

Administration

Greetings Silver Sands Sidewinders

Welcome to Silver Sands Montessori Charter School! We are delighted that you are a part of our community. From our kindergarteners to our eighth graders, SSMCS is committed to providing a positive environment for all children and their families. We can't wait to see all our returning families, new families, and incoming Kindergarteners on Monday, August 24th **virtually**.

Back to School time is always a time of excitement and change, yet with that comes anxiety and nervousness for many children. We recognize that this year there may be even more anxiousness than usual. We will do our best to ensure the transition to virtual learning be as seamless as possible and to ensure that each child feels loved, respected and safe. A Montessori learning environment is like no other ... our main objective at Silver Sands is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating virtual and school environment which will help children to develop within themselves the habits, attitudes, skills and ideas essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. Respect and courtesy at SSMCS is the foundation for everything we do.

We are so excited that you have chosen Montessori education for your family. In today's crowded world of power struggles and ego trips, the Montessori Method serves as a guide to raising unselfish, self-regulated, caring human beings who are problem solvers and have the self-confidence to lead successful lives by their own efforts, rather than at the expense of their fellow citizens. The world needs as many people with these qualities as possible. The world needs Montessori.

Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori school of thought, firmly believed that children have incredibly absorbent minds, assimilating all that they see, hear, and experience. By thoughtfully planning the classroom environment, either virtually or in person, in which children live and learn, the Montessori Method provides the positive experiences you as parents, and SSMCS want our children to have in order to grow up with healthy minds, healthy attitudes and healthy life strategies. By choosing Silver Sands Montessori, you think, as do we, that it's important for your child to...

Be vibrantly inquisitive about new things
Enjoy the process of learning
Acquire fine motor skills
Develop an analytical mind
Work independently
Work without disturbing others
Work well with others

Be able to focus his/her mind on the task at hand
Respect others
Respect his/her own mind and abilities
Feel purposeful and valuable
Derive satisfaction from achievements
Become an independent, confident adult

We strive to continue to provide a system of education that denotes itself to creating a safe, positive atmosphere in which children can learn, grow, achieve, succeed, and come to respect themselves and others whether it be online in our ZOOM or Google meet ups or in person.

We are so excited about this new school year and welcome your involvement. Please feel free to contact any of us by email or phone.

Sincerely,

Ms. Denise, Principal, ms.denise@silversandsmcs.org

Ms. Marlo, Head of School/Director of Finance, ms.marlo@silversandsmcs.org

Ms. Danette, Director of Operations, ms.danette@silversandsmcs.org

Ms. Kim Hodge, Director of Special Programs, ms.kim@silversandsmcs.org

Upper Elementary

Welcome to Upper Elementary Families-the Distant Learning Edition!

We are so excited to begin this adventure with you! Please join us **Thursday, August 20th from 3:00pm - 4:00pm for a virtual Meet and Greet** and an opportunity to answer any question you may have. The link to join this will be emailed to you. Until we have the chance to visit virtually, please read a little about us, your upper elementary team!

Ms. Kim, Lead Rattlesnake (ms.kim_k@silversandsmcs.org):

Hello Family and Friends, I would like to warmly introduce myself to all of you. My name is Ms. Kim and I am so excited to be the teacher in Upper Elementary. I will be working closely with Ms. Mara and Mr. Dennis to ensure a wonderful year for everyone.

I grew up in an Air Force family and have lived and traveled all over the world, including Europe, Asia, Central America, the Middle East and Canada. It's so fun to share my international experiences with my students and feel like I relive each trip when I do. If I could live anywhere in the world, I would have to choose either Japan or Costa Rica. It's a big world out there!

I moved to Las Vegas in 2002 after I graduated from the University of Alaska. I have taught grades ranging from 4th - 12th and come with many years of teaching experience. In my free time, I love spending time with my family and Giant Schnauzer, Echo. We enjoy spending our time camping, hiking and fishing. Secret fact: I'm a master angler and was a deckhand on a fishing boat in Alaska.

I can't wait to meet all of you and look forward to seeing you all soon.

