

# DRAGON'S LAIR

Genevieve Didion K-8

September 2019



*In our first issue of the 2019-20 school year:*

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Mr. Eder shares his thoughts on the new school year and introduces staff changes.

## LET THE FUNDRAISING BEGIN

New this year: The annual Jog-a-Thon will now be held in November.

## A LASTING LEGACY: MRS. CHAMBERS

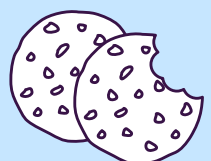
Included in this issue is a special look at our beloved music teacher as she retires.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sep. 11      Back to School Night from 5:00 - 7:30 pm
- Kona Shave Ice, 5:00 - 7:00 pm
  - Fingerprinting Services, 5:00 - 7:30 pm
  - Grades 4-6 Classroom Presentations at 5:30 pm
  - Blacktop Announcements at 6:15 pm
  - Grades K-3 & Middle School Presentations at 6:15 pm
- Sep. 16 & 17      Hearing & Vision Screening, Grades K, 2, 5, 8
- Sep. 18      PTA Meeting at 5:30 pm in the Library
- Sep. 23      Fall Picture Day
- Sep. 27      Meet the Author, Lisa McMann, for 4th-6th Grades
- Sep. 30      Gotcha Acknowledgements during Blacktop Announcements

*Look out for our  
School Kine Cookie  
Fundraiser!*

*More info coming soon!*



# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome back, Didion family! I hope everyone had a restful and rejuvenating summer. We have had a great start to the school year, and I could not be more excited for what is in store for 2019-2020. With the new year, we do have a number of “good byes” and “welcomes” to make that developed over the summer or just at the start of this year. By now, most of you have heard that our beloved music teacher, Mrs. Elett Ricks-Chambers, has officially retired. Mrs. Chambers’ impact on students and on our community over the years cannot be sufficiently discussed and done justice in this small article. Mrs. Chambers has been a fixture at Didion for years, and has contributed immensely to what makes this school and this community amazing. Much more on and from Mrs. Chambers later in this newsletter! While we are sad to see Mrs. Chambers go from our daily program, we are thrilled that she will continue to lead and direct our Thanksgiving and Winter programs this year. We are beyond grateful that Mrs. Chambers will continue this celebration of our students’ talents under her guidance. The shows must go on!

There are also lots of changes going on in the Didion library this year! With Mrs. Chambers’ retirement, Mrs. Rechs will now be on campus full-time as our elementary prep teacher, allowing us to provide our students with more robust library services.



*Mrs. Rechs, Librarian*

Classes in grades 1-6 will continue to visit the library each week but that visit will increase from 30 minutes to 45. The extra time will allow students more freedom to explore great books, talk about what they are reading and work on important information literacy skills. Students in grades 1-6 will also participate in an additional 45 minute information technology class with Mrs. Rechs that will address several areas of digital literacy.



*Mrs. Ricks-Chambers directing students at last year's Winter Recital rehearsal.*

Depending on the grade level, topics will include digital citizenship and cyber safety, source evaluation, website design, basic coding skills and the creation of digital presentations. We are building this exciting new part of the library program from the ground up, so stay tuned for more information as it grows and evolves. Finally, the icing on the cake is that the library will now be open to students and families every day before and after school so please stop in, say hi and maybe check-out a book. Mrs. Rechs would love to see you!

The end of last year also brought the retirements of our former office manager, Kim Tsumura, as well as our middle school science teacher, Dana Flaten. Gail Hori, our longtime clerk, has since assumed the role of office manager and I couldn't be more thrilled! She has been doing an awesome job in her transition, despite the multitude of challenges that the beginning of the year brings. Our new middle school science teacher is Rocio Almanza. She brings great experience, enthusiasm, and warmth to our team and to our middle schoolers. We are lucky to have her! Alice Wong has also re-joined our staff (she worked here several years ago) as our new speech therapist. Welcome back, Ms. Wong! We are also very fortunate to have Debra Aban with us. Mrs. Aban has been doing a fantastic job teaching 3rd grade for us in room 8 in the position once held by Jeremy MacDonald, who has retired and will be sorely missed.

