

Dysart *achiever*

Dysart Unified School District No. 89

A Y E A R I N R E V I E W

Dysart Schools **Report on Success** 2005-2006



From the Superintendent



Mark Maksimowicz, Ed.D.

This special Year in Review edition of the *Dysart Achiever* will help you – our parents and community members – peer into the daily accomplishments and achievements of our students and educators.

In these school summaries, there are several strong themes that emerge which help to illustrate the school system Dysart is becoming. Our educators talk of solutions to challenges, of involving students and parents in education, of providing relevant instruction, and of helping students become positive members of our community.

Over the past year, the Dysart Unified School District has continued to focus on refining our curriculum and ensuring that every day of classroom instruction is aligned with the Arizona Academic Standards, which form the foundation of the AIMS test. This year's graduates, including the first graduating class from Willow Canyon High School, were the first to be held fully accountable to the AIMS test. We are proud to report that more than 550 seniors graduated as members of the Class of 2006. In fact, our seniors earned more than \$1.2 million in scholarships this year.

Along with full implementation of all-day kindergarten this year, clubs and activities were expended for all students. In large part, these clubs and student organizations depend on Tax Credit Donations from parents and members of the community to thrive. With more than 18,000 total students, our kindergarteners make up our largest group – an important indicator about the growth in our community.

Professional development for our staff will receive a boost next year in the area of reading with the help of a \$3 million grant. Dysart was one of a select group of school districts in the nation to receive funding for the Reading First program. The program will be introduced at Kingswood, Luke, Dysart and Surprise elementary schools. Led by a team from the district's Educational Services Department, the three-year grant period will provide the additional resources needed to help the district advance reading instruction. We will take the lessons learned at these schools to help improve reading instruction at all schools, K-12.

As part of our efforts to continue transforming Dysart into a premier school district, we conducted a comprehensive Input and Dialogue Initiative. We surveyed students and community members, evaluated academic performance data, conducted one-on-one focus interviews with staff, and provided parents with an opportunity to participate in facilitated individual school meetings. All of these efforts were focused on identifying current challenges, potential solutions and how we define "premier" as it relates to a school system. The Input and Dialogue Initiative concluded in May with a Future Search Conference with 60 community leaders helping to chart a future for Dysart. Our comprehensive process to collect opinions and input, beyond helping to support district initiatives, is also being considered for national recognition from the National School Public Relations Association.

As the Dysart Unified School District continues to grow and evolve, the dedicated professional staff and educators will continue to focus on helping every child succeed, develop and become engaged in learning for a lifetime.

INSIDE

From the Superintendent.....	2
News in Review.....	3
Ashton Ranch Elementary School.....	4
Cimarron Springs Elementary School.....	4
Countryside Elementary School.....	5
Dysart Elementary School.....	6
El Mirage Elementary School.....	7
Kingswood Elementary School.....	7
Luke Elementary School.....	8
Marley Park Elementary School.....	8
Rancho Gabriela Elementary School.....	9
Sunset Hills Elementary School.....	10
Surprise Elementary School.....	11
Thompson Ranch Elementary School.....	11
West Point Elementary School.....	12
Sundown Mountain Alternative Program.....	12
Dysart High School.....	13
Willow Canyon High School.....	14
News in Review.....	15
Dysart Finances in Review.....	15
Et Cetera.....	16

Governing Board Members



Diana Bass



Bill Lipscomb



Charles Otterman



Mike Planeta



Laura Ramirez

News In Review

Dysart Wins \$3 Million Reading First Grant

The Dysart Unified School District has received a \$3 million U.S. Department of Education grant to support reading instruction over a three-year period. While the funding from the highly competitive Reading First grant will be focused at four campuses, strategies developed will help to drive improvements across the district.

Analysis: Fastest Growing District in State

An analysis by the Dysart Unified School District shows that the district is the fastest growing in Arizona, increasing 306 percent over the past 10 years. A report prepared by Finance Director Ken Hicks, using state Average Daily Membership data from the past 10 years, shows that Dysart is the fastest-growing school system in Arizona based on cumulative growth over the past five years, and had the largest one-year increase in students. Currently, the district serves over 18,000 students.

Dysart News Now Delivered Via E-Mail

The Dysart Unified School District has launched a new e-mail service to help parents and community members stay in touch with school and district news. The free sign-up for Dysart News is available on the district's website at www.dysart.org. In a recent poll of Dysart residents, 58 percent said the best way for them to get information was via e-mail and the Internet. Strong interest in residents receiving information through electronic communications accelerated the district's plans to launch the Dysart News list service.

Dysart Set to Open 4 Schools in 2006-07

With approval from the Arizona School Facilities Board, the Dysart Unified School District plans to open three elementary schools and the new Valley Vista High School



for the 2006-2007 school year. The plan to open four new schools next year will come in two phases: Elementary School 14 at Greer Ranch and Elementary School 15 at Surprise Farms, along with the district's third high school, will open in Fall 2006; Elementary School 16 at Parkview is expected to open in Spring 2007.

