



ARSA REPORTS

Official Publication of the **Arizona Rural Schools Association**



FALL 2020

in this issue...

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Page 1 • From the Executive Director

Page 3 • GPEMC & AZEMC by Dianne Smith, Executive Director, GPEMC/AZEMC

Page 5 • The Story of Mountainside High School by Aspasia Angelou, PhD, Superintendent Nadaburg USD

Page 10 • Arizona County School Superintendent Spotlight by Jacqui Clay, Superintendent Cochise County

Page 16 • ARSA Executive Board Members

Thanks to the efforts of ARSA President, Kristin Turner and AzTEA Executive Director, Non Williams, we had a very successful awards celebration on October 28th in which we honored our 2020 Teacher of The Year Finalists and named Vanessa Arredondo the 2020 Arizona Rural Schools Association Teacher of the year. Ms. Arredondo will go on to compete next year in the National Rural Education Association's (NREA) Teacher of The Year process. State Superintendent, Kathy Hoffman generously provided opening remarks.

We also installed Mr. Tim Carter, Yavapai County School Superintendent into the ARSA Hall of fame. Everyone who has ever worked with Tim knows that this is well deserved and they know of the countless contributions Tim Carter has made to rural education in Arizona.

An ARSA first this year was our ARSA-ASU Champions of Innovation Award going to Mr. Glen Lineberry for his extraordinary work in standing up, and growing the Arizona Student On-Line Collaborative (AzSOC).

Unfortunately, the pandemic is still a reality of our professional lives with which we, and our school communities will be dealing with for years to come. I know many of you and its heart breaking to see the stress this have caused you all.

I promise you; I will do my utmost to make our 26th Annual Conference a celebration of how far you all have come and offer everyone the opportunity to debrief and make plans for the future. I will also feed you as well as possible and offer the very best in meaningful breakout sessions. It will be an event we can all use.

In this edition, Diane Smith, Executive Director will tell us about the work her association, G P E M C, does for Arizona Schools. We are also featuring Ms. Jacqui, Cochise County School Superintendent. Our county school superintendents have done a great many remarkable things to support all our schools, rural and urban.

We are also pleased to have Dr. Aspasia Angelou, Superintendent of Nadaburg USD share her story of passing a bond and building a high school to create a unified school district.

I hope you enjoy this edition and that your holidays are pleasant and safe.

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Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council (GPEMC) Arizona Educational Management Council (AZEMC)

By Dianne Smith

Who We Are

AZEMC is an affiliate of the Greater Phoenix Education Management Council (GPEMC) and the two groups are operationally combined. GPEMC was established in 1974 and combined with AZEMC, includes 55 AZ school districts serving 350,000 students. The group is undergoing a strategic expansion in which it plans to add a couple of new districts which represent underserved regions within the organization and can add to the depth of dialogue and perspective. The combined GPEMC/AZEMC group's mission is to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate activities focused on enhancing student achievement.

The GPEMC/AZEMC group is comprised of three divisions: the Superintendents' Council, the Educational Services (curriculum) Council and the Business Officials Council. Each receive ongoing, timely, up-to-date communications regarding issues AZ school districts' are facing in addition to the opportunity to collaborate with others in their position. A Q&A forum and document sharing site enables districts to ask questions of each other, "compare notes", and exchange resources which help to guide district decisions.

What Do Our Members Say?

"I am in GPEMC/AZEMC because they discuss the issues I deal with daily."

– Dr. Debbi Burdick, Superintendent, Cave Creek Unified

"The value of GPEMC/AZEMC is such, that upon my transition to a new district I brought the recommendation to join immediately to my new Governing Board. It was that important to me."

– Dr. Dan Streeter, Superintendent, Marana Unified

"The networking is key. I can learn what other districts are doing and vet my thoughts and ideas."

– Dr. Kristi Wilson, Superintendent, Buckeye Elementary

AZEMC Mission

Three key areas promote the Organization's mission to communicate, collaborate and coordinate activities focused on student success through the 3 Divisions: Superintendent Council, Educational Services Council and the Business Officials Council.



COLLABORATIVE DIALOGUE: An opportunity for all Members to engage in a valuable exchange of ideas, thoughts, questions, agree/disagree on solutions yet sharing individual expertise and experiences on behalf of our students to ensure the best possible learning environment necessary to produce excelling schools and students ready for their future! Building on a common belief system, appreciating commonalities and differences, and creating both a strategic and tactically attainable plan of action.

LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIPS and DEVELOPING NEW CONNECTIONS: Maintaining, enhancing and expanding relationships with policymakers both at the political level and with the AZ Department of Education, the AZ State Board of Education and other entities, including the business community, at the local, state and federal levels that provide support and influence on education policy and budget reforms.

