

## What's up at WSMR: Schools look forward to successful year

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WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE - As the new school year begins, parents may be faced with the stresses of worrying if their children have the proper tools to succeed this school year.

"I think what makes a successful student is that common belief that they can obtain their personal best through a good support system. Parents hold the key to that support system," said White Sands Schools assistant principal Kathy Vigil.

The staff at White Sands Schools want to remind parents that although school is a major tool in helping their children succeed, it should not be the only one. It is essential for parents to participate in their child's school life for them to excel in any field, Vigil said.

Principal Tom Bulger and Vigil agree it is much more difficult for a child to succeed without the support of a parent.

"The more support a child receives, the greater the child understands the importance of education," Bulger said.

Parents are now able to access their child's grades through an online program called Teacher Ease. Not only can parents view their child's grades, they can also view every assignment that has been turned in and any that are still pending. The program also allows parents to send an electronic message to their child's teacher and receive a response through the same program. Parents will receive an e-mail from their child's teacher asking them to establish an account to allow online access into the program at the start of the school year.

The school has also implemented a new reading program titled "Reading Street" by Scott Foresman. The program is a comprehensive language arts program that will be in place for the next six years and will cover the entire language art spectrum.

"We're committed that all students are successful regardless of ability," Bulger said. "We'll work really hard to ensure that takes place."

Aside from academics, bullying has become of major concern for parents within the last couple of years. The Las Cruces Public School District's policy is zero tolerance for bullying and encourages students to report any and all incidents. Vigil said good communication at home also makes it easier for students to address any issues they have to a trusted adult.

"Inappropriate behavior by a student or an adult will be taken seriously and we want all of our students to know that it is OK to bring information forward," Vigil added.

Symptoms common in children being bullied include change in sleep patterns, stomach aches and not wanting to attend school. Part of the school's prevention program includes a learning curriculum called "Strong Kids," which is designed to teach social and emotional skills, strengthen assets and increase coping skills.

"We can address and solve problems if we are aware of them," Bulger said. "We want families to know that students can feel safe when they report something to me or to their teacher, counselor or assistant principal."

To enforce good character and academics on WSMR students, sports will not be played competitively until both are fulfilled. A student must maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average and abide by the school's codes of conduct to participate in school sports.

School counselor Sherry Ganuelas said she is prepared to work collaboratively with students and parents to achieve a student's continual growth. In doing so, Ganuelas will present her students with the "Six Pillars of Character Counts." The pillars include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship, and are meant to promote social responsibility. Ganuelas said students will also be looking at the district codes and conduct policy to make certain students grasp the concept of the policy.

"We look forward to working with the community, parents and staff to create a fun and safe learning environment for all of our kids," Ganuelas said.

*Adriana Salas is a reporter for the Missile Ranger at White Sands Missile Range.*