Dysart 'Founder' Honored with New Facility

The Dysart Unified School District's new administrative offices have been named in honor of Nathaniel Dysart, one of the district's original Governing Board members and a prominent local rancher. Mr. Dysart served for 35 years as a member of the board and donated several parcels of land developed into school sites still used today. The Dysart Governing Board named the facility for Mr. Dysart as a way to honor his service to the foundations of the community, while also paying respect to the rich and diverse history of the school district. The new facility is located at 15802 North Parkview Place in Surprise.

40,885 Hours Donated by Dysart Volunteers

With more than 620 parents and community members joining forces to support Dysart Schools, volunteers are playing a significant role in the district's academic improvement plans. Beyond providing office help, school volunteers are working with students on math and reading skills to help advance mastery of the Arizona Academic Standards. More than 40,885 hours of service were donated by parents and community members during the 2005-06 school year. Using the national standard, that time equates to a \$737,565 contribution in service from the community. Currently, there are 399 community members and 228 parents who donate service to the Dysart Unified School District.



Ashton Ranch Elementary School

What a year 2005-2006 has been for us. Wow! We have many successes to celebrate that have occurred this school year.

To further enhance our school culture and recognize outstanding students, the Great Expectations Awards were created to honor students who best exemplify all six Character Counts Pillars. Dozens of students have been honored quarterly at a special evening event.

All of our sports teams demonstrated high levels of commitment, sportsmanship and competitive spirit. Our music program produced five memorable performances. Our art department and club produced over 150 displays for our Art Fair. One of our artists was honored with a summer art scholarship by the West Valley Art Museum. Our band program tripled in size from last year. Between our beginning, intermediate and advanced band students, eight performances were conducted. And two of our Mustangs were honored with selections to the All-State Band. The successes kept on rolling as our Mustang Cheer Squad scored major awards in the District Cheer Competition.

Ashton Ranch has been the benefactor of wonderful support from our community. The Surprise Wal-Mart has

donated over \$3,500 to support student achievement. They have been generous assisting our community with supplying uniforms to families in need. Hope Community Church has provided similar support and their generosity has touched many at Ashton Ranch. Many of our other local businesses have provided support as well, including Chick-Fil-A, Eatza-Pizza, Applebees and Exxon Mobil Corp.

While this support for our learning community has been meaningful, we are proud of the efforts of our students to give back to the community. Our National Junior Honor Society and Student Council have provided community service to our school as well as leading a fundraiser that generated \$2,000 to assist in the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund.

We are equally proud of the support we have received from our parent community. The amount of documented hours of volunteerism has soared this year. Our PTSO has continued to show excellent growth, and our community demonstrated throughout the year that they will support meaningful events for children at school.

Cimarron Springs Elementary School

The Highly Performing Cimarron Springs Elementary School had another fantastic year. A team of teachers received the AzCOTT Grant, a grant designed to integrate technology within the classroom. In conjunction with ASU's west campus, students have created a multitude of projects utilizing laptops, digital video cameras and projectors.

Teachers Ben Goodman and Nichole Pottinger introduced blogs into their classrooms. Blogs are Web-based social networking systems used to help increase communication in the classroom. Mr. Goodman was recognized by the Arizona Technology in Education Alliance for his use of blogs and was quoted in *USA Today* for his classroom innovation. Additionally, Ms. Pottinger was awarded the 2005-06 teacher of the year at Cimarron Springs.

Music Teacher Danae Marinelli and her chorus were moved to action after seeing the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. To support those most impacted by the powerful storm, students on campus collected donations for victims and held a benefit concert to raise funds.

Cimarron Springs' athletics had another championship season led by the boys' basketball team and their back-

to-back Dysart District Championships. Coaches Ches Gessner and Brent Shipley helped the Stallions rally and overcome a 13 point first-half deficit to take their second title in as many years.

Cimarron's PTO generously donated sunshades for both playgrounds, championship banners for our athletic teams, a digital wireless scoreboard for the gymnasium, batting cages and pitching machines for baseball and softball, microscopes for science, and area rugs for kindergarten. The PTO also sponsors a monthly family night at area restaurants.

Lisa Garon and Cheryl Oehler have been included in the upcoming 10th Edition of *Who's Who of American Teachers*. This organization honors the top 5 percent of America's teachers.

Angie Mason, an eighth-grade social studies teacher, has been selected for inclusion in the premiere edition of National Honor Roll's *Outstanding American Teachers 2005-06*. Mason was nominated by former student Shana Shamoon, who is now a Willow Canyon sophomore.

Cimarron Springs demonstrated that being Highly Performing is more than a label; it is an attitude and ethic that guides our great school.

