



**DESANA MIDDLE SCHOOL
DRAGON DIGEST**

AUGUST 2016

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1





Principal's Letter

Dear DeSana Parents & Students,

Many of you have asked me over these first few weeks of school, "How has the opening of DeSana gone?" or "How are things going?". From my perspective, what a *fabulous* first 12 days of school we have had in launching our grand adventure here at DeSana!! From our school wide photo with our students and staff forming a D on our football field; to seeing a *sea of lime green* in the hallways as all of our students and staff proudly displayed their new Dragon spirit wear; to our first Dragon football game played under the lights at SFHS stadium; to our first 8th grade field trip; to our school wide assembly for our time capsule project where each Dragon Time presented their items to be buried on our grounds, and the actual burial of the time capsules (which will be dug up when each class graduates from high school!!); to some exciting teaching and learning going on in the classrooms . . . our students have been involved in many exciting activities and events at the start of this school year!

And speaking of students . . . let me tell you just how impressed I am with our young Dragons!! They have begun this new adventure in an eager and enthusiastic manner, all the while excited about their new classes, their new building, and their new friends. They have quickly learned their way around the building . . . quickly focused and settled into their routines . . . and dealt with some "hiccups in opening a new facility" along the way in a very positive manner. I couldn't be more proud of a group of middle schoolers!!

Throughout these past two weeks I have heard many a comment from our DeSana staff --- 63 highly professional and *awesome* teachers and support personnel --- about just how impressive, polite and sweet our young Dragons are. And I couldn't agree more! From my observations,

Upcoming Events

**Fundraiser Orders
Due 8/24/16**

**Curriculum Night
8/25/16**

**First Home Football
Game 8/30/16**

**Coffee &
Conversations
Fall 2016**

Join Our Mailing List!



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our 686 students --- 252 sixth graders, 266 seventh graders, and 168 eighth graders --- have quickly engaged in their studies as our teachers have wasted little very little time in getting about the business of teaching and learning here at DeSana. And while we still have a bit more settling in to do as our buses get into a more normal routine and begin arriving and departing on time, and we get the climate control of our building worked out, and we begin to roll out our clubs and new events and activities in the weeks ahead, we are VERY pleased with the opening of DeSana and the start to this 2016-2017 school year!

There are several activities and events on the horizon that you will want to mark on your calendars. **Curriculum Night** for all three grade levels will be held on next **Thursday, August 25th from 6:00 - 8:00 PM**. Hopefully by now, you have received an eFlyer from us about it, or seen information about this important evening on our DeSana website and/or Face Book page. Our first **Football Spirit Week is Wednesday, August 24th thru Tuesday, August 30th**, with a pep session on the afternoon (3:00ish) of August 30th. And our first home football game played on our Dragon Football Field will be **Tuesday, August 30th at 5:30** against the Bulldogs of Otwell. Students will be allowed to stay after school and attend the game with a signed parent permission form and money for admission. More information to come soon! On **August 31st**, FCS will have their first **Early Release Day**, and our middle school students will be **released at 1:30**. Then on **Friday, September 2nd**, all students will bring home their **4 ½ week Progress Reports** that will give you (and our young Dragons!) an idea of how they have started off this school year in all their classes.

As we begin to roll out our different clubs over the next several weeks, we *truly* hope *all* of our young Dragons will find a club or an activity to get involved in as there will be several, several opportunities that are offered at DeSana! Parents, please check out our DeSana Calendar of Events on our DeSana website --- the Home page, in the bottom left-hand corner --- for ALL activities and events for this school year. We will keep it up to date! And don't forget to follow all of the latest and greatest DeSana happenings on our DeSana web site, Face Book page, and on Twitter @DeSanaMiddle.

Parents, I want to say a BIG thank you for all that you have done to help your young Dragon have a *wonderful* start to this new school year! *Thank you* for bringing your child to our Walkabouts! *Thank you* for joining us for our Open House! *Thank you* for attending our Dragon football games and helping to cheer on our student-athletes! *Thank you* for supporting our teachers and staff in so many ways these past two+ weeks! Please know that we truly want and value your involvement and support here at DeSana! Even if your young Dragon may tell you otherwise, *we want and need your support and involvement* in every facet of our school life at DeSana!

So with more than an *awesome start* under our belt . . . here's to an incredible adventure during this school year --- one filled with much excitement . . . much hope . . . and much promise for many opportunities for high-level learning and growing in so many different ways!