Ms. Mara, Lead Scorpion (ms.mara@silversandsmcs.org):

Hi! My name is Ms. Mara and I am so excited to be starting my 6th year here at Silver Sands in Upper El! I'm originally from Montreal, Quebec and this is my 11th year teaching. I hold a master's degree in teaching and a Montessori certification for nine to twelve year olds. I've taught Kinder, 2nd Grade, and Middle School, but my heart belongs to Upper Elementary. In my free time, I love to spend time with family, who mean the world to me. I love to read! I could read books all day!! I also love to make things -- just to be creative.

I'm really excited to be here with all of you!

Mr. Dennis, Support Rattlesnake/Scorpion (mr.dennis@silversandsmcs.org):

I am originally from Minnesota and had a 20-year career in consumer software before becoming a teacher. I took my Montessori training in Northern California and taught in Oakland, CA for 10 years. I hold a Montessori teaching certificate, am a certified ESL teacher, and hold a Nevada substitute teaching license. I have been with SSMCS since 2014 at both the Kindergarten and Lower Elementary level. I greatly look forward to working with the children, and meeting all of our families this new school year.

Fun fact: I was an elected city council official in Minnesota.

Favorite Spot in Las Vegas: Desert Willow Golf Course

We hope you are excited for this year and we can't wait to catch up with you! We are already so proud of you!!

Thank you kindly,
The Upper El Team

SSMCS Distance Learning FAQs 2020-2021: Upper Elementary

- 1. Will there be an Open House Night?** Yes, SSMCS will hold a virtual Meet and Greet on Thursday from 3:00 - 4:00 where families will be able to see classrooms and meet their teachers.
- 2. What to expect on the first day?** A lot of fun! We will start to get to know each other in video chats that will also inform you of our virtual classroom expectations - basically, we'll meet our new friends and learn about what it means to be in Upper EI!!
- 3. What will the school-day look like?** As we try our best to uphold our usual classroom routines and experiences, the school day will be organized to include scheduled, consistent times for live video lessons and demonstrations from the classroom. Both classrooms will follow the same schedule. At this time, our schedule will have 3 set blocks for zoom instruction (beginning, mid-day, and end of school day). All UE teachers will hold daily office hours prior to our first video conference of the day. Teachers will be available for one/ones, small groups and parent/student questions between the scheduled zooms.

On Wednesdays, students will not have the regularly scheduled lessons. Instead, all can use this time to work independently, conference with teachers for further needs and guidance; basically, to have a day to focus on assignments without a rigorous virtual schedule. The only video item on this day is a "Social Hour" to be held in the afternoon. During this, teachers and classes will just spend time together having fun.

We will end each week (Friday afternoons) with a virtual class meeting to check-in about what went well in the week, what was tough, and answer any burning questions anyone may have about the work before we head off for the weekend.

- 4. Will the teachers hold office hours?** Yes, the upper elementary teachers will hold the same office hours, from 8:30 - 9:00 AM M-F. If you are unable to meet during these times, please feel free to email your teacher with any questions or concerns.
- 5. Will there be packets and what will be in them?** Yes, there will be packets and they may offer different or additional items / materials as lessons progress (so each week will not be exactly the same). Essentially however, packets will include the following:
 - Math-U-See work / Math Command Cards
 - VocabuLit
 - Words Their Way Spelling sorts
 - Scholastic Science Newspaper
 - Scholastic History Newspaper / Scholastic News
 - Junior Great Reading work
 - Math HW packet and Reading Log
- 6. Will students still work through programs like M-U-S at their own pace?** Yes, Math, Reading, and Spelling will be assessed to form small groups. We will do these a little differently as we'll be online. Please expect to receive a M-U-S assessment, for example, prior to beginning school. Reading and spelling assessments will happen online in a whole group. We will work to our best efforts to maintain this important academic feature.
- 7. Will there be a day to pick up and drop off?** Yes, Upper EI students will have a specific day to pick up new packets and drop off prior week's work. Details to be determined shortly.
- 8. What if I can't be there to pick up or drop off on the day assigned to UE?** Please discuss your needs with your child's classroom teacher.
- 9. Will there be a supply list?** Yes, a list of items pertinent to home and our classroom work will be delivered to families in time for the first day and these are to be kept at home.