Countryside Elementary School

The 2005-2006 school year was a busy and exciting session at Countryside Elementary School! Our staff and students are proud of their achievements and celebrated the school year in many ways. Here are only some of our accomplishments:

One of our most successful programs has been recognizing our Star Students of the Month (Laura Stevenson, committee chair). Each month various students were recognized for their strengths in using Character Counts traits. Countryside students enjoy getting involved in and making a difference in their school and community.

Our Leo Club (Kathy Miller, sponsor) had many activities throughout the school year. They adopted a family for the winter holiday and had a clothing and toy drive. The club volunteered their services working at the Westside Food Bank throughout the year. They also held a sock, underwear and toiletries drive.

Morning announcements moved forward with live news programs. Students A.J. Chorak, Izzy Salazar and Kylie Cell anchored our news desk and presented all announcements and school information in a live "news team" atmosphere.

The PTA (Kelly Argust, president) sponsored several Family Movie Nights, Book Fairs, a Holiday Gift Shop and a See's Candy Fundraiser. They purchased several new picnic tables and sports equipment for the school. They also donated new books to all students who had clear library accounts.

The Yearbook Club (Ellen Turer and JoAnn Lara, sponsors) worked hard to achieve their goal of Countryside's first full-color yearbook. Seventh grader Julie Baxter designed our winning cover for the yearbook.

Sixth grader Sidne Wills was our Spelling Bee winner and runner-up was fourth grader Ariana Rodriguez. Sidne competed in the District Spelling Bee where she won first place.

During Teacher Appreciation Week, Countryside teachers were treated to a breakfast held in their honor. Seventh and eighth grade art students, along with teacher Mita Desai, designed an appreciation banner on which the students drew characters of each teacher.

Countryside would like to thank their many volunteers for all of their help. Throughout the year they have provided support and help to our staff and students. They have been so dedicated and have clocked many hours supporting our school.





Dysart Elementary School

Dysart Elementary was, once again, the place for Eagles to soar in 2005-2006. As we continue to move forward in developing our vision for what Dysart will become, it is important that we take the time to reflect and celebrate the wonderful year that was at our school:

Bev Zwick and Linda Heck authored learning units that were accepted by the Core Knowledge Foundation for presentation at its national conference in San Antonio, Texas. The units will be published by the foundation for use by other teachers around the country.

Our Spring Carnival and World's Fair was an amazing success, with many families coming out for an evening of games, food, and even a petting zoo!

Parent University was offered for parents to come and learn about topics that directly related to helping their children be successful.

Each month, DES sponsored "Coffee with the Principals." While enjoying a variety of refreshments, community members were invited to dialogue with administration on a variety of important issues.

Educational grants were rewarded to four DES teachers, Margarita Vasquez, Susan Knutson, Lisa Gura and

Khristina Sorge, as they sought ways to provide additional learning materials and experiences for our students.

Dysart Elementary was selected as a "Benchmark School" by the Arizona Department of Education.

Our talent show was an enormous success! Students from a variety of grade levels took to the stage to demonstrate their many talents, from singing to comedy.

Our Gear Up program sponsored several trips to Arizona universities to allow sixth through eighth graders the opportunity to get a "sneak preview" of their bright future.

For Read Across America Day, DES hosted many exciting activities, including a visit by members of the Arizona Sting lacrosse team to read to our students.

On a sad note, Lisa Hastings, a long-time member of the DES family, passed away in April. Ms. Hastings, who served in many capacities including Literacy Specialist, will be missed and the staff is committed to continuing her vision for exemplary reading instruction for all students.

El Mirage Elementary School

El Mirage Elementary began the 2005-2006 school year implementing the Make Your Day program for students and staff. Teachers were trained during the summer and students received training at the beginning of the year. The premise of Make Your Day is, "No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety and well-being of students and staff." This year has seen a major improvement in student behavior.

Academic goals for El Mirage Elementary focused on increased achievement in math, reading and written communication. Teachers and staff worked hard during the year to ensure student progress. Given that El Mirage made Academic Yearly Progress under NCLB and Performing Plus under AZ Learns during 2004-2005, the academic bar was raised to increased student achievement. In an effort to increase achievement in math, teachers and staff implemented benchmark testing every six weeks. Benchmark testing was also implemented in 6-Trait writing across all grades and continued in reading through the Success for All reading program.

El Mirage students were again participants in tutoring programs focused on academic skill development.

Classes in math and reading were the focus with teachers reporting student progress in their programs.

El Mirage became the first school in the district to feature "Breakfast in the Classroom" affording all students the opportunity to eat a nourishing breakfast before instruction begins each morning.

A major emphasis this year was to increase parent participation. Both the PTO and Site Council have met throughout the year and parents have actively participated in these groups. El Mirage has also seen an increase in parent participation learning English. Twice weekly parents meet at the school's computer lab to engage in English language acquisition.

Clubs such as National Junior Honor Society and NASA Space Club have seen increases in student participation.

A special event occurred at school in May as El Mirage was selected by SeaWorld for a private performance for students. Shamu and friends visited the campus to present their program which coincided with the ocean study unit.

