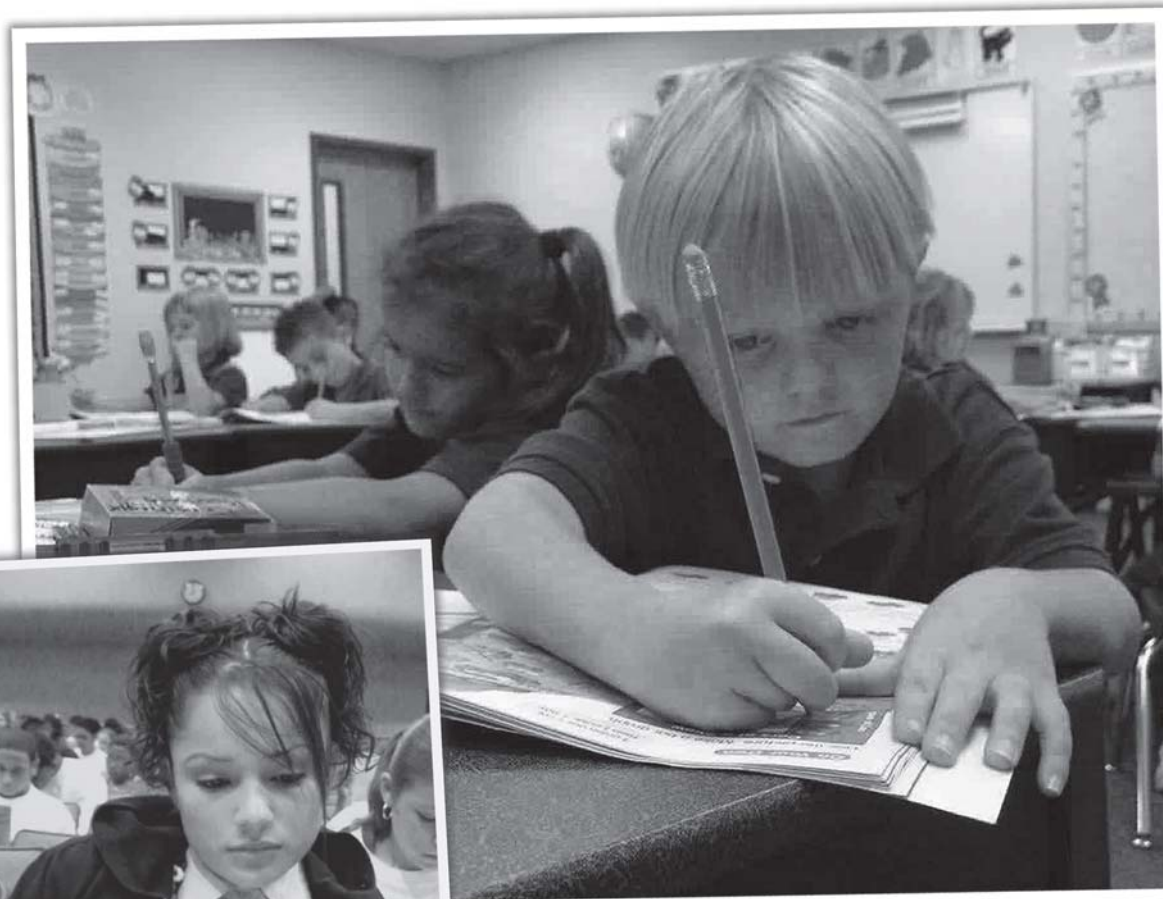


Dysart achiever

Dysart Unified School District No. 89

Volume 2, Number 2

November 2005



Tax Credits

Performance Profiles

New Schools

Town Hall Meetings

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Growth and Construction

The dirt is moving at the corner of Greenway Road and Parkview Place for Surprise's newest high school, and new offices for the Dysart Unified School District. Construction on both projects started this summer.

The yet-unnamed High School 3 is expected to have limited facilities available for students in grades 9 and 10 next



fall. The new school will continue to support our growing community, featuring exciting college prep and career-and-technical

education classes, including a Culinary Arts program. The campus will cost more than \$33 million, funded by Dysart taxpayers and the Arizona School Facilities Board, with support for some features provided by the City of Surprise. This new campus will be able to accommodate more than 2,500 students in a facility very similar to Willow Canyon High School.

The Dysart Unified School District is already making plans for High School 4, which will likely open in 2008. Elementary 14 at Greer Ranch and Elementary 15 at Surprise Farms are also under construction and will welcome students next school year.

