

DRAGON'S LAIR

Genevieve Didion K-8

February/March 2020



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Read about school happenings, including climate surveys and spring testing

UPCOMING EVENTS

Some annual, some new. Check out the exciting events on the Didion calendar.

TALENT SHOW HELP WANTED

Lend a hand to make our May 22nd Talent Show happen! See the last page of the newsletter for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 24 Class Photo Day (for yearbook)
- Feb. 28 Lunar New Year Celebration at 1:00 pm
- Mar. 4 Whole School Picture
- Mar. 5 Third Grade Read Around
- Mar. 6-13 Parent-Teacher Conferences and Shortened Days for Elementary School
- Mar. 10 PTA General Meeting at 5:30 pm in the Library (Tuesday)
- Mar. 13 End of 3rd Quarter for Middle School - Shortened Day
- Mar. 13 Lephrechaun Trap Exhibition in the Gym
- Mar. 13 Father-Daughter Dance from 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm in the Multipurpose Room
- Mar. 17 Kate Messner - Author Visit
- Mar. 28 Fried Rice Breakfast (7:30 - 10:00 am) and Egg Hunt (10:15 am)

**Note the Mother-Son Dance has been rescheduled for May 8th. Details to follow.*

REMINDER: CAASP TESTING IN SPRING

Just as a reminder, starting in late April all students in grades 3-8 will take the California standardized CAASPP exams in English and math, and all 5th and 8th grade students will also take a science exam. More information will be forthcoming from me and from your teachers, including the testing schedule. In the meantime here are some helpful links to parent resources, including information on practice tests:

- [Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments](#) (English and math)
- [California Science Test](#)
- [Student Practice Tests](#)

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Didion Families,

Spring is right around the corner, we passed the 100 day mark, and it will be the end of the next grading period for all students on March 13th. The year is flying by at Didion! Here is an overview of important information and upcoming events. As always, please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Yearbook Class Photos - 2/24

Every class will have a class photo taken for the yearbook on Monday, February 24th.

Lunar New Year Celebration 2/28

We will have a Lunar New Year parade to celebrate the Year of the Rat on Friday, February 28th at 1pm. The parade's focus celebrates all cultures. All students will have the opportunity to participate by walking with their classes around the playground track while wearing garments of their own heritage or displaying cultural art projects from their classes. Parents are welcome to attend. We will even have Eastern Ways there to perform a lion dance!

Climate Surveys - Family Surveys by 3/6

The district has released its annual School Climate Surveys for students, parents, and staff. Survey questions are designed to measure perception of safety and belonging/connectedness. The survey results will be used to support district priorities, the actions in the LCAP and reporting in the California School Dashboard. 3rd - 8th grade students will be given the survey in class over the next month. Please follow the link to take part in the family survey by March 6th: <https://www.scusd.edu/post/2020-school-climate-survey-families>

ES Conferences, End of Trimester, and Minimum Days - 3/6 - 3/13

Elementary school parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for March 6th through March 12th. The end of the trimester is on Friday, March 13th. Look for sign-up links to be sent out by your child's teacher on Friday, February 28th. Elementary students will be on minimum day schedule from March 6th through March 13th: Primary dismisses at 12:05 and Intermediate dismisses at 12:19.

MS End of Quarter and Minimum Day - 3/13

I had an error in my 2/13 "Didion Email Blast." March 13th is the end of the third quarter and is a minimum day for the middle school. 7th and 8th grade students will be dismissed at 12:05.

Father-Daughter Dance 3/13

The Father-Daughter Dance is coming up on March 13th! Flyers were sent home last week, and are also available in the office, or on the website. We are in need of volunteers and donations. Please follow this link to the sign-up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D48A8AD29AAF94-2020>

Don't forget if you buy your tickets ahead of time, you will save money and time at the door! Presale orders need to be in the office by Thursday, February 27th. Thanks and see you there!

Kate Messner, Author Skype Visit - 3/17

Look for more information later in the newsletter about this amazing opportunity for our students to hear from, and interact with, author Kate Messner.