Overall, the school year has been successful and we look forward to continuing our emphasis on academic achievement and student success.

Kingswood Elementary School

This has been an incredible year of change at Kingswood. The campus has had significant remodeling and construction. Most of the construction began last spring and continued until this May. The bus lane was moved to the north side of the campus, allowing the parent pick-up and drop-off lane to be extended and visitor parking to be added to the front of the campus. The administrative office area was remodeled to improve campus safety and efficiency. Two additional kindergarten classrooms were created to accommodate full-day kindergarten. A new library addition was constructed on the east side of the campus and the existing library was converted into a new gymnasium. Chalkboards were replaced with dry erase whiteboards and most of the student furniture was replaced. Despite the challenges of having construction going during the school year, the end results made it all worthwhile.

Kingswood is also welcoming the arrival of a new principal for next year. Brett Richards will be leading the school next year. He has been working with Paul Tighe

to ensure a smooth transition and is looking forward to a great year with the students, staff and community at Kingswood. After five years at Kingswood, Mr. Tighe is taking on a new challenge by opening one of the district's new schools.

There have been many great things happening in the classrooms across the campus. Students and staff have adapted well to the full-day kindergarten program implemented this year. The first grade teachers are anxious to begin working with next year's first grade students after they have had so much more learning time. The teachers are anxious to receive the results from this spring's AIMS testing to reflect growth in student achievement this year.

Luke Elementary School

From the sounds of the Phoenix Symphony to the Arizona Opera Company we've heard it all this year! Throughout the school the productive sounds of learning could be heard. Students participated in the Jump Rope for Heart program under the direction of Mr. Francis and raised money to research heart disease. We continued our partnership with The New Heart Society and raised organ donor awareness by participating in the poster contest. National Junior Honor Society and Student council sponsored a St. Mary's/Westside Food Bank food drive bringing in hundreds of pounds of food. Ms. Nichols' students reached out to those serving in Iraq by writing letters of appreciation.

The Luke Chapter of National Junior Honor Society was formed this year with seven members with Mrs. Otte as advisor. We look forward to watching this program grow each year.

Our Cheer Squad under the direction of Ms. Marquez competed and brought home trophies. We also joined the annual MATHCOUNTS competition season and gained valuable experience for next year.

While the older students were busy, kindergartners were equally busy. This was Luke's first year of all-day

Kindergarten. Mrs. Espitia reports that teachers have seen a lot of growth in their students and formed closer relationships with students and parents. Mrs. Akers in second grade shared that her students participated in units of study that supported the standards, but made learning fun.

Thanks to Mrs. Larson, we had a big helping of "Opera Soup." We were inspired by the beautiful voices of the Arizona Opera Company. Our holiday season show delighted parents with songs about the yuletide season. Jet Singers also performed. In February, we welcomed the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra to Luke and all in attendance sat in absolute amazement at the beauty of the music. Jet Singers Choir and choirs from around the Dysart School District joined together for our third annual Dysart Sings Choir Festival. In April, our talented student musicians and artists presented the annual Luke Talent Show. We are very proud of our students who worked so hard to make this event such a successful one!

Luke students are faster, stronger and brighter, and continue to soar.

Marley Park Elementary School

Marley Park Elementary School's focus on academics and character education, in conjunction with family and community involvement, were the key factors for another successful school year. As the 2005-2006 school year came to a close, we continued to bustle with activities from honoring student achievement with parents and family, to innovative classroom projects.

In kindergarten, we put on a wonderful winter program and took a trip together to the Wildlife World Zoo. We also had many visitors from firefighters to a dentist.

In the first grade, students toured the Challenger Space Center in Peoria in March. We learned many interesting facts about space and some children decided they wanted to be astronauts.

Students in the second grade participated in "Traditions Around the World." Students got their passports stamped and were on their way to learning about the countries and traditions of Ireland, Italy, Mexico and Germany.

In the third grade, we participated in numerous readers' theater productions. We were also fortunate to be able to visit the Arizona Science Center for hands-on learning. We produced the play *Bugz*, and performed for the primary grades.

Fourth graders collected more than \$600 as part of their Read-a-thon Fundraiser. Monies were used to present the school library with an Arbor Day book about trees.

Fifth graders became reading mentors for our second-grade students. A scientific relationship formed between the second and fifth grade students, as the fifth grade fostered their love for science.

All sixth-grade classes studied the cultures of great civilizations. A Publishing Party was held for parents as we published and presented our first major body of writing, "All About Me."

In the seventh grade, projects such as an outdoor weather station, advanced math classes, an accelerated writing Young Author's Group and web quests into ancient civilization, continued to both engage and challenge all students.

Evidence of the eighth-grade dedication was demonstrated through their enthusiasm and commitment to providing Marley Park with a trophy case to the school.



Rancho Gabriela **Elementary School**

Every day, every minute counts. That is our motto. Even with the challenges of opening our new school, Rancho Gabriela staff kept academics as a priority.