The Dysart district is building a 40,000-square-foot administration center next to High School 3. The new offices will include a large meeting room for Governing Board and community meetings. Voters authorized funding for the project in 2002 through a bond election which also supported reconstruction of several older campuses, and a preschool facility as part of Elementary School 15. The new district office is expected to open in 2006.

Join Us

Town Hall Meeting

Nov. 30 at 7 p.m.

Willow Canyon High School, Auditorium

Topics of discussion:

School Construction, Enrollment and Financing

Second Annual Growth Forum

Jan. 18 at 7 p.m.

Willow Canyon High School, Auditorium

Topics of discussion:

Growth and Boundaries

Premier in 5 Update



When he joined the Dysart Unified School District last year, Superintendent Mark Maksimowicz said the district would become a “premier” school system in five years. With less than four years to go, parents, staff and

community members are working together to help define what “premier” is and how Dysart will make improvements for every student.

Earlier this year, Dysart launched an aggressive Input and Dialogue Initiative to collect information on the current status of Dysart Schools. This process has four elements:

- School-by-School Input Meetings
- School Staff Climate Studies
- Student Performance Data Analysis
- Parent, Community Leader and Student Surveying

Progress has been made in each of these areas. Most campuses have held their Input Meetings, most staff members have had an opportunity to give input on their school and

- Academics
- Staff
- Leadership Capacity
- Family and Community

What makes a school premier? It has to be more than good test scores. The Dysart Unified School District wants to hear from all members of the community on what makes a school system premier. A copy of the initial elements of premier is available on the web at www.dysart.org or at any Dysart school. Parents, students, staff and community members are invited to continue submitting input on what a premier school system is, and how Dysart can make those improvements.

Elements of Premier a few examples

Academics

Advanced Placement Classes/ Gifted and Talented Programs
Performance Labels/Adequate Yearly Progress
Curriculum Above State Standards
Focused on Learning, Not Test Taking
Before and After School Programs
Meeting the Needs of the Workforce

Staff

National Board Certification
High Morale Among All Staff
Well-Managed Classrooms
Student Expression and Freedom Valued
Professional Development
Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Family & Community

School-Business Partnerships
Supporting Diversity
Intergenerational Programs
Active Volunteer Program/Active Community Dialogue
Mentoring Programs for Staff and Students

Leadership Capacity

Professional Learning Communities
Growing Smart
Good Stewards of Fiscal Resources
Environmentally Responsible
Coordinated Relationships with Support Organizations
Equality Among Campuses



the district, analysis of student performance data continues with comprehensive AIMS information available to staff and community members, and the district is working on surveys for students and community members.

All of this information will help the Dysart community identify how the district can become premier. In fact, more than 75 “elements of premier” have been developed by administrators and members of the district’s Governing Board. These elements are in four focus areas:

‘Performing’ or better

School achievement profiles issued by the Arizona Department of Education reflect Performing and Performing Plus designations for most schools in the Dysart Unified School District.

The Arizona school accountability system, known as AZ LEARNS, gives schools annual achievement profiles that are listed as: Excelling, Highly Performing, Performing

Plus, Performing, Underperforming and Failing. The system was designed to provide community members with a fair comparison among the state’s public schools. Profiles were first issued in 2003.

Dysart’s two newest schools – Rancho Gabriela and Sunset Hills – did not qualify for achievement profiles this year. Surprise Elementary

School’s profile was designated as Underperforming.

Over the past year, Dysart’s new leadership team led by Superintendent Mark Maksimowicz has worked to better align classroom instruction with state standards, focus the use of financial resources to support academic progress, improve staff development, and maximize the use of classroom time.

“We are seeing the hard work of our staff reflected in these positive achievement profiles,” said Dr. Maksimowicz. “This is a team effort with everyone in the district dedicated to improving the academic performance of every student. Change can be a difficult process, but the district’s staff and educators have worked hard to show improvements. Dysart will continue to grow and develop as a premier system for children to learn. We have made progress, but the challenge continues.”

For the 2003-2004 school year, Dysart had six schools designated as Performing, with one Failing campus. The school once labeled as Failing – El Mirage Elementary – has undergone significant restructuring to make immediate improvements. Dysart administrators, however, are focusing on improving every school in the district, taking lessons from El Mirage to apply at other campuses.

Achievement Profiles for 2004-2005:

Ashton Ranch Elementary	Performing
Cimarron Springs Elementary	Performing Plus
Countryside Elementary	Performing
Dysart Elementary	Performing
Dysart High	Performing
El Mirage Elementary	Performing Plus
Kingswood Elementary	Performing Plus
Luke Elementary	Performing
Marley Park Elementary	Performing Plus
Surprise Elementary	Underperforming
Thompson Ranch Elementary	Performing
West Point Elementary	Performing Plus
Willow Canyon High	Performing Plus

The requirements for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and AZ LEARNS build upon Dysart’s commitment to a Continuous Improvement Process, which includes setting goals and evaluating programs and services. With the Continuous Improvement Plan, Dysart is able to better respond to needs identified through these mandates to ensure that no child is left behind at any stage of his or her education.

