



PIONEER PLAYBOOK

2023-2024

Welcome to our school community! In an effort to keep you informed and maintain a safe and organized school community, we have devised a playbook or information guide with all the things you need to know about our school. We would like to welcome you to our wonderful school! The purpose of this playbook is to keep you abreast of the day to day logistics. If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback on how we can improve, please contact one of our administrators. We are looking forward to a productive, fun and safe year!

Union Park Elementary Mission, Vision and Collective Commitments

Mission:

Ignite a passion for learning in all.

Vision:

At Union Park Elementary we will advocate for all students to reach their academic and social-emotional potential.

Commitments:

- We will cultivate a safe learning environment for all.
- We will foster a joy of learning through curiosity, taking risks and making mistakes.
- We will engage and collaborate as part of a professional learning community.
- We will provide timely, diagnostic, and directive support for students.
- We will challenge students to develop their full potential by enriching learning.

23-24 School Year Theme:

We are Game Changers!

A game changer is a person who, by the force of their personality , desires to do things differently, and their belief in the change they envision, alter the status quo. The changes that result can affect communities, industries, nations, and the world.

Our school-wide theme this year is about being game changers for our students. We will model attitudes that exude a game changer mindset. I'm excited about the message because it is about the impact we can make on our students. TOGETHER, and as a united community, we will change our STUDENTS' lives! Every stakeholder at Union Park has a shared responsibility to make a difference each and every day. We will help our students make the connection by having traditional board games decorations and quotes on doors and hallway bulletin boards this year.

Meet our Administration Team

Lorena Salas~Principal

This will be my 28th year in education and my 17th year as principal. I was part of the phenomenal team that opened Union Park in 2019. Prior to serving at Union Park, I was a principal at a Title I campus in Denton. I am currently pursuing my doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Walden University.

I have been married for 28 years and have two daughters. Marissa is a NICU nurse at Parkland in Dallas and Emma is starting her freshman year at University of Texas in Austin.



Karsten Hatcher~Assistant Principal

Welcome Union Park Family!

My name is Karsten Hatcher and it is my pleasure to serve as Union Park Elementary's Assistant Principal! I am so excited for this school year!

This is my 16th year in education, all within Denton ISD! During this time, I have had the privilege to teach in the classroom, be a math and reading interventionist, and an Instructional Literacy Coach. My last 4 years, I have served as the Assistant Principal here and most recently the district's Summer School Principal. I love working with students and staff and have taught professional development for the district as well as educational conferences.

My husband Kyle is also a Principal and I have two children, Chandler (12) & Collins (8). We have two dogs and love all things outdoors and sports!



Ajika Robinson~Administrative Intern

This will be my 16th year in education. I have taught 3rd & 4th grade, Middle School Special Education Inclusion and Resource and have also taught as an adjunct professor at Trinity International University. I will continue my role as the Admin Associate for the 2023-2024 school year at UPE!

I have been married for 27 years and have 5 children!



Debra Sweeney~Counselor

This will be my 17th year in education and my 3rd year as a counselor. I joined this amazing team two years ago in 2021. Prior to joining Denton ISD I spent one year in Lewisville ISD as a 4th grade teacher and 11 years in Little Elm as a 3rd and 5th grade teacher. I earned My Masters in School Counseling from Lamar University in 2017.

I have been married to my husband Greg for 33 yrs. We have two children Gregory and Vinny. Gregory is a Social Studies Teacher in Lewisville ISD. Vinny works in the family manufacturing business as a Project Manager. We also have two dogs Cassie and Pepper.



Student Safety

Student safety is our number one priority here at Union Park Elementary! Denton ISD and Union Park Elementary have implemented a district-wide card access system designed to make our schools safer. All exterior doors are opened and closed through a timed computerized system and only with a staff badge. Our doors remain locked during business hours and all visitors are required to go to the front for entrance. The only visitor access during the day will be through the front doors. Our office hours are from 7:15 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Visitors ring at the door and information is gathered before entering the building. All visitors in the building are asked to show their identification, state the purpose of their visit and affix a visitor's badge where it is visible to all to let the students and staff know that they have checked in with the office and have a purpose in our school. Any volunteer that is in the building for an extended time and work with children is required to pass a background check from the district. In addition, weekly checks on outside doors are completed and cameras are located in and around the inside and exterior of the building.