Our kindergarten year was a grand success. All kindergarten children were at or above the winter benchmark and we expect the same for our spring assessment.

Rancho Gabriela's first grade children read their way through the year learning about space, the ocean and the rainforest. We had enormous growth in our technology skills, addition and subtraction and writing.

Second grade students have achieved many accomplishments. We've written all types of genre, read numerous fiction and non-fiction books, learned to tell time to five minutes, counted money, added and subtracted with regrouping, and worked on place value.

Third grade staff enjoys challenge. Students studied the state standards and teachers allowed their assessments to drive instruction. With exciting projects and focused objectives, third graders used the rich resources available to make this school year a huge success.

Fourth graders grew leaps and bounds this year. As a grade level we learned from each other and shared ideas.

Teacher collaboration ensured standards were being met. We were appreciative of the help and support we provided each other.

Fifth grade students learned how to write expressively. Students enjoyed learning about natural disasters, the solar system and early United States history.

Our sixth grade students traveled back in time to Ancient Cities and Civilizations, as well as applying the scientific process in many areas.

We are proud of our seventh and eighth grade students for their willingness to learn to develop critical thinking skills. Students were brought to a whole new level in mathematics. Learning was fun when using hands-on algebra. Language Arts class stressed application of literary elements to a variety of genres. Social Studies offered students an opportunity to better themselves through studies of the U.S. Constitution. Science students have enjoyed working in our lab applying what they have learned in class to real-life situations.

Despite the many challenges, inherent in opening a new school, our year has been filled with social and academic successes.

Sunset Hills Elementary School

Sunset Hills Elementary School began its first journey on August 21, 2006 with 900 students excitedly walking through the doors. The school year began with high expectations and achievement as the guiding forces of the school. "Excellence, everyday" is the motto of Sunset Hills, and this was evidenced by our students' academic achievement and excellent behavior from the outset.

The teaching team of Sunset Hills quickly set a positive tone for student achievement by conducting monthly assessments of students to aide in driving instructional decisions. Instruction was geared to meet the challenges faced by all students as well as to expand their understanding of grade level curriculum. Throughout the year, our students have gone beyond expectations in their academic achievement and excellent school behavior.

In addition, Sunset Hills was established with excellent parental support. Our parents have stepped to the forefront of parent involvement in many areas. In November, our parents donated over \$9,000 to go directly toward our new playground equipment, and that vision was realized in January as our playgrounds arrived. In addition, our parents have supported our teachers as volunteers,

through membership in the PTO and with outstanding support of school endeavors from home.

Throughout the year, Sunset Hills Elementary has seen many clubs and activities begin. These extra-curricular opportunities allow students to extend their school day and expand their areas of interest. Our football, volleyball, cheer, basketball, soccer, baseball and softball teams competed well within our district league, with the girls' soccer team finishing fourth in the Dysart tournament, and the girls' softball team finishing second. In addition, our choir and band programs began in earnest with our choir performing for the Kiwanis Club in December, representing the school well. Finally, the Student Council and National Junior Honor Society began their quest for excellence, allowing our students opportunities for leadership.

This has been an excellent first year of school at Sunset Hills Elementary School. Our students, parents, teachers and community have established a great community for learning. We look forward to the coming years with eager anticipation of our students' many successes. Go Bobcats!



Surprise Elementary School

The opening of our new campus brought many opportunities. We continue to seek creative, research-based solutions that keep us moving toward our mission and vision of lifetime learners, building a premier place for everyone to learn, grow and succeed.

The completion of the school year comes with the opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments as we prepare for next year. The most important accomplishments occurring as a result of the incredible students, supportive parents and caring teachers at Surprise Elementary.

We are all proud of the progress that we have made this year. There were so many important accomplishments. For example, the opening of the school year was a great example of the team work that Surprise Elementary is proud of. We started our school year at Rancho Gabriela; with the support of district office personnel and Rancho Gabriela staff, the teachers at Surprise were able to focus their energy on teaching and learning.

We have had many successful events this year such as our Kinder Rodeo and our Kinder Make-n-Take nights. Jump Rope for Heart successfully collected over \$1,200.

Our winter celebration was a big hit with everyone, featuring our choir and band.

In February our school set a goal to read 500,000 pages to celebrate Read Across America. To reward students for reaching their goal, Principal David Dumon agreed to have pies thrown at him from the class that collectively read the most pages. Ann Cox's kindergarten class was the winner, reading 37,915 pages.

The student athletes at Surprise excelled in sports this year. The boys' flag football team and soccer team both won championship for Surprise Elementary and the basketball team took second place in the tournament. The girls' soccer, basketball and softball teams all played in championship matches. Girls' soccer and basketball took second place in both tournaments and the Surprise Lady Cubs proudly finished the year with a championship in softball.

We have had a fantastic year at Surprise Elementary. With continued collaboration between, parents, staff and community members, our students will develop into lifetime learners.

