

September 2020

## Newsletter—Dexter Elementary School

### Principal's Corner

On behalf of our faculty and staff, I welcome our new families and all returning families to School Year 2020-2021. This year marks Dexter's 51st year of serving military-connected students. We are proud of our commitment to provide a safe learning environment where all students can reach their highest potential.

As we navigate during these uncertain times, the health and safety of our students and staff are of the utmost importance. In accordance with DoDEA guidelines as outlined in [DoDEA Announces Plan for 2020-21 Return to School](#) we are implementing mitigation strategies to promote a safe and healthy learning and working environment once we return to the school building.

Due to the current Health Protection Condition level -Charlie at Benning, we are providing instruction by remote learning. We miss having our students at school. However, the safety and health of our stakeholders is our priority. Our staff is doing a wonderful job providing quality instruction addressing essential learning standards. Our goal is to deliver excellent instruction whether we are in remote learning or in-person learning.

If you have any questions about concepts taught in the class, please reach out to your child's teacher. All staff have office hours and that is a great time to address any concerns or questions that you may have. When you email a teacher, expect to receive a response within 24 hours. Please visit our Remote Learning website at <https://sites.google.com/student.dodea.edu/dexterelementary/home>

Thank you for entrusting the staff at Dexter to make a positive difference in your child's educational experience. We look forward to working with each of you. We are going to make SY 2020-2021 a GREAT year!



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Herbert J. Dexter Elementary

**Motto:** "where we learn from the past to create our own future"

**School Colors:** Blue, Red and White

**Mascot:** Herbie the Eagle

## Welcome New Staff!

Dexter Elementary has some new faces this year! Please join us in welcoming them!

### Ms. Earthlyn Armstrong

Earthlyn Armstrong joins us from North Carolina. She began her career working in K - 12 education as an educational aide then Special Education Educator. After graduating with her Masters in Occupational Therapy from Springfield College in 2008 she worked as a school-based OT. In addition to working in school-based practice she has also worked in outpatient pediatrics, inpatient rehab and skilled nursing settings. Most recently she was on faculty in the new Doctorate of Occupational Therapy program at Methodist University. Earthlyn lives with her husband, Justin, and her two sons; Jude (9) and Rocco (4). In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family, swimming and being a beach bum. She is excited to join our DoDEA family and serve our students, staff and community.

### Ms. Mayra Lopez

Hello, my name is Mayra Lopez and I am the new Registrar at Dexter Elementary. I've been settling into my position these past couple of weeks. I am excited to meet everyone. Please be patient with me if I do not remember your name right away, I will keep working at it until I get it right.

I am a proud Military Spouse. My husband has been actively serving for 21 years in the Army. We have been stationed at Fort Benning for the past 5 years, with our 2 wonderful children. Although I am originally from California, we have decided to call Georgia our home. My background is in education, and I have been working with DODEA for 4 years. I have a passion of working with Military families, serving those who selflessly serve us. It is my goal to meet the needs of students and families at Dexter Elementary. I look forward to a successful school year!

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Ms. Mayra Lopez

Herbert J. Dexter Elementary



Ms. Katherine Donaldson



Ms. Mckenzie Worster

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## Ms. Katherine Donaldson

My name is Katherine Donaldson, and I am teaching Art. I have my Masters in Elementary Education and a certificate in Early Childhood Education. My husband is stationed on Fort Benning, and we have lived on post for 2 1/2 years. We have three kids, and we enjoy biking, running, camping, and fishing with our family. I enjoy learning about art and the history behind the art, along with the stories of the artists who created it.

## Ms. Mckenzie Worster

Hello my name is Mckenzie Worster. My husband and I are from Ohio, we both attended The Ohio State University where I studied International Relations, Security & Intelligence. The Army brought us to Georgia and we love it here! In Ohio I raised cattle, sheep and chickens. During college I spent time traveling in China, Japan, South Africa, Morocco, Myanmar, Vietnam, India, Mauritius, Ghana, and I spent some time in Europe. Now in my free time I enjoy gardening, baking and cooking food from all over the world. In Georgia I volunteer for the Red Cross as a part of a disaster action team. I am always trying to learn something new, right now I am studying Spanish. As a substitute I am enjoying the time I have with my first grade class and excited for what's to come!

