

Thankful

November continues to be a festival of activity - Veterans Day ceremonies, anticipation of Thanksgiving, State letter-grade recognition, fine arts performances, academic honors, athletic State titles, and the passage of the DVUSD Override and Land Sale. The odds were against us, yet we prevailed together thanks to our community, parents, and staff. Teamwork truly makes the dream work for the next generation. Despite the noise and misinformation from keyboard warriors, it was heartening to see our community see through the misguided campaigns and stay grounded in the monsoon of positivity coming from DVUSD. You may be wondering: Which accomplishment matters most?

DVUSD earned the strongest State letter-grade results in our history. Our 42 schools and campuses repeated last year's record performance - an A for the District, a record-high 27 A-rated campuses for the second consecutive year, and 93% of schools rated A or B. All five high schools—Barry Goldwater, Boulder Creek, Deer Valley, Mountain Ridge, and O'Connor - earned A ratings, only the second time this has happened in District history. This is remarkable news, but it may not be the *best* news.

The best news is that DVUSD stands like a sturdy table supported by four strong legs: academics, fine arts, Career & Technical Education, and athletics/clubs/opportunities. Academics are essential - foundational to our mission - but it is only one part of what makes a district excellent. The research is clear: truly outstanding public school districts excel across all four areas, meeting students where their needs are. Public schools take all students as they come, while private and charter schools often select theirs. If DVUSD can outperform selective schools in these four domains, it means we are truly accomplishing something extraordinary.

Last year, DVUSD students and staff earned hundreds of #extraordinary awards, all listed at www.dvUSD.org/extraordinary. That torrid pace has not slowed. As the first semester of the year comes to a close, our students are again earning State titles in fine arts, academics, and athletics. For two consecutive years we surpassed the 70-award mark, and this year is tracking the same way. These recognitions come from competing against the best in Arizona - not a small pool of similar schools. Yet even this impressive achievement is not the month's greatest news.

The greatest news is the passage of the Override and Land Sale. With Arizona ranking 50th in the nation in State financial support for public schools, local backing is essential. Without it, neighborhoods risk slow decay and diminished opportunities for children.

As we enter the holiday season, we have much to be thankful for. When local public schools thrive, research shows three things happen: property values rise, crime decreases, and the next generation is prepared to contribute to the community. The reverse is equally true - declining school districts experience dropping property values, rising crime, and a generation less equipped to give back. Thanks to the on-going community support, DVUSD will continue to excel and uplift our north-central Maricopa County community.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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