“Dysart Schools will continue to make progress. These achievement profiles provide validation for our efforts but do not signify an end to our work,” Dr. Maksimowicz said. “The Dysart Unified School District is becoming a premier school system. Each day we make progress by remaining focused on the needs of each student. The support and work of our staff, administrators, Governing Board members, parents and volunteers will continue to advance our mission to become premier.”





Support **Dysart Schools** and receive a **dollar-for-dollar** state tax credit!

It's easy!

Pick an extra-curricular activity and school to support. Fill out this form and mail it with your donation to:

Dysart Unified School District
Attn: Tax Credit Program
11405 North Dysart Road
El Mirage, AZ 85335

Apply my tax credit to the following school:

- Dysart High
- Willow Canyon High
- Ashton Ranch Elementary
- Cimarron Springs Elementary
- Countryside Elementary
- Dysart Elementary
- El Mirage Elementary
- Kingswood Elementary
- Luke Elementary
- Marley Park Elementary
- Rancho Gabriela Elementary
- Sunset Hills Elementary
- Surprise Elementary
- Thompson Ranch Elementary
- West Point Elementary

For more information, turn the page or visit us on the web at:

www.dysart.org



Couples filing joint taxes may donate up to **\$300**
Individuals up to **\$200**

Name: _____

Social Security #: (optional) _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Amount Donated: _____

I want to support:

- School May Designate Use
- Enrichment Programs
- Athletics
- Fine Arts
- Clubs

100%
of your donation goes to
the activity and school
you choose



School Tax Credit

Commonly Asked Questions

What is a tax credit?

Arizona Law (ARS 43-1089.01) allows **married couples filing jointly a tax credit of up to \$300** and **individual taxpayers a tax credit of up to \$200** when they contribute to extra-curricular activities in public schools. This tax credit is available to all who reside in Arizona and have a tax liability at least equal to that of their donation. You **DO NOT** have to be a parent of a child in school to benefit from this law. Corporations are not eligible. Contributions are donated directly to schools. This means your donations are used directly to support student activities in the Dysart School of your choice.

A tax credit is a full refund of your money provided you have a tax liability equaling or exceeding your donation. For example, if you have an \$850 Arizona State tax liability and you make a \$300 donation to a public school, \$300 is subtracted from your tax liability. Then, you would owe only \$550. A husband and wife who file separate returns for a taxable year for which they could have filed jointly may each claim only one-half of the \$300 tax credit that would have been allowed for the joint return. Deadline to make a donation is December 31 of each year.

To claim the tax credit, taxpayers must contribute to an extra-curricular activity for which the school district requires a fee or funds to operate

the program. Extra-curricular activities are optional, noncredit, educational activities that are offered before, during or after school hours. Examples include field trips, enrichment activities, athletic and music programs, and after school clubs.

How do I receive my tax credit?

Please do the following if you would like to receive the tax credit:

- Fill out the Arizona Tax Credit Request form on page 5 and remove it by cutting along the dotted line. Attach your check



made payable to the Dysart Unified School District. Be sure to designate which school you wish to support.

- Indicate on the response form how you would like your donation to be used. If you have no preference, you may choose the category "School may designate program use."
- You can make your contribution in person at any Dysart school or you can mail this form to the District Office (address on reverse). Upon payment, a pre-numbered receipt will be mailed to you for tax reporting purposes. Please place this form with your other tax preparation documents.

What do I do when I prepare my taxes?

Show your pre-numbered receipt to your tax preparer, who should have ARIZONA FORM 322 to report your tax credit. This form is also available on the Department of Revenue web site (www.revenue.state.az.us).

Because Dysart must keep strict records of the funds received and report their use to the state, there will be no refunds should you discover that you do not have a tax liability to cover the tax credit. However, you would be able to carry the credit forward for up to five years.

School Raises Money for Katrina Victims

More than 500 people enjoyed the Katrina Benefit Concert at Cimarron Springs Elementary School. This was a powerful example of team effort as music teacher Danae Marinelli orchestrated the efforts of the Cimarron Springs Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, PTO and Surprise Fire fighters to raise money for the Red Cross and donations for the Salvation Army. More than \$1,000 and 2,500 items were donated. In addition, the Student Council raised \$1,410.07 in the change drive to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.