## Technology Tips from Ms. Showalter

With our students in remote learning, our kids are having more screen time than ever before. With the proliferation of handheld devices such as tablets, smart phones and game consoles, Digital Eye Strain is a condition that is affecting more people than ever before. Even young children can experience this discomfort which includes: eye fatigue and discomfort, dry eyes, headaches, blurred vision, neck and shoulder pain, eye twitching and red eyes.



However, there are some very simple things to you can do to help your student avoid Digital Eye Strain.

### **Adjust the Computer Display Settings**

Adjusting the brightness of your computer screen can help you avoid Digital Eye Strain. The screen should not appear a lot brighter than the room surrounding it. In other words, if the white space on your screen appears to be a light source for the room, it is probably too bright. You want the whites on your screen to appear just a little gray.

### **Try Blinking More Often**

Although it sounds a little silly, blinking more often is another easy way to help combat Digital Eye Strain. Students tend to blink less when they are staring intently at a computer screen. The act of blinking helps moisten your eyes to prevent dryness and further irritation.

### **Exercise Your Eyes with the 20-20-20 Rule**

To help reduce eye fatigue, doctors recommend that you try exercising your eyes by giving your eyes a break from the deep focus of the computer screen. You can do this every 20 minutes by looking at an object about 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This gives your eye time to relax and reduces fatigue.

### **Take Frequent Breaks**

Brain breaks are good for students in general, but taking breaks from the computer screen will help them reduce Digital Eye Strain. Getting up and taking a short walk,

Nurse Lynn Swinford



standing, and stretching help relieve tension in their shoulders and neck as well. If possible, try to take a 5-10 minute break every hour.

Just a reminder, if you need assistance with Google Accounts or passwords you can e-mail me at:

[sarah.showalter@student.dodea.edu](mailto:sarah.showalter@student.dodea.edu)

## A Note from Nurse Lynn

Welcome Back!!! I, like most of you, was hoping we would be learning in person inside the school building when we came back this fall, but that just did not happen. I know you all will make the best of it until we are able to be in our classrooms again.

For those of you who don't know me, let me share a little about myself. I am the person who has the privilege of taking care of Dexter students and staff. I have been a registered nurse for 25 years. I have been associated with school nursing for almost 13 years. I was privileged to live the life of a military spouse for 18 years. I have two boys. My older son, Sam, is 20 and is a junior at Auburn University. Nathan, my younger son, is 17 and is in the 11th grade at Shaw High.

I am currently working from the school and am here to answer any health related questions or concerns you might have. You can reach me via email at [lynn.swinford@dodea.edu](mailto:lynn.swinford@dodea.edu) or by phone at 706-545-7770.

I never miss an opportunity to share this particular tidbit...so....  
WASH YOUR HANDS !!! :)

Warmest Regards,  
Lynn Swinford, BSN RN  
Dexter School Nurse

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## Grade Level Spotlight Kindergarten

Dear Parents,

The first three weeks have flown by. Students are getting used to our routines for remote learning and are adjusting well to our new normal. Our kindergarteners are doing GREAT and we are very proud of their progress! We are currently working on the following skills:

**ELA**-uppercase and lowercase letter recognition

**Math**-number recognition (0-10) and counting objects (0-5)

**Science**-Animals two by two: goldfish

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your continued support,

Mrs. Alexander and Ms. Barrett

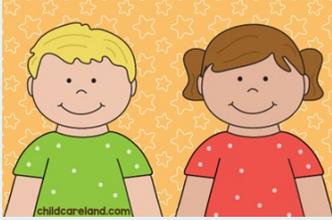
Mrs. Allen and Mr. Rodriguez

Ms. Frasier and Mrs. Ramey

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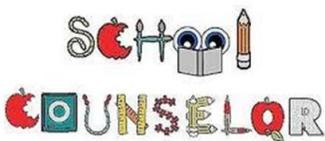
## Grade Level Spotlight 1st Grade

First grade is off to a great start. We have read a lot of interesting stories..."Going to the Beach," "Our Family Stories" and many more. During Reading Workshop, we have been discussing the title, author and illustrator of the books along with the table of contents. For our phonics lessons, we have been learning a lot about blending words, short vowel sounds, segmenting phonemes, and beginning and ending sounds. We also have been learning about syllables and enjoy clapping out the word parts. In Social Studies, we shared information about ourselves and our families using Google Docs. Students listed their favorite food, color, book and toy and they also listed the members of their families. First grade students are working hard!