Our students and staff also participate in monthly drills to practice our safety protocols and procedures and to ensure our technology is in good working order. Notification is sent to families the day of to inform in the event your child comes home with thoughts to process or questions they may have.

Parents will be allowed to walk their child/ren in for the first two days of school. Beginning Monday, the 14th, parents may not walk their children into the school. If you are there to volunteer we ask that you follow all guest procedures and wait until 8:00 once we have all children in classrooms.

Important Times

- **7:15 AM**...School doors open for drop off and cafeteria opens for breakfast
 - Students enter the building through the front and the back cafeteria entrance.
- **7:30 AM**...Students may begin entering the classrooms from the gym, cafeteria, or from being dropped off.
- **7:45 AM**...Tardy bell rings & Announcements/Morning Circle starts
- *If your student arrives after 7:45 AM, the doors are locked. We ask that parents bring their student to the front office for a safe check in. The cafeteria closes for breakfast at 7:40.*
- **1:30 PM**...Deadline to inform the front office for the day of any dismissal changes.
- **2:00 PM**...Students will not be dismissed from the front office past 2:00 PM each day. If you need to pick up your student for an early dismissal, please do so prior to 2:00 PM. Students will not be sent to the office to wait for a parent. They will be called down once the parent arrives to avoid missing out on more instruction.
- **3:00 PM**...All students are dismissed from the building

Arrival & Dismissal

Union Park Elementary Arrival Map

3rd-5th Grade

Back (Cafeteria) Drop-off

7:15am Doors Open

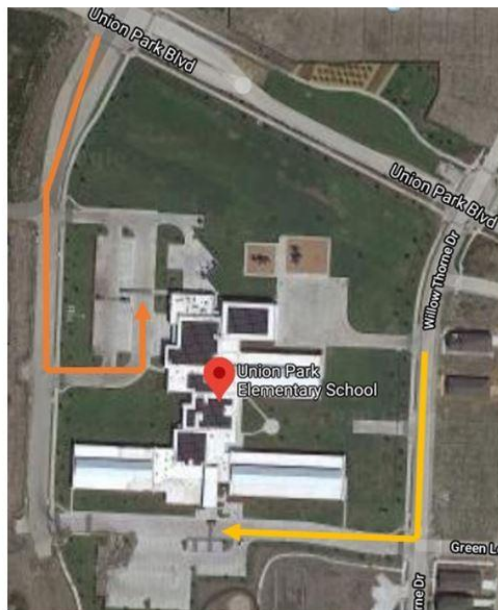
7:45am Doors Close

*anyone late must come through the front

On Union Park Blvd., take a right onto Fieldwood way, left into the cafeteria drive.

Helpful Tips:

- ✓ Once in the drive, there will only be one drop-off line for safety of our students.
- ✓ Have students ready to exit when its their turn.
- ✓ Siblings can exit together, no matter the grade.



Prek-2nd Grade

Front Drop-off

7:15am Doors open

7:45am Doors close

*late arrivals require parent sign in. Please park and walk your child in.

Turn onto Willow Thorne Dr., turn into the front drive of school.

Walkers

All walkers are asked to arrive in the front

Union Park Elementary Dismissal Map

Car Riders



All parents will drive down Willow Thorne Dr. through the front of the building, turn right at the end of the drive, go down Fieldwood Way and turn right into our cafeteria drive. Students will be dismissed by car number starting at 3:05pm

Helpful Tips:

- ✓ Once in the cafeteria drive, we will form two lanes. Children will be walked to your car. Parents are asked to remain in their vehicle.
- ✓ Have your car tag hanging on the rearview mirror.
- ✓ No dismissal changes can happen after 1:30pm



Bus Riders & Daycare



All bus riders and daycare will be dismissed as buses arrive. These students are dismissed out the gym in our bus drive on Willow Thorne Dr.

