

Top Shelf

The Deer Valley Unified School District (DVUSD) has been on a roll for the past five years. The purposeful execution of our Strategic Plan has produced amazing results, year after year. In the educational world, slow, calculated, and deliberate steps, are actually the way to moving faster. Much like trying to get the extra miles-per-hour from a dragster, the attention to detail ends up being the difference between winning awards that are located on the top shelf, bottom shelf, or no awards at all.

The start of the 2025 school year has been no different. Awards are arriving monthly for fine arts, athletics, and academics, right on schedule. DVUSD just received an “A” rating as a public school district from the State and turned in a record number of “A” schools at 27, and 35 of our 42 schools are either rated “A” or “B.” Twenty-four of our schools have been awarded the A-Plus School of Excellence distinction, and we are one-of-eleven national Model Professional Learning Communities K-12 districts. Thirty-two of our teachers are Nationally-Board Certified. With all of these accolades, I still believe that it will be hard to top last year’s group of students who were awarded over 70 individual and team State Championships.

All five high school marching bands made it to the State ABODA Finals Day on November 16th, a feat that hasn’t been accomplished in over a dozen years. Several of the bands are top contenders for an ABODA State Marching Band title. DVUSD had two teachers make the finals for the Arizona Education Foundation’s “Arizona Teacher of the Year” and both were from Boulder Creek High School. BCHS teacher, Emmett Burnton, came home with the hardware, the first in DVUSD history. Tara LeCount of Diamond Canyon School was also named an Exemplary Principal by the Maricopa Superintendent’s Office.

DVUSD won the national Forbes Best Midsize employer award for two years in a row in 2022 & 2023 and has been noted as Arizona’s Best Midsize Employer for the last five years. Park Meadows was named a Level 4 PBIS Model School for an amazing culture, while nine other DVUSD schools received the Level 2 Fidelity award. Many district choirs and bands just scored “Superior with Distinction” ratings at competitions this past month. Dozens of DVUSD students received Flinn Scholarships, National Merit Scholarship finalists’ awards, perfect scores on the state math and language arts tests, and the national ACT exam this past year. If you want to see a list of the #extraordinary accomplishments go to www.dvUSD.org/extraordinary.

One thing has remained a constant in DVUSD – the pursuit of excellence for all students. Recognition by local, state, and national organizations are just road signs reminding us to stay on our road of continuous improvement. We enjoy awards, but they are not what fuels us to reach our goals. Helping our students achieve their potential is the most important thing we do. If we succeed, our state and national leaders will be reaching for the top shelf to hand DVUSD students, staff, and schools another recognition for their hard work.

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