Fried Rice and Egg Hunt - 3/28

Donations for plastic Easter eggs, wrapped candy, and small toys will be collected in the library for the March 28th Fried Rice breakfast and egg hunt. Mrs. Rechs would like to start ASAP on collecting donations and start filling eggs.

Mother-Son Dance - 5/8

The Mother-Son dance has been rescheduled for May 8th. Look for more details in the coming months!

Great Job, Didion Middle School Basketball!

Players, we are so proud of your hard work and effort this season. We saw a ton of growth and heart with our teams, and you all did a great job representing Didion. A huge thank you to our coaches, Jamal Thomas and James Therriault, along with their assistants, coaches Tish and Chuck! Thank you, coaches, for working with and supporting our players, and for the countless hours you put into each of your teams. Let's Go, Dragons!!

Congratulations to January's Perspective-Taking Champions and our Middle School Elks Lodge Students of the Month!

Perspective-Taking Champions: Daphne Lucas, Nico Martinez, Lars Lucas, Alex Quok, Araya Shem, Kimiko Yorita, Matthew Lau, Jolie Tam, Madeleine Soto, Kai Hancock, Elliott Vu, Avery Page, Reese Namikawa, Gabe Arriola, Izaiah Luna, Olivia Nylander, Lily Molina, Kingsley Huang, Maddox Hughes, Ann Arca, Aleen Houjeij, Alex DiSantis, Kiera, Sonju-Doyle, Taiga Hancock, Jaden Fulgham, Dillon Zettel, Nathan Gaultney, Calton Kuang, Elijah Jauregui, Mackenzie Russell, Tyler Ohara, Anabella Cedillo, Caden Jones, Amelia Nylander, Illiana Foth, Evelyn Sarte, Sajan Soomal, Ashleigh LaPlaca, Elizabeth Lee, and Marco Chen. Elks Lodge Students of the Month: Rebecca Lin and Jutnice Moua.



Chromebook Carts Update

Thanks to the amazing success of our Fun Run, and the incredible generosity of our community, we were able to submit our order for FOUR NEW CLASSROOM CHROMEBOOK CARTS! We will "unveil" the carts during blacktop announcements as soon as they arrive.

Cold and Flu Season

We are in the midst of cold and flu season. Please do not send your child to school if he/she has a fever. Also, encourage your child to always cover when coughing, and to wash their hands frequently.

California Standardized CAASPP Exams for 3rd-8th graders

Each spring, students in grades 3-8 will take these exams in English and math, and all 5th and 8th grade students will also take a science exam. At Didion, we will begin our testing in late April. More information will be forthcoming from me and from your teachers, including the testing schedule. In the meantime here are some helpful links to parent resources, including information on practice tests:

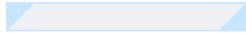
[Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments \(English and math\)](#)

[California Science Test](#)

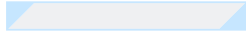
[Student Practice Tests](#)

Start of School Year Announced for 9/3/20

You have likely heard the news already... The start date for the 2020-2021 school year is Thursday, September 3rd.



*Has your child been missing an item? A jacket or hat?
Please come to the Multipurpose Room and look
through our Lost and Found items that are posted
along the wall. Claim your items soon
before they are donated.*



*Lost &
Found*

A LOOK BACK

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

The fourth annual Battle of the Books was held on January 31st. 91 kids in 6th-8th grade worked hard preparing and their effort showed in a close and exciting battle between the 24 participating teams. Congrats to the winning teams!

1ST PLACE

The Fairy tales

Lily Agraan

Lillian Espinoza

Mia Taniguchi

2ND PLACE

CVS Pharmacy

Sofia Yee

Vivian Lim

Chloe Chan

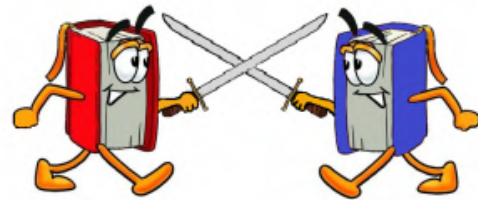
3RD PLACE

Time Turners

Allonnah Torres

Katie Yue

Jordyn La Placa



DIDION DOES GOOD

Back in December, Didion's Wish Wall project helped fulfill the wishes of 81 families at the Sacramento Children's Home. Since then, Didion students have contributed to the community in other inspiring ways.