Walkers



All walkers will dismiss at 3:10 in front of the school. They will walk down the front sidewalk towards Willow Thorne Dr. *Parents cannot park in the parking lot or on Willow Thorne to avoid the car line due to safety concerns.

Note: new roads have been developed to the south/west of our campus. The maps indicate the streets we will continue to utilize for arrival and dismissal. Your car tag number is submitted into our computer by the staff member in the front of our campus. Entering from a new side road will result in causing congestion and your car number to not be entered into our dismissal system. This may slow down the pick up time and confuse your child.

Attendance

Documentation after an Absence

All absent notes and doctors notes/documentation should be uploaded to the form: [School Absence Note](#)

When a student is absent from school, the reason for that absence must be provided in writing within 3 school days to the school in order to make appropriate documentation. A handwritten note or email from the parent to the campus attendance secretary will be accepted. Phone calls will not be accepted as documentation. A phone call from the school verifying the parent note may be expected in some instances. The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused. Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for five or more consecutive days because of a personal illness must submit a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws. Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

In order for an absence to be coded MED, the student must begin classes or return to school on the same day of the appointment. The appointment should be supported by a document, such as a note or fax from a healthcare professional. This documented medical appointment applies to any absence for the student.

CHAMPS Behavior Expectations

CHAMPS is an acronym that reflects the types of expectations used by the teacher to clarify the activity and transitions occurring in class. The acronym stands for Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, and Participation. Randy Sprick, co-author of CHAMPS, designed this program to help classroom teachers develop a proactive and positive classroom environment so that learning time can be maximized.

The process of communicating expectations will begin with the start of each workshop and prior to transitioning. Providing clear expectations for students eliminates the need for students to guess what is expected of them. After defining expectations, corrective consequences are designated. We follow CHAMPS expectations in our common areas such as the cafeteria, bathrooms, hallways, and the playground, as well as in the classrooms.

Pioneer Gold

Pioneer Gold is a positive reinforcer to encourage and recognize students for following the expectations. Students can use their collected Pioneer Gold to purchase items at the Pioneer Gold Store. Teachers have designated days to take their class to the Pioneer Gold Store. We always welcome donations for our store.

Cafeteria

Money may be placed in a child's account by sending cash or checks made out to the Union Park Elementary Cafeteria, or by paying online through the Denton ISD Home Page www.dentonisd.org (For Parents Tab). As part of the online registration process, the option to fill out a Free or Reduced Lunch application was provided. If you would like your child to be considered for meal assistance and/or would like additional information about the Free or Reduced Federal Lunch Program, you can visit the Denton ISD Home Page www.dentonisd.org (go to the "For Parents Tab"). The application must be filled out every year. Parents may only enter the cafeteria to put money on their child's lunch account in the morning.

- Breakfast is available to students in the cafeteria from 7:15-7:40 am.
- Students should not bring drinks in glass bottles.
- Students are discouraged from bringing soda/soft drink type beverages to the cafeteria for lunch or snack.
- Ice cream and other snacks will be available for purchase (on designated days by grade level)
- Students who bring their lunch may not share their food with anyone. Parents should provide only for their own child as they would not know of any food allergies any other child may have.
- Due to FMNV [Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value restrictions] guidelines, birthday cake or cupcakes cannot be served in the cafeteria.
- When having lunch with your child, he/she cannot invite other students to eat with them. We are limited on space and the parent of the other child has not given permission.
- Out of courtesy and because some parents have not given permission for their child to be in pictures, please refrain from taking videos or pictures of other children.
- Parents and their child will be seated at designated tables.

Please join us in encouraging your children to make lunch a pleasant experience. We encourage our students to follow CHAMPS in the cafeteria. We want the cafeteria to be a safe and pleasant place for everyone to enjoy.