## School Counselor

Hello Dexter Eagles! Remote learning is off to a great start. However, remote learning can also be a bit challenging for most students of all ages. It's very important to encourage your students daily as they are learning remotely and to praise them as well. One of the greatest challenges students experience is learning to cope with the social aspect of things. Though they are able to see their classmates when they are in group online, it's still a different feeling when not being in actual class with them in person. It would be a great idea to try and contact the parents of your student's friends and schedule some social distance activities with them where they can see and have fun with their friends in person.

I've already had the pleasure of providing remote guidance with our 1st graders and now I'm currently providing remote guidance with our 2nd graders. I look forward to working with the other grade levels in the months to come. Though I'm not



Ms. DeShaun Howard



providing remote guidance to all grade levels at the moment, I'm still available for individual counseling for all students in grades K -5. If your student would like to speak with me or our Military Family Life Counselor (MFLC), please feel free to contact us. Our information is listed below.

School Counselor- Ms. DeShaun Howard

Email: [dshaun.howard@dodea.edu](mailto:dshaun.howard@dodea.edu)

Google Classroom Link: <https://classroom.google.com/u/0/c/MTQ3Nzg3Nzc3OTUx>

MFLC- Ms. Berth Bartolin

Email: [bbartolin9@magellanhealth.com](mailto:bbartolin9@magellanhealth.com)

Phone: 706-969-9859

## Upcoming Events

- **Sept 21: No School for students** -Teacher PD Day
- **Sept 26: Dexter Night Out: Icey girl** - Ft. Benning location from 12p.m.—7p.m. Just mention Dexter PTO and a portion of the sales will be donated to the school.
- **Sept. 28– Oct. 11: Fall Online Book Fair**  
<https://www.scholastic.com/bf/dexterelementaryschool13>
- **Oct. 12: No School** - Columbus Day

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## **About Gradespeed Access for Students:**

4th and 5th Grade Dexter students can access their grades online through Gradespeed. Students can login to Gradespeed using their DoDEA standard name (first initial + first 3 of last name + last 4 of ID) and DoDEA Google Password. An example is shown below:

Username: ssho7890

Password: Dexter2020eagles

For student access to Gradespeed please visit:

<https://dodea.gradespeed.net/pc/studentlogin.aspx>

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For more information about parent access, please see the instructions on the next page.

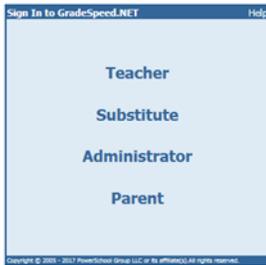
# GradeSpeed



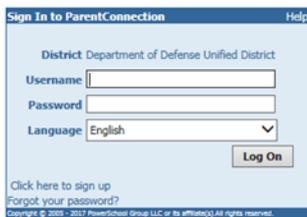
1. Set up your account.
2. Wait for verification.
3. Access your child's grades, assignments, attendance, etc.

## Creating Your Parent Account

1. Go to:  
<https://dodea.gradespeed.net>
2. Click Parent



3. Click the link in the lower left corner to sign up.



4. Fill in the blanks. The username and password is what you will use each time you log into GradeSpeed.

Note: Email address is very important.

5. Click Sign Up.

6. Click OK.



7. Click the "Add a Student" Link.

8. Use student's full legal name and Birthday. Click Submit.

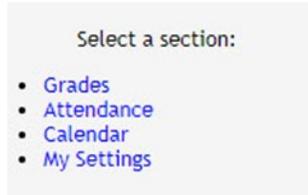
9. Click OK.



10. Log off and wait 2 to 3 days for your account to be approved.

NOTE: Each parent can set up his or her own account.

You can access the following features within your account by clicking the links found on the left of the screen.



- **Grades** - click to view the current grade average in each class. Click the individual letter grade link to view the assignments associated with that grade.
- You may **email** the teacher from this screen by clicking the teacher's name
- **Attendance** - click to view attendance information for your Student.
- **Calendar** - click to view attendance and school calendar.
- **My Settings** - click to edit the parent account information (name, address, email, password, etc.)

Reminder: Gradespeed is for 4th and 5th Grade students only.