- 10. Will there be paper and online work?** Yes, there will be both but at the start of the year, as we ease into virtual learning, we will predominantly work on paper-delivered packets. The many works in these packets (Scholastic, Jr. Great..) have virtual access but, as we do not want to be overwhelmed with too many logins/passwords, we will keep things simple (paper packets) now.
- 11. Will there be all of the specials?** Yes! Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Alessandra will still teach Art and Music and Mr. Dennis will instruct PE, Spanish, Gardening/Botany, and Library.
- 12. How will Library work?** We really just want to make sure our UE students are reading. Whether this is virtually through programs like RAZkids or with a book they have available to them at home, the students will be asked to read for the time allotted in the special (40 min.). More info will come from your teachers as the year progresses.
- 13. Will there be homework?** Yes. Students will receive an additional math lesson introducing the homework at the beginning of the week. They will return HW to the school when they pick up the next week's packet. Math HW provides essential SBAC practice all year long.

Additionally, students will receive a weekly reading log. They are highly encouraged to read at least 20 minutes daily. They must fill out the log, have a parent sign, and return it to school when they pick up the next week's packet.

*Please know that homework will not be assigned immediately. We anticipate starting to collect and deliver homework about the 3rd week of school.

- 14. Will the classrooms have support teachers?** One special facet to our distance learning program is the fact that we not only continue to have a support teacher, but both classes will have the same support! This will give great continuity to our department and offer essential collaboration opportunities among us, to provide an optimal educational experience for your student. We are especially delighted to not only provide consistency & excellence, but also comfort as your student may have worked with our wonderful support, Mr. Dennis, in Lower El.
- 15. What are the email addresses of the upper elementary teachers?**
Kimberly Kirner <ms.kim_k@silversandsmcs.org> - Rattlesnakes
Mara Tattner <ms.mara@silversandsmcs.org> - Scorpions
Dennis Burke <mr.dennis@silversandsmcs.org> - Support Teacher

- 16. How will attendance be taken?** Attendance will be taken directly in Infinite Campus and parents, you will have the ability to check your student in. You can do this by logging into Infinite Campus and clicking a simple box. If this sounds stressful (as yet one more thing to do in an already busy day) please don't worry -- teachers will have their usual capability of taking attendance in Infinite Campus. We will use student participation in zooms and on Google Classroom to justify the "present". More information will be provided to you shortly. If you have any concerns, please contact us through email.
- 17. How will parents communicate with the teacher? With the students?** Communication between home and school can increase your child's interest and achievement in learning. The three of us will work closely with one another to ensure that all of our students feel safe and are given the optimal environment in which to succeed. If you have questions and/or concerns as the year gets underway, please contact any one of us. The most efficient way to reach us is via email or Google Classroom. We will try to respond within 24 hours. Our schedule has office hours to meet with parents and/or students at the beginning of the school day via Zoom. Forms with the opportunity to update your correct email addresses and phone numbers will be coming home to you soon (before the school year starts). If you share custody of a 4th/ 5th grader, please help us by ensuring your most recent contact information and that both custodial parents are listed on that form. Thank you!

Elementary Specials

Music and Art

We are excited to start another school year with you. Even though things will be different this year we look forward to catching up with all of our students and getting to know the new ones. Going into this school year, music and art classes are being taught virtually, just as if we were in the building.

We know the arts offer students many opportunities for self-expression, creative problem solving, and an outlet during stressful times. As we are making plans for this school year, these things are at the forefront of our minds. Our planned lessons reflect this and we can't wait to see what our students create.

Sincerely,

Ms. Alessandra and Ms. Rebecca



Ms. Alessandra teaches music. This is her 4th year teaching at Silver Sands. She received a Bachelor of Music Education with an emphasis in Spanish from the University of Northern Colorado. When not playing the piano or oboe, she enjoys reading, traveling (though not this year), and spending time with her husband and little daughter.

Ms. Rebecca teaches visual art. She has been with Silver Sands as a teacher for the past three years and part of the SSMCS family since 2015. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from UNLV with her area of study in Landscape Architecture. Ms. Rebecca enjoys painting, crafting, and camping with her husband and daughters.