Lastly, we have said good bye and best of luck to Wendell Birt, our school plant manager, who left last week to take over operations at another larger school in the district after several years at Didion. We hope to be interviewing and hiring soon for his replacement, and in the meantime Ms. Indigeo Hall will be filling in. Thank you, Ms. Hall!

At the beginning of the year I always like to give parents some important safety reminders. First, we all know that traffic around drop-off and pick-up time is a challenge. I want us to always be mindful of traffic and pedestrian safety during these times, and to exercise caution and patience. Please refrain from making u-turns in front of the school and also from parking in loading zones (i.e. on Harmon Dr. along the school side of the street), or dropping off/picking up students in the staff parking lots.

Additionally, adults and students alike should use the crosswalks when crossing the streets. Also, when you do have to park, be careful to not block the driveways of any of our neighbors. When picking up your child on campus, we also ask that you please wait outside of the breezeway/hallways so that the halls do not become overcrowded and so that teachers may teach to the bell. Lastly, I want to remind everyone that anyone who is on campus after 8:15 needs to check in with the main office and get a visitor badge. Safety is our number one priority and collectively we must commit to procedures that help us keep the campus safe.

This is going to be an AMAZING year. The staff and I are excited and committed to making this year even better than the last. Stay connected by frequently visiting our school website at [www.didion.scusd.edu](http://www.didion.scusd.edu). In particular, take note of our year-long and monthly calendars to get the scoop on upcoming events. Also, look for emails, phone calls, and text messages from me regarding important reminders and announcements. In order to receive those messages, make sure you've submitted your most current contact information on emergency cards and update the office on any changes moving forward.

I look forward to every day with your children and our students. Thank you for your trust and partnership. As always, please reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns.

- Mr. Eder





## JOG-A-THON FUNDRAISER

### Local Business and Family Sponsors Needed

*Sponsor by October 1st and get your name on a Didion t-shirt!*

We're so excited to host our annual **Didion Jog-a-thon on November 15th, 2019** to help our school! We are trying something new when it comes to fundraising and would greatly appreciate your help. To increase the excitement and school spirit of this event, we're hoping to provide each student with a **FREE** custom Didion t-shirt to wear to the Jog-a-Thon. In order to make this happen, we need your help!

### *Calling all local businesses!*

At sponsorships of \$250 and up, a sponsor's name or logo will be displayed on the back of a shirt that will be worn by every student in the school. Not only will the investment be helpful to Didion, it will increase exposure and encourage more business for our sponsors.

**If you know of, or are affiliated with, a business that would be interested in sponsoring shirts for our students, please email [halekuney@gmail.com](mailto:halekuney@gmail.com).** Information pamphlets will also be available at the front office.

### *Families also welcome to sponsor!*

Not a business? No problem! We also welcome sponsorships from individual families. Family names will also be printed on the back of our t-shirts!

Let's rally up our school spirit for this fundraiser! Thank you for helping to strengthen our school! More information on the Jog-a-Thon will be released next month.

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

<https://didion.scusd.edu/afterschool-programs>

As we get back to school, don't forget to enroll your child(ren) in Didion's Afterschool Programs. Our STEM4AL approach focuses on a variety of areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Arts, and Foreign Language. Programs are offered every day of the week for grades K-6th. Most afterschool programs start in September or early October, with many filling up fast. For a detailed list of all programs, please visit Didion's website at <https://didion.scusd.edu/afterschool-programs>.

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## Mrs. Cathy Rechs Librarian



*Mrs. Rechs is Didion's Librarian, and beginning this year will be teaching full-time. In addition to the library, she will be teaching digital literacy during information technology class.*

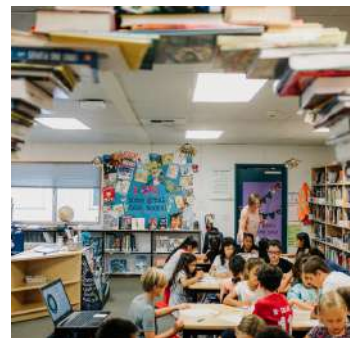


### *How did you end up at Didion?*

I came to Didion as a parent 10 years ago. I had been a classroom teacher but paused my career to stay home with my kids. When my son was 3 I toured a bunch of schools in the area. After seeing Mrs. Martinez teach kindergarten, I decided that Didion was where we needed to be. Years later, the librarian position opened up just when I was ready to get back into education. I loved the job so much that I went back to school to get my librarian credential and masters degree. It's been a lot of fun (and a lot more hard work). I'll be so happy to graduate in May!