Browns Bridge Church

Chick-Fil-A at The Collection

Dr. Hom Pediatric Dentistry & Alpharetta Comprehensive Dentistry

Dunkin' Donuts@ Highway 9& McFarland

RBM of Alpharetta

With warmest wishes for an outstanding year,

Terri C. North
Principal

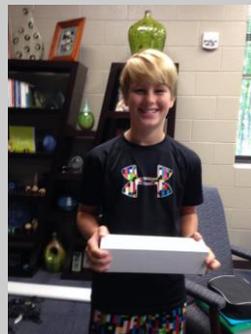
PTSA

The DeSana PTSA would like to welcome you to an exciting first year at DeSana Middle School. There is still time to join the PTSA. Please send in the PTSA forms that you found in your Open House Packets. The PTSA is here to support the children and teachers at DeSana Middle School. We are working to be able to provide mini grants for our teachers and activities for our children, including Dragon Day of Good Deeds (D3 Day). We can not do it without your support. If you can not make a monetary donation, please still send in your forms and we will add you to our contact list. The Fundraiser is in full swing. Please help us out by selling the magazines, tumblers, and cookie dough. The Fundraiser will run until Wednesday August 24th. Please have your children turn in any forms to the PTSA table on the 24th. Thank you for helping! We can't do it without YOU!

Dawn Bourg
DeSana PTSA President

Congratulations!

Aiden R. won the Apple Watch in a raffle for all students who e-mailed at least 12 people for the DeSana PTSA Fundraiser. Still many great prizes to come!



Academics



Important Documents Sent Home with Students ----- On Monday, **August 8th**, students were asked to take home several (six, to be exact) important documents to review with their parents, and to have their parent and the student sign off on some of these documents and return to their Dragon Time teacher. These documents are required by Georgia law or Forsyth County Schools' policy. They include:

1. **FCS 2016-2017 Code of Conduct**
2. **DeSana's Student/Parent Handbook**
3. **DeSana 2016-2017 Club Flyer**
4. **Responsible Use Guidelines for FCS's Community / BYOT Protocol for Use and Permission Form**
5. **2016-2017 Parent Permission Form and Student & Parent Signatures Sheet**
6. **Parent Occupational Survey**

Students **MUST** bring back to their Dragon Time teacher **#4, #5** and **#6** as soon as possible. We also need parents to complete their child's **Check In / Check Out Card**, which you received in your Student/Parent Information Packet distributed at Open House or on the first day of school, and return it to your child's Dragon Time teacher ASAP. Thank you for your help and support in getting these important documents completed and turned-in in a timely manner!

!! Curriculum Night at DeSana !!
August 25, 2016
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Curriculum Night at DeSana will be a special event you won't want to miss! Our goal for this evening is to provide you an opportunity to meet and greet your son's/daughter's teachers as you follow your child's schedule for the evening, and to hear a brief overview of what your child has to look forward to in each class this year, all the while working to get everyone back home at a reasonable time. We hope you will join us for this evening! Your presence at this event sends a very powerful and lasting message to your middle schooler that his/her education is very important and will be a priority in your family. Thank you for making it a priority!

The first part of the evening will take place in our gym. During this session, you will hear a welcome from Ms. North, the principal, to be followed by a brief PTSA meeting, introduction of our wonderful DeSana staff, and brief introductions of our DeSana Business Partners thus far. After this opening session, you will locate and travel to your child's 1st period teacher (***Don't worry if you don't remember who that is as***

we will have an ALPHA list of students at the entrance to the school and at the head of each grade level hallway on which you can locate your child and his/her 1st period teacher and room number). When you get to your child's first period class, you will receive a copy of your child's class schedule for you to follow the rest of the evening.

Please remember that Curriculum Night is not a conference night, but our teachers will be glad to answer any questions regarding your student as soon as possible by phone or e-mail. Just let them know you want to talk at a later date.

Our ESOL parents will attend a special session with ESOL teachers Roxana Perez, Audrey Chang and Phyllis Lindsey from 6:00 - 6:30 in the media center, as they go over information pertinent to our ESOL program. They will describe the ESOL program and will inform parents of the resources that are available to ESOL students, both during the school day and outside of school. From 6:30 to 8:00, our ESOL parents will follow their child's schedule, attending each class, each period. During 3rd Period Literacy Time, Ms. Perez and Ms. Chang will be available to help ESOL parents with information about *itslearning* and Parent Portal.

Curriculum Night Schedule

6:00 - 6:30 p.m.

We will begin the evening in the gym, with a welcome from Terri North, Principal, a brief PTSA meeting to follow, an introduction of our *fabulous* DeSana staff, and then a brief introduction of our DeSana Business Partners thus far.

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Follow your child's schedule to get a "snapshot" of "a day in the life of your middle schooler". You will follow your student's 7-period day in the order of his/her daily classes. Please see the schedule below.

