



Desert Willow Middle School – FAST Academy: Fine Arts, Science, and

Technology

The Desert Willow FAST Academy offers middle school students three options: Fine Arts, Science, or Technology. The Fine Arts pathway provides introductory to advanced learning and performance opportunities for students in variety of Visual Arts and Performing Arts elective classes. All courses are designed to increase creativity and critical thinking skills and are created for students wishing to pursue fine arts in high school and college.

The Visual Arts Pathway courses include:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Ceramics
- Printmaking
- Graphic Design
- Photography
- Advanced 2-D Art
- Advanced 3-D Media
- Digital Video

Students also learn the art critique process, investigate art careers, and study art history and aesthetics.

Performing Arts courses include:

- Beginning Chorus
- Choir
- Beginning and Advanced Band
- Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced String Orchestra
- Wind Ensemble
- Concert Band
- Jazz Band
- Digital Music Theory/Composition
- Dance

- Keyboarding
- Drama and Musical Theatre
- Digital Photography
- Graphic Design

The **Environmental Science Pathway** provides integration between Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics. The Environmental Science Pathway focuses on developing a deep understanding of the Next Generation Science Standards and includes modules from Project Lead the Way. The courses in this pathway are in development.

The **Digital Communication Pathway** provides students with opportunities for communicating effectively and working interdependently with multidisciplinary careers. Students will develop digital knowledge, values, and a range of critical thinking, communication and information management skills for the digital age. Digital Literacy will move students from the basic level of access to use to understanding and eventually the creation of websites, blogs, vlogs, computer applications and programs.

Courses in this pathway are in development and include:

- Digital Humanities
- Media Studies
- Foreign Language Lab

Desert Willow staff recognizes that middle school students may not be ready to choose and invest in a single pathway. Students may enter VAPA, Science or Technology, or Communication pathways in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, and may continue their chosen pathway for one, two, or three years.

AVID – Advancement Via Individual Determination

Students who remain in AVID throughout middle school and high school have an 85% better chance of being accepted to colleges and universities and are prepared to be successful in their college classes.

AVID:

- Teaches skills and behaviors for academic success.
- Provides intensive support with tutorials and strong student / teacher relationships.
- Creates a positive peer group for students.
- Develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination.

AVID COMPONENTS:

- **Student Success Skills** – Communication skills (listening, speaking, writing), self-advocacy skills, note-taking strategies, critical thinking, and study skills.
- **Organizational Skills** – Mental and physical; students learn to use organizational tools, as well as learn and practice skills around time management and goal-setting.
- **WICOR Lessons** – Emphasize instruction on writing to learn, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading to learn in all content areas.
- **Partnerships** – Among students, classrooms, grade levels, schools, families, and communities.