### *What's your role at Didion? What are some goals you might have for our kids?*

My role changed this year and I couldn't be more excited. I'm now full-time which gives me so much more space to build a robust library program for the kids. This year they will get a longer weekly library visit which will give us more time to read and talk about books and to learn how to find the right book at the right time. THEN I get to see them a second time each week for an information technology class. We'll work on digital citizenship, coding, website design, digital presentation software and information literacy. There aren't that many opportunities to work full-time as a librarian in an elementary school, this job is literally a dream come true for me.



### *What are some fun facts about you?*

Hmmm... fun facts? I paid for college by becoming a truck driver. I got my commercial license and hauled tomatoes 16 hours a day 7 days a week all summer for 3 years. It allowed me to pay for my entire education without any loans. I'm probably not the only truck driver turned librarian in the world, but there can't be too many of us!



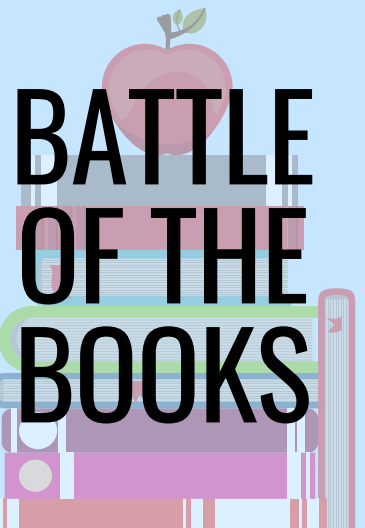
# LIBRARY CORNER

## HARRY POTTER NIGHT

at the 2019 Fall Festival

This year's fall library event is Harry Potter night! Join your fellow Potterheads in the library during the 2019 Fall Festival for treats, games and activities for the wizard in all of us! If you have any Harry Potter themed decorations or items that you think would work well or if you would like to conjure some yummy treats for the Honeydukes booth, Mrs. Rechs would love your help! You can contact her by sending an owl, stopping by the library before or after school or emailing at [catherine-rechs@scusd.edu](mailto:catherine-rechs@scusd.edu).

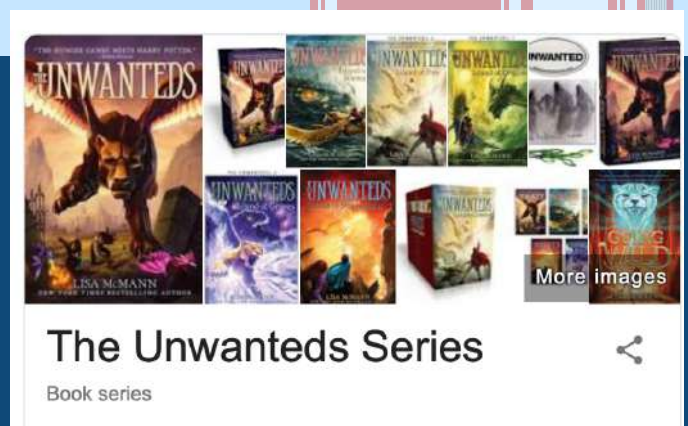
Battle of the Books is an exciting reading challenge for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. It's designed to get kids reading great new books and having fun while competing with their peers. 6th, 7th and 8th grade students are invited to form battle teams of 2-5 people. Each team will divide up responsibility for reading and knowing the 4 books in the competition. After reading and studying, teams will gather for a game-show style trivia contest on January 31st, 2020 to show off their knowledge! The winning teams will receive crowns and gift certificates to the bookfair and ALL participants will celebrate afterwards with a pizza luncheon hosted by the Didion PTA. If your student is interested, they simply need to form a team and turn in a registration form to Mrs. Rechs by November 22nd. Here is a link to the reading list and registration form.