Mrs. Ewing's third grade Class President, Conner Wagner, organized the class in collecting 20 unwrapped toys for the Shriners Holiday Toy Drive. The class also held a coat drive. Along with Ms. Miyata's class, they collected roughly 25 coats, blankets, scarves and gloves. These were handed out by the River's Edge Ministry to those in need at Cesar Chavez Park on January 6th.



IN THE KNOW

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

Friday, February 28th at 1:00 pm at the Didion Playground/Gym/Track



Parents are invited to come celebrate the Year of the Rat at our Lunar New Year with our students! This parade celebrates all cultures and students are encouraged to wear traditional Asian garments or garments of their own heritage, or the "good luck" color of red on this day. Highlights of the parade include lion dancers, dragons, lanterns, props made by students, and much more!



FATHER DAUGHTER DANCE

Friday, March 13th from 6:00 - 8:30 pm

Sock Hop: Let's Shake, Rattle & Roll!

The Father Daughter dance is going 50's this year! Come dressed in your best Sock Hop outfit and prepare to dance the night away.

Presale tickets are on sale through February 27th and will be sent home with your child. Please remember to bring the tickets to the dance! Prices increase after the 27th and can also be bought at the door.

We are in need of donations and volunteers, if you are interested in helping out please follow this link to our signup page. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D48A8AD29AAF94-2020>

AUTHOR KATE MESSNER WILL VISIT SOON!

Tuesday, March 17th



Last year Didion did an all-school read of the amazing book Wishtree. It was such a beautiful, community building experience that we wanted to do something similar again. This year we've been doing a whole-school author study of Kate Messner. She is a unique children's author because she writes books at every level, from picture books all the way to Young Adult. She is a master at incorporating science, engineering, history and topical subjects into fun, exciting narrative text.

The kids have been reading her books in the library since the beginning of the year and soon we will all be able to meet the author herself! On March 17th Ms. Messner will hold 4 Skype sessions, one for each grade level group K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8. She will focus her discussion on the books each group has read and talk to the kids about the writing process and her experience as an author. A huge thank you to our PTA for funding the cost of the visit and for purchasing several copies of her books for circulation in the library. We're all really looking forward to this special event!

FRIED RICE BREAKFAST AND EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 28th

Breakfast starting at 7:30 am-10:00 am, Egg Hunt at 10:15 am



With the success of last year's menu, the Fried Rice Breakfast and Egg Hunt is back! Enjoy a hearty meal before bringing the kids out for fun adventure exploring the grass for eggs. Stay tuned for ticket sales!

Mrs. Rechs is currently collecting donations of plastic eggs, candy, and fillers in the library. Please bring your donations ASAP so we can prep for an amazing day!

Link to sign up to volunteer for the breakfast: <https://signup.com/go/CeFZcwZ>

Fried Rice Throwdown

Do you think that your fried rice reigns supreme? Think you can beat the competition? If so, enter to be Didion's 2nd Iron Chef in our Fried Rice Throwdown. Our winner, Nathan Lee from last year will be entering again to defend his title. Please cook five cups of rice for the competition. Please bring your completed dish to the Fried Rice Breakfast on Saturday, March 28th by 8:00 am. Judging begins at 8:30 am and will end at 9:30 am. The winner will be announced at 9:45 am before the Egg Hunt starts. (Please have a list of all ingredients used for allergy purposes.) Each entrant will get a free breakfast ticket and be eligible for prizes.

