



International
Women's Day

#ChooseToChallenge

The AZCSP Zip

Arizona Charter Schools Pro-

March 2021



Looking Ahead

SAVE the DATE

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT LEADERSHIP CONSULTATION

Guest: Lorah Neville
APRIL 19 & MAY 3 | 3:30 - 4:30

Instructional Rounds

03/04/2021 COHORT ONE

Start @ 8:30 am. VIRTUAL
Edison School of Innovation

03/09/2021 COHORT TWO

Start @ 8:30 am. VIRTUAL
CASA Academy

Formative Assessment

03/03/2021 FA #5.

Providence High School

03/03/2021 FA #5.

AMS South Mountain

03/10/2021 FA #5.

Great Hearts Maryvale Prep

03/10/2021 FA #5.

AMS Avondale

03/11/2021 FA #5.

CASA Academy

03/11/2021 FA #4.

Empower

03/23/2021 FA #5.

Heritage

03/24/2021 FA #5.

AMS Glendale & Peoria
Advanced

03/24/2021 FA #5.

Kaleidoscope

03/26/2021 FA #5.

A+

03/31/2021 FA #6.

AMS South Mountain

04/01/2021 FA #6.

Providence High School

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Dr. Mark Francis writes...

Greetings school leaders:

Monday, March 8, 2021 is International Women's Day. The theme this year is "[Women in leadership: Achieving an Equal future in a COVID-19 world.](#)"

Every day we see more and more women advancing into leadership positions in government, business, and public service. However, America and the developed world have miles to go. America's daughters have various protections under the law but still face many uphill cultural and social challenges. To help meet those challenges, the education environment you create on your campus can profoundly impact the future of girls' lives not only through the rigor of your program and your expectations for them, but also help boys learn to respectfully interact with their female peers while striving to achieve their own goals.

When I think about the role of women's education and their role in the world, I think about my own upbringing. I was raised by my mother and grandmother, both of whom were dealt a bad hand in life. Yet, through their resourcefulness they became life-long learners who knew that education was the golden ticket to a sustainable life. Through the many sacrifices of my grandmother, my mom became the first woman to graduate from college in our family. While she was still treated as a second-class employee in her work, together, they helped provide a sustainable future for me and my siblings. I am deeply grateful for all they did for us.

Because I saw women as large and in charge early in life, I had no problem recruiting and placing women in major leadership positions at the charter school I founded. The inside joke at Arizona Schools for the Arts is that the [all-female] leadership team drove the program while Mark plunged toilets and drove the bus. (I may have done a bit more but that was a while ago.)



Claire Novak
Developer

An example of the vital work we do in charter schools was highlighted during a recent interview AZ Charter Association President Jake Logan held with AZ Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman. During the interview, Supt. Hoffman highlighted an innovative on-line, self-care program that Claire Novak, a junior at Arizona Schools for the Arts created.

[The Wellness Trail](#) is a six-lesson peer-led wellness curriculum that Claire created to promote and build strong social, emotional, digital, physical, and

intellectual wellness habits for middle schoolers. Her own experience with the struggle through middle and high school, along with her wrestles with overwhelming anxiety led her to create The Wellness Trail.

[I urge you to check it out.](#) It demonstrates that solutions to complex issues don't have to come from the top but can emerge from the youth on our own campuses.

AZCSP Update

In mid May 2021, US Department of Education monitors will come to Arizona and review the AZCSP program. Yes, we get monitored just like you. The AZCSP team is preparing a mountain of files documenting our policies and procedures. It is a week - long virtual visit (May 17-21) and will require considerable follow-ups. Five to six AZCSP subrecipients will be virtually interviewed during that week. AZCSP will alert selected schools at least four weeks before the visit.

[CLICK HERE to join the](#) **FA Café** Monday 3:30-4:30pm

Academy of Math and Science Desert Sky in the Spotlight

As told to David Fox by Kristina Winters

AZCSP: *There are a lot of teachers here at Desert Sky. How have they risen to the challenges of teaching a combination of virtual, hybrid, and in-person, classes?*

Kristina: Preparing for the first day of school is always challenging. Imagine having four "first days" as the teachers transitioned to and from distance learning to brick and mortar. Within two weeks of going virtual, all our teachers became Google Classroom certified. Once they gained confidence with that, they began to search out more technology resources and presented PD to their fellow colleagues.

AZCSP: *What is the most exciting thing that has come out of the pandemic for Desert Sky?*

Kristina: Perseverance! Usually, it is the students going through the progressive struggle to grow, but this year it was the teachers! Watching them take risks with new technology and teaching strategies has just been amazing to see. In addition, every time we have transitioned back to brick & mortar, I am pleased with the motivation the students return with. We took a staff survey in mid January, and Desert Sky had the highest positive staff morale scores in the Academy of Math and Science Network.

AZCSP: *You have hosted IR for both in-person and virtual observations.*

Kristina: The first time we hosted IR, we were near wrapping up our very first year in operation. The focus had been on culture and procedures. The experience of

having the AZCSP team and my fellow AZ charter administrators/school founders was a bit nerve-racking, but we welcomed the feedback, as we are always looking to grow.

This time around, being the first campus to go through the IR process virtually brought forth its own challenges. Trying to capture all the components of the lessons as well as "what the students were doing" proved to be the toughest part.

AZCSP: *Over the years you've been involved in IR, what are some of the benefits you have noticed in your own professional practice?*

Kristina: This process forces a complete mindset shift. Prior to IR, when observing in classrooms I was focusing/providing feedback on mainly teacher words and actions. Now the focus is on students and their evidence of learning.

AZCSP: *I heard you say recently that you are looking forward to the AZM2. Why?*

Kristina: Because AZMerit was canceled last year, we have only actually ever received state assessment data from our baseline year. My team looks forward to using the data to plan for 2021 professional development and set our SMART goals. Not to mention, our teachers never stopped teaching and consistently required our students to show F.I.R.E. (Focus Integrity Respect Excellence).



Kristina Winters
Principal