You will meet in each teacher's room for approximately 8 minutes. Each teacher will give a general overview of the *Georgia Standards of Excellence* or the *Georgia Performance Standards* for their class, instructional strategies planned, and types of assessments students can expect in each class. In addition, each teacher may discuss their classroom daily routine, show examples of student work, or have you participate in a learning activity. There will be approximately 3 minutes between classes for you to travel to your next class. We will announce the beginning and the end of each class over the intercom.

Time Schedule

6:30 - 6:45	Transition from the Gym to 1st Period Class, Get
6:45 - 6:48	Change
6:48 - 6:56	2nd Period
6:56 - 6:59	Change
6:59 - 7:07	3rd Period
7:07 - 7:10	Change
7:10- 7:18	4th Period
7:18 - 7:21	Change
7:21 - 7:29	5th Period
7:29 - 7:32	Change
7:32 - 7:40	6th Period
7:40 - 7:43	Change
7:43 - 7:51	7th Period
7:51 - 8:00	Thank You for Coming and Good Night!

Mark your calendar now.....in **LIME GREEN**.....and make plans to join us for this informative evening!!

Athletics

Are You Ready For Some Football??!!!! --- Our Dragon Football Team has been playing hard and with much Dragon Pride throughout their first two games of the season against South Middle and Piney Grove, but came up short in the W column! Our **next game is Tuesday, August 23rd** against the Patriots of Liberty. We hope you will make the trek and come help cheer on our Dragons!



Be sure and mark your calendars for the first reaal home game of this season as our Dragons play on our **own** home field against the Otwell Bulldogs on **Tuesday, August 30th**. We want to christen our new field with a BIG W, so we need all our Dragon fans to be there, sporting your DeSana spirit wear and colors, and making some noise to help cheer our Dragons to a VICTORY!! Admission to games is \$3.00 for students and \$5.00 for adults. Students may stay after school and be supervised by administrators and teachers until game time. They must have a permission form signed by their parent to do so. Permission forms will be on our DeSana website, under Athletics, by next Wednesday, and available in Dragon Time classrooms, as well as in the front office. So make your plans now to be at the DRAGON'S LAIR on Thursday, August 30th!!

We Have Spirit, Yes We Do!!! ----- The week leading up to our home game against Otwell will give all of our young Dragons a chance to show their school spirit and pride as our DeSana Cheerleaders sponsor DRAGON FOOTBALL SPIRIT WEEK. Here's the game plan:

- **Wednesday** **August 24th** **Tie Dye / Neon Colors Day (How bright can you be??)**
- **Thursday** **August 25th** **Jersey Day (college or professional) (Of course, it should be a Duke one!)**
- **Friday** **August 26th** **Hat Day (Yes, you get to wear a hat inside the building!)**
- **Monday** **August 29th** **Twin Day (Or triplet or quadruplet day!)**
- **Tuesday** **August 30th** **Spirit Day (Sport your navy, green and gray!)**

And on Tuesday, the 30th, we will have a Pep Session from 3:00-4:00ish to get our Dragon Football Team pumped and ready to breathe fire against the Bulldogs!!! So start your wardrobe planning now!! And stay calm and show your Dragon Spirit!!

The Arts

Band Instrument Rental Night --- Band Director, Mike Mitchell, will host a Band Instrument Rental Night, with a variety of vendors present, on this Friday, August 19th from 5:00 - 8:00 PM in the Band Room. Parents of Band students, especially 6th grade Band students, add this to your calendar now and make plans to be here!





Activities

Ms. North's Photography Club! --- Clubs at DeSana will begin rolling out soon, and one of those to start right after Labor Day is Ms. North's Photography Club! Ms. North is looking for *photography enthusiasts* --- those who already know something about taking digital photographs and want to improve and those who don't know a thing but are excited about learning! The first club meeting will be on Thursday, September 8th from 8:00 - 8:45 in the media center. Students should come to the front office before that morning to get a pass to attend the meeting on the 8th. There will be 11 club meetings from September 8th until right before the Winter Break, six Saturday Photo Expeditions to places around the metro area (Think Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Zoo Atlanta, Waterfall Trekking in the North GA Mountains, Pooles Mill Bridge in North Forsyth, and some other fun and photographic spots!), which are all family affairs, and a culminating Photography Exhibition in mid-December! Mark your calendars with this date if you are interested in being a member of the DeSana Photography Club and stay tuned to morning announcements for more info about the first meeting! A packet of information, outlining all club meetings, photo expeditions, and information about the Photography Exhibition will be given out at this first meeting. Ms. North looks forward to seeing all the DeSana *photography enthusiasts* on the 8th!!