Link to sign up for the Fried Rice Throwdown: <https://signup.com/go/svOtOVW>

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Many of our afterschool programs have started new sessions this month. Make sure to visit our school website at <https://didion.scusd.edu/afterschool-programs> for more detailed information on each of our programs. Note **two new & free options** for our intermediate and middle-school students:

- [Speech and Debate Club](#) (grades 5th-8th, Mondays 2:30-3:30pm)
- [Street Hockey Club](#) (grades 4th-6th, Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm)

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The Elk's Lodge #6 has a Student of the Month program that recognizes one high achieving student from area schools each month. They generously host a luncheon for the Student of the Month recipient and his or her family where they recognize the student and award him or her a small gift. Here are our February students.

REBECCA LIN



How many years have you attended Didion?

I've been here since kindergarten.

What's your favorite memory of your time here?

I have a lot of memories of doing the Winter Program. I really enjoy singing carols and remembering Mrs. Chambers teaching us the song "Old Toy Train." That song makes me cry. Also, in fifth grade I made a lot of friends in class, and I really enjoyed volunteering at the Hyatt Hotel to help housekeeping. I had to help clean up the floors and beds. It was a special field trip with Mrs. Nann.

What are some hobbies that you have outside of school?

I like to practice contortion stretching and I enjoy baking. I watch YouTube videos to practice my moves. I really like Sophie Dossi and Anna McNulty. I also take dance classes every Friday. We do performances twice a year at the Elite Studio in Elk Grove. My most recent performance for Jazz was scary because I had to sit on a ladder for part of the show.

What's something that most people don't know about you?

My friends from other schools don't know that I like to practice contortionism. When I scare people, I use contortionist moves to surprise them.

What high school will you be attending?

I'm going to JFK or the Met depending on how many other students are enrolling. The Met is a unique school because they have internships. I would like to do an internship in baking or sewing if I end up going there.

JUTNICE MOUA



How many years have you attended Didion?

This is my second year here. I came from MLK because my parents thought that Didion would be a good middle school for me.

What's your favorite memory of your time here?

I really enjoyed the table tennis tournament in PE with Mr. Carras. First, he taught us how to play table tennis, and then two weeks later we started the tournament during class. If you got into the finals, you had to play a tournament during lunch. I got third place for 8th graders. My favorite part about table tennis is doing spin moves with the ball.

What are some hobbies that you have outside of school?

I like to play basketball. I usually play with my big brother at a park near our home. I'm good at defense and at shooting 3's. I'm also on the Mathletes team.

Today is our second real tournament at the Serna Center. At the competition, we choose a math subject, and when your math subject is called you have to go to a separate table and do math problems. I like the snacks and just doing math because it's fun.

What's something that most people don't know about you?

I'm actually loud at home, especially when I'm with my family.

What high school will you be attending?

I'm going to JFK. I'm interested in possibly joining the tennis team during my freshman year.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet our new Middle School science teacher, Mrs. Rocio Almanza!

Are you from the Sacramento area? How did you make your way to Didion?

I love Sacramento and grew up in the area. I graduated from Johnson High School and Sacramento State. I also have a 9-year-old son who is very active in sports and plays for the local leagues which is how I heard of Didion and I was blessed enough to be offered a position in this wonderful community.

What drew you to become a science teacher?

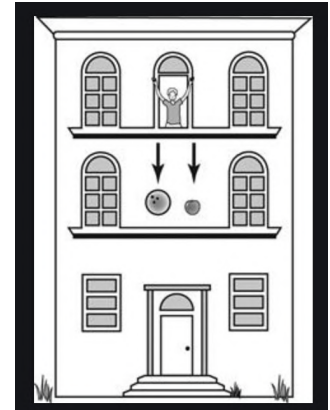
My entire school system experience was (and will always be) through the lens of an English Learner, so math and science have always been a world with no language barriers that I thrived in. I was in high school, enjoying and looking forward to my life science class, when I knew I wanted to become a science teacher.

What's an interesting science fact most people don't know?

Many students start with the misconception that heavier objects always fall faster than lighter objects, and it seems natural and makes sense. However, after we study force and motion they understand, that with the right conditions, objects free fall at the same rate.

What's your favorite science subject?

Chemistry and the particle model are my favorite units to teach. I love to see students build this conceptual model through real-life phenomena.



What's your favorite thing about working with middle school students?