## MEET THE AUTHOR

Lisa McMann

Didion 4th-8th graders are going to get the opportunity to meet author Lisa McMann! Ms. McMann has written over two dozen books including the NY Times bestselling series The Unwanteds. On September 27th, Ms. McMann will spend about 45 minutes with our students giving a presentation about the Unwanteds series, including writing tips and side stories about what it's like to be an author. She will discuss how she got the idea for the Unwanteds series (and how writers come up with ideas for stories), how her kids were involved in this series from the time they were 12 and 9, and talk about art, as well as the creativity theme in the books. If you would like to order an autographed copy of one of her books you can do so ahead of time. You will also be able to order books on the day of the assembly. Please return order forms to Mrs. Rechs in the library.



ORDER FORM ON NEXT PAGE





# Lisa McMann Book Order Form

1011 K Street, Sacramento

Please show how many of each book you want.

Qty	Titles	Cost
	The Unwanted Quest: Dragon Curse (Book Four) - \$18.99 Hardcover	
	The Unwanted Quest: Dragon Ghosts (Book Three) - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	
	The Unwanted Quest: Dragon Bones (Book Two) - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	
	The Unwanted Quest: Dragon Captives (Book One) - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	
	The Unwanted: Book 1 - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	
	The Unwanted: Island of Silence (Book Two) - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	
	The Unwanted: Island of Fire (Book Three) - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	

**LAST DAY TO ORDER: OCTOBER 7, 2019**

Total Items

SUBTOTAL

TAX: 8.75%

TOTAL

**BOOK PERSONALIZATION (optional):**

Please include a check or Money Order

GIVE ORDER FORM AND MONEY TO TEACHER BY

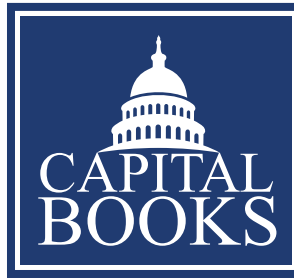
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STUDENT'S NAME

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TEACHER'S NAME

Alternatively, books may also be purchased from [store.capitalbooksonk.com/lisa-mcmann](http://store.capitalbooksonk.com/lisa-mcmann)  
And we'll deliver them to the school when they arrive.



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	The Unwanted: Island of Silence (Book Two) - \$8.99 Trade Paperback	
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STUDENT'S NAME

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TEACHER'S NAME

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And we'll deliver them to the school when they arrive.

# NOTES FROM THE PTA

## JOIN THE PTA

The start of the school year means it is PTA signup time! Every year we ask each Didion family to support our PTA with one membership per adult. The membership forms were sent home in your start-of school-packet. Please return the completed form, along with your membership check and completed survey, to your child's teacher. Without your support, the PTA would not be able to provide our school with things like field trips, computers, classroom supplies, and a library.

## 2019-2020 PTA MEETING SCHEDULE

All PTA meetings are held on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm in the Library,  
with child care provided on campus.

September 18th

November 15th

January 8th

March 11th

May 13th

## OPEN BOARD POSITIONS

Current openings on the PTA Board:

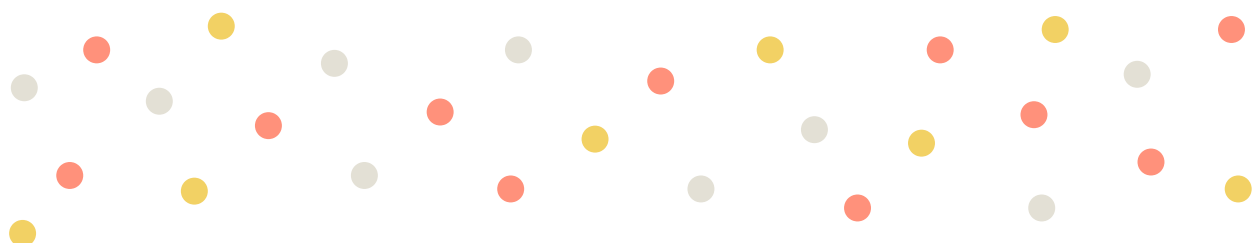
- Secretary
- Parliamentarian

Learn more about these positions at the upcoming PTA meeting, or contact PTA Board President Elaine Austin at [dorayandaustin@yahoo.com](mailto:dorayandaustin@yahoo.com).