Play Teaches Effective Communication Skills

Jacinda Buchmann's Creative Communication class at West Point Elementary School performed a play titled "Sleeping Henry" about a boy who feels he isn't talented, so he decides to sleep his life away. The creative communications class is designed to teach students speaking and presentation skills. Throughout the quarter they have learned how to present a speech, do improvisation and give debates.

Volunteers Make Tutor Program Possible

Dysart High School's "Tutor Lab" is up and running again this year, and we wouldn't be running at all if not for all of the wonderfully talented community volunteers who come in each day during the school week to work with ELL and Migrant students. This program pairs community volunteers with an individual in the classroom to support the learning of the English language. The tutors read, write, draw and support homework efforts of the students enrolled in the Tutor Lab.

Flat Stanley Teaches Kids About Letter Writing

The third graders in Michelle Pugliese, Carolyn Hamblen, Lana Brodkorb and Patricia Green's classes at Luke Elementary School learned about letter writing. Teachers read *Flat Stanley*, by Jeff Brown, a book about a boy named Stanley who gets flattened by a falling bulletin board. While

Stanley was flat he had amazing adventures. The students created their own Flat Stanley and mailed him to a relative or friend in a state other than Arizona.

Students Craft Well Wishes For Katrina Victims

At Dysart Elementary School, the second graders from Dallas Bankston's class made cards of well wishes to welcome the children who moved here from the hurricane-stricken gulf-coast. The cards were sent to the Salvation Army and given to the children who were staying at the coliseum in Phoenix.

Ancient Cultures Thrive at Rancho Gabriela

Rancho Gabriela Elementary School's sixth grade jumped into the topic of ancient civilization with a bang. Groups of students were assigned an ancient culture to research and present to the class. As part of this project, they used both text and Internet research skills to discover more about the Sumerians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians.



Sixth Graders Apply for Summa University

In any given classroom, the Arizona State Standards are being reviewed and new concepts introduced. However, in AnneMarie Lampright's sixth grade class at Ashton Ranch Elementary School, just completing the basic curriculum is not enough. These students have applied for Summa University, an enrichment program designed to mirror the college experience and prepare students for higher education, and are working toward a Certificate of Distinction.

Students Raise Money for Hospital

Sundown Mountain students recently raised nearly \$230 for Phoenix Children's Hospital in honor of one of our very own students, Shirley Streater. Shirley passed away this past summer from cancer. A big thank you goes to Sundown Mountain students who took part in this great event.

From the Superintendent



Mark Maksimowicz, Ed.D.

“With the help of every member of our community, our great staff and students, we continue to make progress.”

Last month, *The Arizona Republic* featured a lengthy front-page story on some of the changes taking place at El Mirage Elementary School. Last year, El Mirage was designated as a failing school – a label that has improved dramatically over the last 12 months. The Arizona Department of Education recently declared that El Mirage was “Performing Plus.”

The news coverage showed an important change on campus: teachers are to be educators, not just disciplinarians. Under this renewed philosophy, students are expected to hold themselves accountable for their behavior. No child is permitted to interfere with the education of another. It’s a basic principle, but one that has helped focus the campus environment on learning.

As El Mirage Elementary transforms, so too does the entire district. After 18 months as superintendent, we continue to evaluate the district and make changes when needed. These changes are beginning to show results. We have higher conduct standards for students, more professional development, improving test scores, and strong morale across the district. Change is hard, but the entire staff is committed to turning our school system into a point of pride for the community.

Growth continues to be a challenge. There are more than 17,600 students in Dysart Schools, three times the number of students enrolled just five years ago.

November begins the process of reviewing school enrollment, boundary lines and the progress of our construction projects. We will have two public forums on these topics. The first, on Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. at Willow Canyon High School, will review School Construction, Enrollment and Financing. A second meeting, the district’s Second Annual Growth/Boundaries Forum, will be held on Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. at Willow Canyon High School. In these meetings, we will review the process for building a school and filling it with students. This will also be an opportunity for our community to ask questions and make suggestions.

With the help of every member of our community, our great staff and students, we continue to make progress.

Seeking employment?

Dysart Unified School District currently has a variety of employment opportunities, including substitute positions. Interested?

www.dysart.org

or

623.876.7912

Help us become Premier in 5!

Governing Board

Charles Otterman
President

Bill Lipscomb
Clerk

Diana Bass
Member

Laura Ramirez
Member

District Administration

Mark Maksimowicz, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Gail Pletnick, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

Denise Birdwell
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

Jenea Moore
Communication Specialist



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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El Mirage, AZ 85335

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