Lunch guests

Parents may have lunch with their child beginning September 5th. In an effort to keep a safe environment, we ask that you support the following:

- Lunch visitors will check in at the front desk prior to their child's lunch.
 - *Students with **last name A-J** lunch visitors on Tuesday & Thursday*
 - *Students with **last name K-Z** lunch visitors on Wednesday & Friday*
 - *We will alternate days each semester.*
 - *Starting in the spring, **last name A-J** lunch visitors on Wednesday & Friday.*
 - *Starting in the spring, **last name K-Z** lunch visitors on Tuesday & Thursday*
 - *Campus closed to lunch visitors on Monday*

Due to availability and to maintain a manageable number of lunch guests, if you would like to eat lunch with your child you will need to plan ahead and make a reservation. Link to sign up is posted on our website under campus information and then “Lunch with your child”

This will allow us to know how many visitors to expect. We will use the reservation list to mark you off when you sign in to the office. Please have your identification ready when you arrive.

Teacher Conference & Planning Times

Parents may request an in-person conference to discuss their child’s academic progress, concerns, or celebrations at any time. Feel free to email your child’s teacher on their district email address. You can schedule an appointment to come in and look at their work and discuss how you can partner with the teacher to support your child. We are here to listen and help!

Teachers will not answer the classroom phone during class as it disrupts instruction and learning. If you have an emergency, please call the front office at 369-0900. Teachers will return phone calls during their conference and planning time and after school.

Field Trips

We encourage parents to attend field trips with their child. Your support and supervision is needed for a fun and safe extension of our students’ learning. For safety precautions, chaperones may not bring their younger children if they are chaperoning and may not ride the bus to and from the field trip. The teacher will provide instructions on the roles and responsibilities of those chaperoning and will assign children to their group. All chaperones must complete a background prior to the field trip. All chaperones are asked to check in with the office and receive a Volunteer label to affix so that other parents and staff members know you have checked in with the office.

Volunteer Forms/Background Checks

As a safety precaution, background checks are to be completed each school year for any parent/guardian who wishes to volunteer in the building, chaperone field trips or participate in classroom parties and celebrations. Without a current background check on file for the year, you will not be able to attend any events with students. Many of you may have completed the new background check during the online registration process. If you did not, or if you have other relatives who want to volunteer on campus, please complete the form. www.dentonisd.org (For Parents Tab/Volunteer Program).

Nurse

Each school has a full-time registered nurse that provides many health services for students including:

- Emergency first aid, safety awareness and accident prevention.
- Assessment of individual health needs, with appropriate nursing intervention and referral.

- Serving as a health resource for students, parents, and staff including individual health counseling and classroom education programs.
- Screenings as required by the state:
 - Vision/Hearing – 5th, 3rd, 1st Grades and Kindergarten
 - Acanthosis – 3rd grade/randomly and 5th grade during scoliosis screening
 - Pediculosis – as needed when nits or lice are found; at the nurse's discretion, at the teachers' discretion students who show symptoms will be sent to the nurse for screening
 - Growth/Development Classes to be held for 4th and 5th grade students during the spring semester

There are several, simple things that can be done to help your child feel their best while at school:

- a good night's sleep followed by breakfast. If your child is not a breakfast eater, send a late morning snack.
- send a refillable water bottle, drinking extra water is encouraged for headaches, sore throats, coughs and stomach aches.
- keep a change of clothes in a ZipLock bag in their backpack. Not all accidents are potty accidents. Most are food, rips or recess issues.
- It is OK to give cough, cold allergy medications to your child before school. They may NOT bring these medications to school. This includes cough drops.

If you email a teacher regarding ANYTHING medical, please include Nurse (LBurns2@dentonISD.org); that way, she is aware if the teacher gets too busy to share or if they are absent. If you have any questions regarding if your child should be in school regarding a medical issue, please call 940-369-0908. Nurse communicates mainly via email, phone calls are reserved for emergencies.

Birthday Celebrations

There will be no in-class birthday parties at any grade level. Passing out of store bought cookies or cupcakes will take place the last ten minutes of the day. Students will be recognized during announcements and will be sent to the office for a special birthday sticker.