## VOLUNTEERING WITH THE PTA

Looking to help out? School events require the help, planning and coordination of Didion parents and families. Parents are encouraged to get involved and learn more by attending a PTA meeting or signing up online for volunteer and donation opportunities. Events include the Fall Festival, Scholastic Book Fair, Father-Daughter Dance and more. Signups for donations and volunteer shifts for each event can be accessed online at

<https://didion.scusd.edu/volunteer-opportunities>.







**About my “retirement”:**

**I read somewhere that “you are retired if you think you are.” I personally don’t think I am. As I reflect on this season in my life I would like to characterize it in this way: my job description has changed from Didion Music Specialist to Didion Booster, Advocate, and Cheerleader.**

**Thank you again, family, for the awesome privilege of being a part of Didion for almost four decades. You all have been more than amazing and I am eternally grateful.**

**A songwriter wrote “If I can help somebody as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vain.”**

**See you soon!**

**Lots of Love,  
Elett Ricks-Chambers**

GENEVIEVE DIDION K-8  
A CALIFORNIA DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

***Mrs. Elett  
Ricks-Chambers***

## MRS. CHAMBERS' FAVORITE MUSIC QUOTES

*“The arts are not a frill. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature, and help to shape our identity. What is there that can transcend deep difference and stubborn divisions? The arts. They have a wonderful universality. Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator. The arts do not discriminate. The arts can lift us up.”*

-Former Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan



*Mrs. Chambers has taught music to Genevieve Didion students since 1980, and hence her influence on our community spans generations. She grew up in New York, where a flourishing music curriculum instilled in her an appreciation for arts and education. Mrs. Chambers is an invaluable part of Didion and much revered among students, families and alumni.*



## **What is your earliest musical memory?**

Please allow me to share more than one...

My mom playing the piano and singing songs to me. Music is in my DNA, I am sure I responded to my mother's music before I was even born.

I vividly remember performing in my first piano recital, I think I was almost 4.

There were hundreds of people in the audience. I can still see the beautiful dress I wore with lace socks and patent leather shoes. My legs dangled from the piano bench because I was so small.

**My piano teacher was Mrs. Elett Dixon.** She was my mom's teacher and my mom named me after her.

I can name the location because there were many more recitals that followed, it was Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, New York.

My first piece was my teacher's arrangement of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. My teacher and I told the story and I played a theme on the piano for each of the characters and the action in the story.

## **Who is your biggest influence?**

Again, while I certainly would say my parents and maternal grandparents. My music teachers influenced me as well.

**First piano teacher:** Mrs. Elett Dixon

**Elementary School Music Teacher:** Mrs. McGruder

**Middle School Music Teacher and All- City Honor Choir Director:** Mrs. Hill

**High School Music Teacher:** Mr. Ricca

**College Piano Professor:** Mr. Thomas Kerr

*“It is in Apple’s DNA that technology alone is not enough – it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing.”*

- Steve Jobs, in introducing the iPad2 in 2011



**If you were stranded on an island, what book, music album, and instrument would you take with you?**

**Book:** The Bible

**Music Album:** My Apple Music (No genre of music would be left out!)

**Instrument:** A grand piano

**What do you love about your job?**

What I love about my job is the fact that each and every work day I am blessed to come to work in a profession that I know I was born to be a part of. I love the treasure of the awesome opportunity that had been afforded to me to make a difference in the lives of the most priceless gifts in the world. The gift of my Didion children!

I believe many of them will remember their music experiences, along with our connections to the world around us and more importantly how much I loved them. It doesn't get any better than that.

**What are your thoughts on cultivating an appreciation of arts and education in our children?**

Several years ago a student brought a quote they cut out for me that said “Music Is Life.” I could not agree more.

My music exposure started early in life and as a result music is a part of the air I breathe. I cannot imagine life without the arts. I am so fortunate to have grown up in an era where the arts were truly valued. Let's keep doing the same for our children.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Didion families for your love and support of our school. Your understanding of the place for the arts in the lives of our children has been phenomenal and I am grateful.

*Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything."*

- Plato