Thompson Ranch Elementary School

The students and staff of Thompson Ranch Elementary have had an exciting year of cool activities.

Thompson Ranch's Family Reading Night was a great success. Jared Hedden, a fifth-grade teacher, organized this event which brought nearly 300 people to our school. Parents were given tips, in English and Spanish, on helping their children with reading and homework. Six teachers hosted sessions in their classrooms for students and their parents. Dozens of prizes were raffled off to students who came. The biggest hit was the Book Swap. In the weeks before the event, students brought in books they no longer wanted. They received a Book Buck for each one. On the night of the event, more than 1,700 books were exchanged!

Kindergarten classes had a very successful Pajama Party in the fall to help parents learn their role in educating their children and helping them develop reading skills and strategies.

The Spring Festival was a big hit with the Thompson Ranch community. More than \$4,000 was earned to support the school. Power 92.3 FM along with various

restaurants and businesses donated time and resources to make our festival a success.

The seventh-grade Language Arts classes at Thompson Ranch Elementary School, led by Veronica Vasquez, coordinated three showcases this past year to exhibit students' outstanding writing and corresponding projects. The first showcase allowed students to write about themselves and also honor a person of their choice. Students made display boards with pictures of the person they wrote about. The second showcase was centered on poetry. Ten students and two faculty members read their unique poetry to students, parents and staff. All other students had their poetry books, filled with their own poetry, on display. The third showcase sparked the creative minds of our seventh graders. They were to create a new character for *The Wizard of Oz* and state the characteristic their character was portraying. The turn-out for all three events was amazing. Several parents, family members, friends and faculty and staff came to support the remarkable work of our students.

West Point Elementary School

“Going From Good to Great” has been a resounding theme throughout the West Point learning community this past year. West Point has always been known as a “Good” school we desire to become a “GREAT” school and believe we have the students, staff and community to make this happen. When the AIMS scores were announced earlier this year the school was excited to learn that according to the Annual Measurable Objectives, set by the Arizona Department of Education, West Point is already performing at the expected level for the year 2011. The majority of our students are currently meeting the state standards at all grade levels, in all content areas. Our goal is to move our students from the “Meeting the Standards” level to the “Exceeding the Standards” level of achievement.

Many celebrations have been held this year, all connecting the school with the community. Hundreds of parents joined us on campus this year to participate in the Pilgrims’ Pride Picnic, Read Across America, Family Math Night, Science Fair, Invention Convention, Spring

Band Concert and the many other individual classroom celebrations that were held.

Jeanna Caywood, a third-grade teacher, was named as the West Point Teacher of the Year for 2006 and Susan McDoniel, a first-grade teacher, was named the Walmart Teacher of the Year for the Surprise area. Both of these teachers have been nominated to be named as the Arizona Teacher of the Year for 2006.

More than 20 of our sixth-grade students had poems published in the *Celebration of Young Poets* book for the 2005-2006 school year. We are also proud of our athletic teams. The girls’ volleyball and basketball teams each brought home first place trophies this year.

Even though this year was one of the best years ever for West Point Elementary School, we are already looking forward to great things happening on campus and in each classroom next year. Our goal is to become a “Highly Performing” or “Excelling” school and we are well on the way to achieving just that.

Sundown Mountain Alternative Program

With a small campus, 80 students and five teachers, you might say this couldn’t be a very productive high school, but take a closer look. Sundown Mountain has a commitment to excellence. During AIMS testing Sundown’s attendance was over 95 percent for reading, writing and mathematics. Sundown also allows students not only to get their credits faster, but also gives each student equal opportunities to succeed. This is a school team where learning is mandatory and 100 percent is expected.

At Sundown we work hard, but at the same time have fun. We took a time out when Al Simmons of McFarlane Enterprises came through. The original Spawn and his crew were part of our many speakers who visited our campus. Sundown also knows how to give back to the community; Sundown participated in the Sock Drive and the Can Food Drive. During the food drive, we banked in 10 cans per student, leaving us with the highest percentage of cans per student in the district.

Sundown played well on the road as we made a few stops at the College of Culinary Arts, Estrella Mountain

Community College and the Arizona Science Museum of Technology. Twenty-four students, including Marvin Laurence, Mikiela Ayala and Kim Bush as the planning team captains, all scored big at the Youth Leadership Conference.

Twenty yearbook students worked overtime to produce the yearbook for Sundown. Sanja Malkoc and Lisa Ojeda were the top playmakers.

Sundown Mountain collected monies for the World Vision by having a 30-hour fast and collecting \$120. Later Lisa Ojeda and Sanja Malkoc went and saw what it was like to be a disc jockey at radio station 95.1. In January, the KPHO-TV 5 weather team blew through and visited our school. Sundown students also howled with the Coyotes at Coyotes Career Day at the Glendale Arena. We had five representatives and one sponsor attend the Annual National Hispanic Women’s Conference in September. Sundown showed their teamwork as they brought in over \$500 donating art carts to the Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

~ by Jake Haley and Samantha Forbush

Dysart High School

The rebirth of Dysart High School was completed this year and Demon Pride found its way back on campus. With construction completed prior to the beginning of the school year, students and staff were welcomed to one of the finest high school facilities in the West Valley.