Children should not bring invitations for a private party to school, unless the invitations include everyone in the student's class. Children who do not receive invitations do not always understand why they are being excluded. We will not deliver balloons, flowers, or birthday baskets, etc. to the classroom, as not to disrupt the learning environment. Our teachers are not allowed or cannot facilitate the distribution of invitations.

Lost and Found

All lost and found articles, with the exception of jewelry, glasses, money, cell phones, and wallets will be placed in the lost right outside the cafeteria. The items listed "exceptions" above will be turned in to the office. At the end of each month, any unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

Early Release Days

Our district has built in early release days each month. These days are intended to allow our teachers to participate in professional development and to analyze student learning. When teachers

come together to collaborate, we call this time Professional Learning Communities. It is a time to review student work and teaching to ensure it is rigorous and we are assessing what we are teaching to ensure students are learning. We are proud to announce that a group of teachers (one from each grade level) participated in a Professional Learning Communities Training over the summer.

If a child is not making adequate progress and it is determined at the PLC that more discussion is needed to determine how to better support the student, the next step is to refer the child to our DMTSS committee (Denton Multi Tiered System of Support). It is essentially a time to come together with a team of support to determine next steps and monitor the progress of the child. Parents will be notified should their child be referred to the committee.

To help you plan for the early release days, we have included the link to the DISD calendar here: <https://www.dentonisd.org/families>.

Wagon Up! Assemblies

The purpose of our assemblies is to come together as a school to share information and celebrations. We will hold assemblies at the beginning of the school year to discuss our behavior expectations. Pioneer Gold and Pioneer Pride Awards will also be introduced and presented. Eventually, assemblies will only be held once a month.

Watch DOGS Program at UPE

Fathers, grandfathers, step-fathers, uncles, and other father-figures serving on campus under the leadership of a program coordinator and under the guidance of a school principal or designated administrator. Our program helps provide positive male role models for the students, demonstrating by their presence that education is important. Meanwhile, we provide extra sets of eyes and ears to enhance school security, reduce bullying and provide a greater sense of campus safety allowing students and teachers to focus on learning.

Things they helps with:

- Arrival/Dismissal
- Recess Duty
- Monitor hallways during transitions
- Eat lunch with your child(ren)
- Facilitate small group activities
- Extra set of hands with helping around the building such as exterior door checks

Communication

Communication with parents fosters a partnership between home and school. Parents should hear from the teacher often whether it's a positive note or a concern in academics or behavior.

Communicating with parents is vital to a student's success. Keeping parents informed of what their child is learning is a must. Teachers are expected to use technology to keep parents abreast of grade level needs and events. Communication is two-way. Should you need to communicate a concern or

have a question about your child, it is recommended that your child's teacher be the first line of contact. Many times, if it is classroom based, the teacher will be able to answer your questions more quickly.

Technology communication from teachers

Webpages- updated regularly and a hub for parents to access class information

DOJO- Pictures of happenings while at school, flyers, reminders. This form of communication should not be used for learning or behavior concerns.

Email- Monthly Newsletters (S'Mores) from grade level

*Teachers will check emails before school, during their conference, and/or after school. It is district policy to return a parent's phone call or email within 24 hours.

Pioneer Progress- Weekly academic progress and updates sent home to parents

Campus Wide Newsletter (Pioneer Pipeline)

Sent monthly via email and posted on social media for parents to be abreast of information campuswide.

Bullying

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repetitive and involves an imbalance of power and strength between the bully and the target of bullying. Denton ISD wants school to be a safe place for all students and is providing this form so that you can report any incidents that appear to fit the definition of bullying.

Fighting is never a good way to solve problems. The best deterrent is adult authority. Students who feel threatened at school should immediately ask for help from teachers, coaches, counselors, and/or the student resource officer. Teach your children that reporting school violence or bullying is not "tattling." Bystanders play an important role in bullying because students who observe and do not report bullying contribute to its existence by providing an audience. Help your child understand that despite what we see and hear in the media, victimization is not entertainment. Please partner with us to help our children learn effective ways of social interaction that demonstrates respect for one another at home, in the community, and in school.

