading scales shared earlier, checking PowerSchool regularly, and consistently communicating with teachers are all ways to understand how your child(ren) is progressing and learning each skill and standard required at their grade level.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLC's)

Most Fridays, students will be released early so that we are able to participate in PLC work. This work is directly related to the planning, instruction and interventions we implement in our classrooms to ensure that students master the standards.

Role of PLC

A professional learning community is a group of educators that meet regularly and work Collaboratively to improve teaching practices and the achievement of students. The questions that drive the work of PLC's are:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- How will we respond if some students do not learn?
- How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

PLC Teams are responsible for collaborating to establish general consistency among the following:

- Assignments, presentations, products, observations and assessments used to determine a student's level of performance in relation to grade-level standards.
- The method and schedule for additional learning opportunities.
- Due dates, deadlines, and procedures for reassessment.
- Create opportunities for common scoring of assessments.



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STANDARDS FOR EACH QUARTER

- We will be following the updated Arizona State Science Standards this year. There are learning progressions for each standard, which is the work that takes place, allowing for the necessary learning before each standard is assessed. Learning progressions are an accumulation of prerequisite skills. As students master learning progressions, they demonstrate a positive trajectory toward overall standard mastery. “A learning progression is a model of successfully more sophisticated ways of thinking about a topic typically demonstrated by children as they learn, from naive to expert.” -National Research Council (2007)

Quarterly Standards of Focus:

1st Quarter

- 8.E1U1.6 Analyze and interpret data about the Earth’s geological column to communicate relative ages of rock layers and fossils.
- 8.L3U1.9 Construct an explanation of how genetic variations occur in offspring through the inheritance of traits or through mutations.
- 8.L4U1.11 Develop and use a model to explain how natural selection may lead to increases and decreases of specific traits in populations over time
- 8.L4U1.12 Gather and communicate evidence on how the process of natural selection provides an explanation of how new species can evolve.

2nd Quarter

- 8.L3U3.10 Communicate how advancements in technology have furthered the field of genetic research and use evidence to support an argument about the positive and negative effects of genetic research on human lives.
- 8.E1U3.7 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about data and historical patterns to predict natural hazards and other geological events.
- 8.P1U1.1 Develop and use a model to demonstrate that atoms and molecules can be combined or rearranged in chemical reactions to form new compounds with the total number of each type of atom conserved.
- 8.P1U1.2 Obtain and evaluate information regarding how scientists identify substances based on unique physical and chemical properties.

3rd Quarter

- 8.P4U1.3 Construct an explanation on how energy can be transferred from one energy store to another.
- 8.P4U2.5 Develop a solution to increase efficiency when transferring energy from one source to another.
- 8.P4U1.4 Develop and use mathematical models to explain wave characteristics and interactions.
- 8.E1U3.8 Construct and support an argument about how human consumption of limited resources impacts the biosphere.

4th Quarter

- 4th Quarter will be cumulative in nature and students will revisit their learning from the course of the year to revisit each standard as they explore the requirements of colonizing Mars