The faculty and administration set high goals for themselves and the students. Dysart renewed its focus on the core subjects of reading, writing and math.

The students reached out to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and were able to donate over \$3,500 to the relief efforts. It was a campus-wide opportunity to help those who were in need.

Throughout the entire year there were sounds on campus that had been absent in years past. The DHS Band returned with vigor and energy thanks to its new director, Mark Weber. The Scarlet Demon Regiment filled pep assemblies, football games and the auditorium with the excitement only a band can bring. From the APS Holiday Light Parade to multiple competitions, the Regiment made Dysart proud.

DHS students were not limited to the campus for their successes, the internationally ranked Key Club made their presence known throughout the surrounding community. Their efforts in helping with the Rock n' Roll Paint-a-Thon, March of Dimes, Read and Lead and other activities helped those in need.

Athletically, the Demons were able to reach new heights of competition. From the girls' volleyball team to the boys' baseball team, DHS sports were another source of pride.

The 2006 school year brought on new challenges for the seniors. Needing to pass all three portions of the AIMS test was another hurdle before graduation. DHS teachers reached out to the seniors in need and offered in-depth tutoring that proved to be more than successful, as evidenced by the increased AIMS scores.

Whether it was through our many clubs, multiple new Career and Technical Education courses, or the opportunity to learn something new, Dysart High School students and staff take pride in a flourishing academic environment for this school year and many more to come. We invite you to see what's happening on our campus.



Willow Canyon High School

At the Arizona Interscholastic Association One Act Play Competition, WCHS received the only Superior rating for *Wiley and the Hairy Man*. The cast was also named “Best Ensemble” for the two-day competition. Theater teacher Carol Swinney shares: “I never cease to experience the most incredible emotion when I stand in the booth and watch our students in performance. All of a sudden, I look at them and think ‘Who are you and where did this magic come from?’ It doesn’t matter if it’s a student who has performed all of his life or a student who is experiencing performance for the first time ... the looks on their faces, the light in their eyes cannot be reproduced, cannot be simulated, cannot be described.”

The English Department began the year by participating in a workshop on teaching Shakespeare through performance. Many teachers adopted these ideas into their classrooms. We began Willow Canyon’s poetry night, where teachers and students alike shared their poetry. We introduced advanced creative writing, film analysis, and speech and debate classes to our course selection this year, with many students choosing to take an English elective.

The Art Department held its annual art exhibit in May to showcase student work from the school year. Artworks included drawings, paintings, sculpture, ceramics and mixed-media pieces. Styles and subject matter included realism, surrealism, abstraction, portraiture, still life, human form studies, and found object construction.

The Concert Band performed at the State Concert Band Festival and their energy was tremendous. After the competition, director Julie Trent arrived with the results packet and the students crowded around for the announcement. As Miss Trent finished the sentence, “You earned a Superior with Distinction,” the excited students jumped with joy, hugged each other, cried, handed the plaque to each other, and cheered. When the initial explosion of new-found energy calmed, Miss Trent asked the students if they wanted to know what Superior with Distinction meant. The band members said, “YES!” “It means you received a superior rating from every judge. This is the highest rating that is given to high school bands.”



News In Review

Presiding Judge Empowers High School Panel

Maricopa County Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Ronan swore-in members of the Criminal Justice Club at Dysart High School to hear certain delinquent cases and assigned approved consequences on behalf of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Dysart High became one of several such authorized Teen Courts in the Valley.

New Freshmen 'Cruise' into High School

Dysart's high schools are looking for a few incoming freshmen looking to take a summer cruise. Incoming high school freshmen will have an opportunity to experience high school courses in a fun setting this summer. To help students in the Class of 2010 feel prepared to learn and to fit in at their school, we invite them to sail aboard the "S.S. Dysart" during the Summer Cruise Camp.

Programs Flourish with Sun Health Aid

High school students in the Dysart Unified School District are getting their "apple a day," thanks to an innovative community health education program offered by Sun Health. As the first of its kind in the Valley, the Sun Health "Apple a Day" program is designed to enhance young bodies and minds by motivating and helping students to maintain and improve their health, prevent disease and reduce health-related risk behaviors. The "Apple a Day" program is a helpful supplement for teachers and school administrators, providing classes on medical, science, health and healthcare careers to students.

H.S. 3 Gets a Name: Valley Vista High School

Dysart's High School No. 3, currently under construction in Surprise, was formally given its identity by the Dysart Unified School District Governing Board. The board approved the name (Valley Vista High School), colors (Purple, Black and Silver) and mascot (Monsoon) for the district's newest high school.