My favorite thing about middle school students is seeing them develop. They are excited about their independence, they begin to value friendships, they are eager for life, and I just find it fascinating to watch them build character and identity through the friendships they develop.

What are your favorite hobbies?

My favorite thing to do is to take walks on the bike trail and enjoy the scenery of our beautiful river city.



NOTES FROM THE PTA

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) supports the Didion community through fundraising and volunteer efforts

UPCOMING PTA MEETINGS

Get in the know by attending a PTA meeting! Childcare is provided. Meetings are held at 5:30 pm in the Library.

- TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH
- WEDNESDAY, MAY 13TH

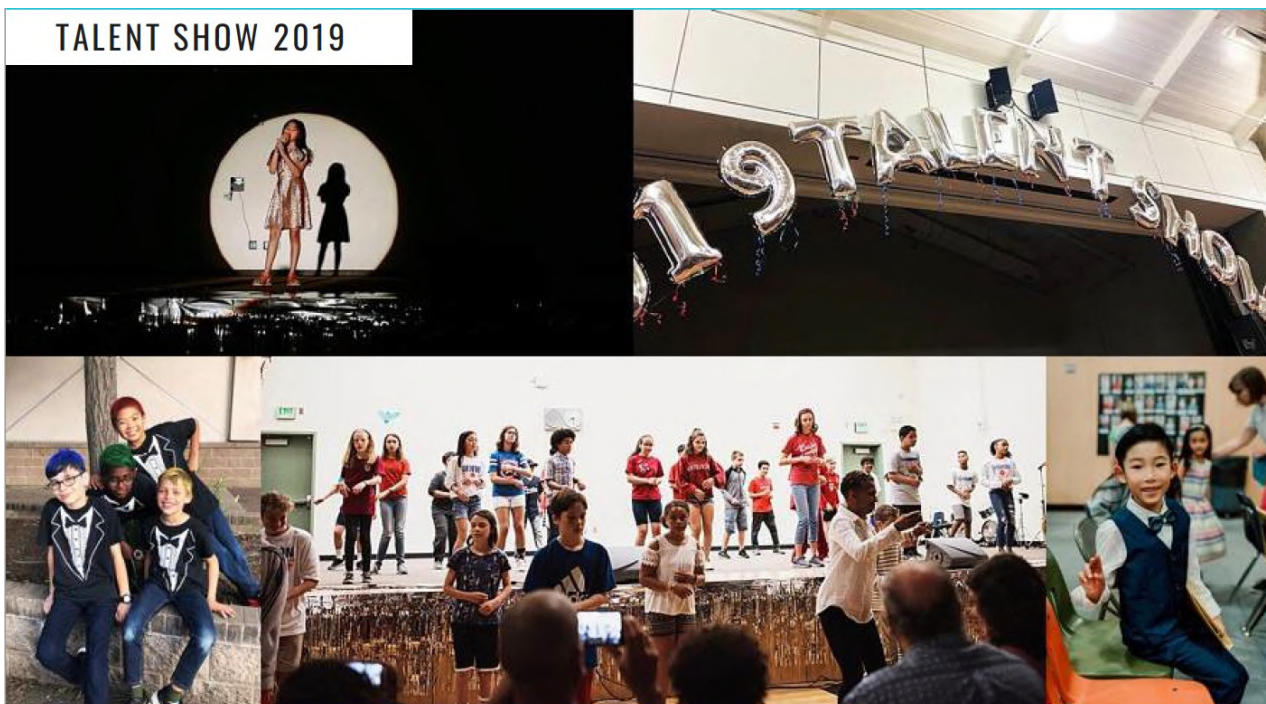
IN SEARCH OF A CHAIR FOR ANNUAL TALENT SHOW

Without a chair to organize Didion's Talent Show, the annual event that showcases the talents of our amazing students will not go on!

This special event brings together the Didion community and celebrates the various talents of our kids. Past acts have included musical displays, like vocal performances, piano pieces, and dancing, but also a variety of talents, like comedy acts and gymnastics. Last year our Didion staff even surprised the audience with a choreographed dance number!