If you believe your child is the target of bullying behaviors at school, it is essential that you report that to an administrator or counselor and request to fill out the parent information form as completely as possible so that the school can intervene. You can also anonymously report through the [Stopit app](#).

Workshop Model

All teachers teach using the workshop model. The workshop model is an incredibly efficient method of teaching. Within the workshop structure, teachers are able to address both the whole group's

needs as well as differentiating for the needs of small groups and individuals. Workshop is a component of a comprehensive block, standards based, driven by student assessment, differentiated instruction (by level, interest, groupings).

Every grade level (K-5) will have the same components in their schedule, just modified in order. An Example schedule is below:

- Arrival
- Morning Circle
- Reading Workshop
- Special Areas
- Writing Workshop
- Science/SS
- Recess
- Lunch
- WIN time (What I Need- Intervention)
- Math Workshop
- Dismissal

Special Areas Include:

- Art
- Library
- Music
- PE (2x/week)

DMTSS

Denton's Multi- Tiered System of Supports is a campus-wide foundational, evidence-based framework for effectively integrating multiple systems and services to simultaneously address students' academic achievement, behavior, and social-emotional well-being. MTSS is effective for all students, including those who are at risk of school failure as well as students with potential disabilities. This outcome-focused culture is designed to maximize student achievement and progress and will strengthen learning for all students.

An intervention is anything a school does above and beyond what all students receive to help certain students succeed academically and social-emotionally. If all students receive a particular instructional practice or service, it is part of the school's core instructional program. But if the school provides a specific practice, program, or service to some students, it is an intervention. All grade levels have WIN (What I Need) Intervention time built into their daily schedule.

Student Clubs

Student Leadership Team: Open to fourth and fifth graders that demonstrate leadership qualities. Interested students must apply and get signatures from a teacher and parent. They will support every day of opening car doors, greeting students as they walk into the building, making schoolwide posters, and more. Students on the SLT will participate in monthly meetings.

Orchestra: Open to fifth grade students and as part of their special areas rotation. They will participate in afterschool programs.

Choir: Open to fourth and fifth grade students. Choir students will participate in afterschool programs and some community events. Must commit to after school practices.

Honor Choir: Fifth grade students already in choir must try out for the honor choir. They will compete in district level choir performances with all other district schools.

Robotics: Open to third through fifth grade students. They will participate in afterschool activities once weekly.

Crafting and Makerspace Club: Open to second and third graders. This club will offer students the opportunity to explore their interests in functional crafting. The club will teach essential skills, such as collaboration, adaptability, communication, and innovation, but also practical skills, such as beginning tool usage and sewing (hand and machine). This is a once a week after school club.

Report Cards

Denton ISD is on a 9-week grading period. You will receive your child's report card electronically through HAC using the same email you registered your child with. For more information on how to locate your child's grades or to set up an account, visit: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/42505>

Parent Engagement

Parent support is valued, welcomed, and encouraged at Union Park Elementary! We know that parent engagement is vital to build relationships within our school community.

- PTA membership -There are always opportunities to help when you join PTA! Any and all parents, grandparents, and family are welcome to join!
- PTA Room Parent -Look for information and sign up opportunities to organize parties and support your child's teacher. (stock the lounge, Winter hallway decorations, Fall Carnival and much more!)
- Watch Dogs-Our first meeting is coming soon. Attendance is mandatory if you plan to participate in this wonderful program.
- Guest Readers– Ask your child's teacher about coming in on Fridays to read to the class. (You must have passed a background check)

- Library organization- Mrs. Howington is always looking for parents to help shelve books. Contact her for more information.
- Teacher support-always feel free to contact your child's teacher to ask how you can help. There are ways to help that won't interrupt instruction such as cutting out, laminating, labeling, etc.

To view our DISD Parent & Student Handbook, and for access to other Quick Links click here:

Student & Parent Handbook (live link will be added once received from district)

[2023-2024 School Year Calendar](#)

[Union Park School website](#)

[Union Park PTA website](#)