International Baccalaureate World School

Willow Canyon High School has successfully completed the two-year authorization process to become an International Baccalaureate World School. Willow Canyon is one of nine high schools in the state of Arizona to be Diploma Programme authorized. There are currently 44 sophomores who will begin taking IB courses during the 2006-2007 school year.

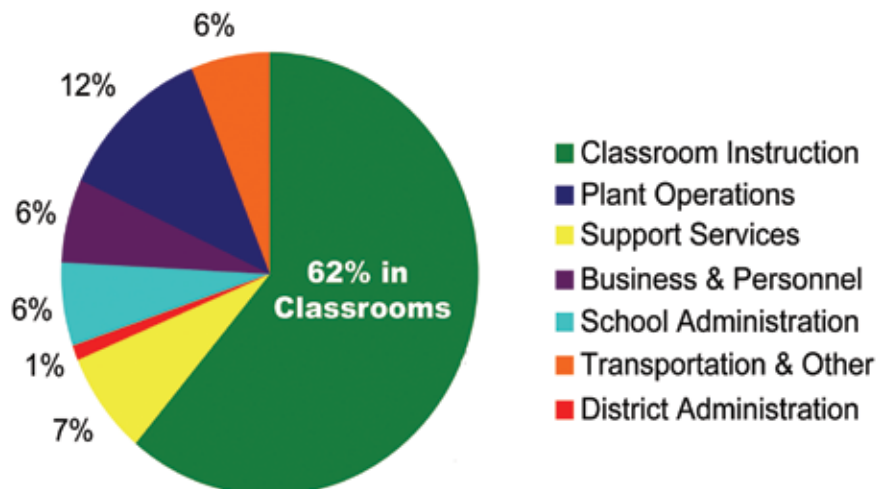
Volunteers Donate 1,149 Backpacks to Dysart

Thanks to the help of some dedicated community members, more than 1,000 students in the Dysart Unified School District received new, supply-filled school backpacks to start the academic year off right. The School Backpack Program, based in Sun City Grand, donated more about 1,150 backpacks to students in Dysart Schools. The program has been raising funds and donating backpacks since 1998.

Dysart Finances In Review

This pie chart represents a breakdown of the district's Maintenance and Operations Budget from fiscal year 2006.

This year, 62 percent of all M&O funds were spent in Dysart classrooms, an increase of 3 percent over the previous year. Only 1 percent of the budget was spent on district administration.



Dysart *Communication Tools*

As part of the district's commitment to ongoing communications with the community, the Dysart Unified School District introduced a trio of new tools this year to help parents and community members stay in contact with the latest district news and events.

A four-month project to create a new district website involved researching other school and organization websites, analyzing the district's existing website, and reviewing frequent questions or comments from community members. The new www.dysart.org site includes a refined organization structure to help users find key information more efficiently. Sections are devoted to helping people "Get Involved," and there are pages designed specifically for those "New to Dysart" as well as "Parents and Students." Employment opportunities, news headlines, school information and a complete listing of department contacts are also featured.

An online application developed by a district team allows schools to easily enter information on events, meetings and deadlines. Parents and community members can search for events by school

and month by visiting <http://calendar.dysart.org>. The system is even flexible enough to allow two schools to be queried at the same time, helping parents who may have children at two campuses.

Dysart's third new communication tool is the Dysart News E-Mail List for parents and community members. The free sign-up for the Dysart News list is available on the district's website at www.dysart.org. Subscribers will receive regular e-mails about district news, and a weekly summary of events and activities at Dysart's elementary and high schools. By subscribing, parents and community members will have immediate access to breaking district news, without waiting to read it in the newspaper or hear about it during a school meeting. To self subscribe, visit: www.dysart.org and look for the Dysart News link.

The new Dysart website, e-mail news list and online calendar join Dysart-TV99, available to all Cox Cable subscribers in the district, as 24/7 methods for parents and community members to stay "tuned in" to district news and events.

**EXPLORE
YOUR
POTENTIAL**

Dysart Community Education offers youth *and* adult enrichment classes throughout the summer. Learn more by calling 623.876.7056 or log on to dysart.org and click on 'Community Education.'

**IN A
DYSART
ENRICHMENT
CLASS**

School starts **August 21** for Dysart students!

Governing Board

Diana Bass
Bill Lipscomb
Charles Otterman
Mike Planeta
Laura Ramirez

District Administration

Mark Maksimowicz, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Gail Pletnick, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
Denise Birdwell, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Lynn Montanya
Executive Director of Human Resources/Legal Counsel
Scott Thompson
Executive Director of Business Services

Timothy Tait, Public Information Officer
Editor

Jennea Bono, Communications Specialist
Graphic Designer and Photographer



The mission of the Dysart Unified School District is to ensure that our students achieve academic success and make responsible life choices through a bold, distinctive educational system that cultivates their innate gifts, provides multiple opportunities and inspiration for unlimited learning in a safe environment and sustains effective community and family relationships.

Dysart Unified School District No.89

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