Notes from the previous event chair detailing event logistics are available. If you have any interest in organizing the talent show, scheduled for May 22nd, please contact Elaine Austin at dorayandaustin@yahoo.com.

TALENT SHOW 2019



2020 Didion Father Daughter Dance



Sock Hop



Let's Shake, Rattle & Roll!



Friday, March 13th 6:00 - 8:30 pm

Rockin' Dancing, Crazy Photo Booth, Cool Raffle, and Light Refreshments!

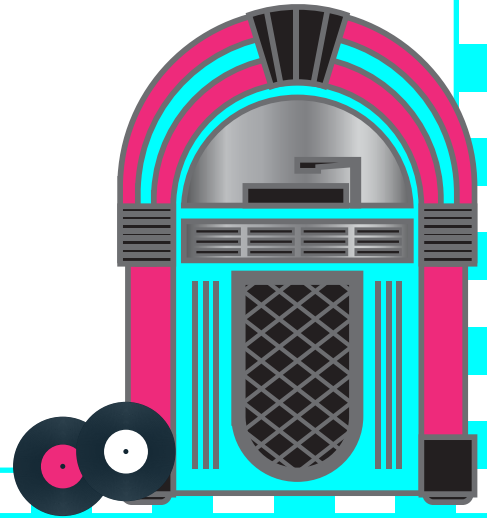
Save money on presale tickets! Return this form with payment to your teacher/office by February 27th!

The fathers in our lives come in many forms - **all** father figures are welcome!

PRESALE PRICE	AFTER FEBRUARY 27th
\$25	\$35 for 1 daughter
\$35	\$45 for 2 daughters
\$45	\$55 for 3 or more daughters



Your help is needed! Please check the signupgenius.com to volunteer and to donate food, drinks, and raffle prizes. If you have any questions, please contact Erin Pacheco @erinmpacheco@gmail.com



2020 Didion Father Daughter Dance Presale Form – Due February 27th

Student Name(s):

Teacher Name(s):

Room #:

- \$25 for 1 daughter
 \$35 for 2 daughters
 \$45 for 3 or more daughters

Professional portraits, circle one: \$15 for 2 prints (1 pose) \$30 for 4 prints (2 poses) \$45 for 6 prints (3 poses)

\$ _____ raffle tickets, fill in dollar amount, sold in bundles of 10 tickets for \$5

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ Payment, circle one: CASH CHECK (payable to Didion PTA)

♥ Rise and Shine Didion...

It's Fried Rice and Egg Hunt Time!!

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH 7:30 AM TO 10:00 AM

Didion Multi Purpose Room

Presale \$8 per person - Children 2 & under are Free

After March 16th \$10 Kids (3 to 12) \$12 Adults

2nd Annual Iron Chef Fried Rice Throwdown

More info and to register - <https://signup.com/go/svOtOVW>

MENU

Fried Rice

Eggs

Sausage

Fruit

Pastries

Coffee

Orange Juice

Egg Hunt
10:15 am

Want a FREE Breakfast??

Volunteer for a shift...

<https://signup.com/go/CeFZcwZ>



Presale Order Form - All You Can Eat Breakfast

Please return this section of the flyer with check or cash to your teacher or the office no later than **Monday, March 16th** to receive the presale discounted price. Tickets are still available after March 16th and at the door for the increased prices. Please make checks payable to Didion PTA.

Your guests will not need a ticket to redeem their breakfast. List the names of your guests below and they can check in under the student's last name.

I would like to preorder _____ tickets (\$8 each) _____ 2 years old and under tickets

AFTER 3/16 → Adult _____ tickets (\$12 each) Kids _____ tickets (\$10 each) _____ 2 years old and under tickets

Student's Name _____ Grade/Teacher _____

I have enclosed a total of \$ _____ Phone # & Email _____

List names of guests (please indicate if they are a child 2 years or under/indicate free next to the name with the volunteer shift)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

Last Name Initial _____

Adults _____ Kids _____

2 & Under _____ Comp _____

Check # _____ Cash _____

(COMMITTEE USE ONLY)