Altruistic Endeavors

The Importance of Altruistic Endeavors at DeSana --- At DeSana, Altruistic Endeavors is one of the five key facets of our overall program. It

is one of our core values, so to speak. We want our young Dragons to not only know what it is like to give back to their wonderful community and others, but to also experience it firsthand. Through many different DeSana service clubs, school wide charitable endeavors, and our first DeSana Day of Good Deeds (or D3 Day, for short!) in the spring, we will work to provide our students with a variety of community service opportunities throughout the year in school, in our local community, and in different parts of our country and the world.

So why encourage our young Dragons to get involved in community service? Well, first and foremost, it is the right thing to do; to learn to give freely and happily of one's time and talents and heart to help others, expecting nothing in return! But here are a few other reasons to consider encouraging your child to get involved in community service:

- To help someone in need.
- Those who give of themselves and their resources, and help others, say they feel they receive a great feeling in return.
- Helping others can expand your world and help you to better understand what is happening in your community.
- Meet new people and make new friends.
- To improve our world by caring for the environment.
- Giving back to one's community and others is an "added advantage" on your college resume.

Please check out opportunities for serving and helping others right here in the Dragon Digest, and for students, on morning announcements!



Other Important Information

Important Reminder About Free & Reduced Meal Applications--
- Parents, we encourage you to complete a Free and Reduced-Priced meal application on-line, if you have the need, at <http://schoolmealapp.forsyth.k12.ga.us>. The application is easy to complete and can be processed quickly, with results usually in one day. On-line applications also help cut down on meal charges because paper applications can take as long as 10 days to process. *A NEW Free & Reduced meal application must be completed each year **prior to September 15th**.* If you have any questions, please call Joe Sanders at 770-888-3473 extension 202427 or email at jsanders@forsyth.k12.ga.us.

SAFETY IS . . . And Always WILL BE . . . Our #1 PRIORITY At DeSana!

--- Please know that providing a safe and secure environment at DeSana for our students and staff is our #1 Priority Each and every day! We know that if our students do not feel safe, then learning cannot take place for our students. Forsyth County Schools and DeSana Middle School have many practices and procedures in place to help safeguard your child every minute of every day to, from and on campus. Detailed safety plans for all kinds of emergencies have been carefully planned, written, shared with staff, and put in place, and will be practiced frequently with our staff and students as we begin this school year. We will continue to practice these drills in an organized way, and as if they were the real thing, throughout the school year.

DeSana has a School Resource Officer (SRO), Deputy Stephen Lavin. He is on our campus on a regular basis, checking on things, talking to our students, and getting to know them. All middle schools in the district now have a front entrance with a "buzz-in" and intercom feature for entrance after students have entered for the morning. All visitors must come to this single door and be buzzed in by a front office secretary who has a wide view of the entire person and the surrounding area. Strict and technologically-sophisticated sign-in procedures for visitors, one they are buzzed in, are in place, and a driver's license is required to check out a student.

Some of DeSana's standard operating procedures are to have our head custodian check the entire facility and campus early each morning to look for any unusual objects. Phones are in every classroom, and administrators in constant communication with each other, our SRO, and the front office through radios, as well as with the school district's safety office via the use of cell phones. Our school phones come equipped with sophisticated technology that allows for tracing phone calls in the event of a bomb threat or other threatening phone calls.

Our FCS Code of Conduct prohibits students from wearing over-length, over-sized, and baggy clothing, including coats inside the building, so that weapons and other contraband are less likely to be hidden on students. The FCS Dress Code is enforced at DeSana.

All Forsyth County school buses are equipped with two-way radios so that they can be in constant communication with the transportation department and the school. They are also equipped with GPS so that bus locations may be tracked at all times.

Diligent supervision of our students by our entire staff, from the moment they step foot on campus until they leave, is a daily practice. Talking to our students about safety being a top priority, and letting them know that it is their responsibility also to let an adult know immediately if they see or hear something that could jeopardize this safety, is a practice we began the first week of school, and we will continue to preach throughout the school year. Rest assured any information of this nature that is shared with an administrator, counselor or teacher is held in strictest confidence.

These are just some of the practices and procedures we have in place. We hope you will spend some time with your middle schooler over

the next few days and throughout the year discussing the importance of all these safety procedures, and let him/her know that it is also your expectation that he/she take personal responsibility in reporting anything he/she sees or hears that could jeopardize the safety of any or all of our students and staff.

We encourage you, parents, that any time you have concerns about the safety or well-being of your child, you will not hesitate to call a DeSana administrator to discuss these concerns. We want Desana to be a place where all students, staff and parents feel safe and comfortable. But we need *everyone's help* to keep it that way throughout this school year. Thanking you in advance for your help and support when it comes to the safety of our children!