

Oracle School District Update



Dear Parents, Grandparents and Community Members,

In the blink of an eye another semester has flown by us. I would like to take this opportunity to give you an update on the many things going on in our District, State and on the Federal level that impact our District mission to expand expectations by providing an innovative and boundless educational environment that develops adventurous learners and responsible citizens.

Going Above and Beyond: There is no question that what makes schools truly great are the educators and the special and unique programs we put in place to make learning meaningful and fun. There are many examples of this in our District such as our horsemanship program, orchestra, family reading nights, fall festival, student gardens and much more. It is not just that we have these programs; it is that they are excellent because we have people that go above and beyond and that have great passion for these programs. This is what makes children love school.

Volunteers: Our pool of wonderful volunteers keeps growing. We have made great strides in ensuring that volunteers are accepted with open arms and that their experience is rewarding and meaningful. We are very fortunate to have highly skilled volunteers in our area that can help us make a difference. Volunteer applications and the volunteer handbook are available on our website.

Strategic planning: Each year the Governing Board and Superintendent works on areas that we feel will have the greatest impact on student learning. The areas we identify are then broken down into objectives which we work on in Board work sessions to ensure that these objectives get accomplished. Our current strategic areas and objectives can be found on our District section of the website.

New Technology Program: One strategic area we will be working on in early January is implementing a technology class that will be offered in all grades. In grades k-6 the class will be a scheduled special. In grades 7-8 the class will be an elective. The technology class will be broken into two main components:

- **Programming and Technology:** This class will be run by a certified teacher that will teach computer programming to our kindergarten through eighth grade students.
- **Makers Space:** The Makers Space will be part of the technology class providing students the opportunity to apply the programming and technology skills they learn collaborating and creating using robotics, drones, 3-D printing and more!

Administrative changes: Our good friend Nannette Soule will be retiring as the Mountain Vista Principal at the end of this school year which will mean changes in our District's administrative structure. We will hire an administrator who will function as an assistant principal until our enrollment grows a little. I will work closely with this person and will share some of the Mountain Vista administrative duties as well as the Superintendent's duties. Our plan is to have this new administrative position filled by March 10th.

Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA: Last year the Federal Government put into place the Every Student Succeeds Act. Many details are still being worked out as far as how exactly states will implement this new plan which is scheduled to be in action next school year. What we know:

- **A-F Accountability:** There will be a new accountability system that by Arizona law is supposed to be in place utilizing this school years AZMerit results. The State Board of Education is working on this new plan but is behind schedule and is seeking an extension. The new plan will focus on academic growth in general and academic growth in subgroups such as SPED, ELL and the bottom 25%. There will be other indicators such as the number of students in advanced classes but this has yet to be determined.
- **Updated Arizona Academic Standards:** Yes it is true; the academic standards have been officially changed. We have the rest of this school year and all of next school year to learn them before they are officially put in place for the 2018/2019 school year. From what I understand the standards are not "radically different" but we will have to dig into them sooner than later. One thing I do know is that we are on the right track and will not likely make sweeping changes.

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"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Nelson Mandela

Thank you very much for serving the children in our school district. My own children are a product of our district and I wouldn't have had it any other way!

*Respectfully,
Mr. Blauser*



Small town roots, Global expectations