REALISTIC and PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION: Policy and political leaders change, education reform efforts evolve, but the HOW is critical for school leaders. Utilizing timely, accurate, in-depth communication, working collaboratively on the academic and social-emotional needs of our students, engaging with policy leaders to coordinate and advocate when questions arise or clarifications are required enables GPEMC/AZEMC members to implement policies in a realistic and practical manner.

(continued on page 8)

The Value of ASBAIT

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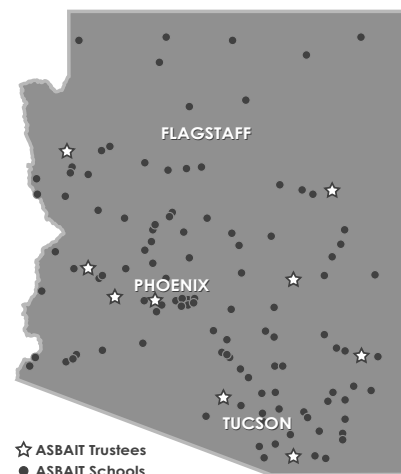
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The Story of Mountainside High School

By Dr. Aspasia Angelou, Superintendent Nadaburg Unified School District

The journey to build a high school in the Wittmann community has been a long and unpredictable one, to say the least. It is important to understand the historical context that shaped this story for one to truly appreciate the significance of a high school for this rural/suburban community northwest of Phoenix.

Historical Background

Until August 17, 2020, Nadaburg was the only Unified School District in Arizona that did not have its own traditional high school. In November 2006, district voters approved the unification of the district pursuant to ARS 15-449 (becoming a K-12 district rather than K-8). The unification to a K-12 district became effective July 1, 2007. However, multiple attempts to pass a bond failed over the course of thirteen years, during which time, the district fell under A.R.S. 15-824 (2), and paid for high school students to attend neighboring districts.

In 2019, we attempted again to pass the bond and reiterated the repercussions of not passing the bond to the constituents, as follows:

- Consolidation with another school district
 - o Community must vote to join another district
 - o Other district must vote to allow consolidation
 - o Community inherits new district's tax rate
 - o Example: neighboring district has 85,000 registered voters, Nadaburg has about 5,000
- School District is unable to operate/function
- State seeks receivership of district
- Push for legislation to revert to a K8 district because unification was decided by the 2006 election

The bond was passed successfully on November 5th of 2019, with the tireless work of the board, community supporters, teachers, staff, students and families!

However, legislation related to the unique circumstances of this situation included HB2287,

the "Nadaburg Bill" of 2019, pertaining only to NUSD, regarding the sole status as a unified school district without a high school. Prior to COVID-19, the HB2287 passed successfully through the AZ House of Representatives and to the Senate with the support of Representative Joanne Osborne and Senator Sine Kerr. Unfortunately, with the closure of schools and governmental agencies in March of 2020, the bill stalled. We are once again planning to present the "Nadaburg Bill" to legislators in January of 2021, if all goes well.

The School Facilities Board (SFB) reviewed the issues and projected a timeline indicating the District would be ready for a high school once a program was started in current facilities and moved beyond capacity. Our plan began with design teams meeting to discuss all aspects of school life: curriculum, programming, athletics, technology integration, student experience and blended learning models. We are developing a robust model for our high school programming in preparation for those students who would choose our dual opportunities of a 2-year Associate's degree or an industry certification, with the support of West-Mec and ASU prep online.

Planning for the HS model

Mountainside High School (MHS), home of the Wolves, was named by the students, with the guidance of principal, Dr. Kathryn Strevell. The school was designed to create opportunities for student choice, focus on relationships, connectedness and skills development.

More choices mean students will better balance outside work and family responsibilities, while also preparing for college, work, and life.

Meaningful relationships that connect students more deeply to their school and community. They will be heard, known, understood, and supported. Our culture reflects rising pride in being a Nadaburg student.

(continued on page 20)



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For more information about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program, and other important information, please visit our website at gcu.edu/disclosures. Please note, not all GCU programs are available in all states and in all learning modalities. Program availability is contingent on student enrollment. Grand Canyon University is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission 800-621-7440; <http://hlcommission.org/>. Important policy information is available in the University Policy Handbook at <https://www.gcu.edu/academics/academic-policies.php>. GCU, while reserving its lawful rights in light of its Christian mission, is committed to maintaining an academic environment that is free from unlawful discrimination. Further detail on GCU's Non-Discrimination policies can be found at gcu.edu/titleIX. The information printed in this material is accurate as of NOVEMBER 2017. For the most up-to-date information about admission requirements, tuition, scholarships and more, visit gcu.edu ©2017 Grand Canyon University 17SEA0298

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Goal:

**INCREASE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
FOR ALL!**

Focus on our Commitment *the WHY*

Strengthen our Leadership *the WHO*

Develop our Strategy *the HOW*

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Arizona County Schools Superintendent Spotlight

By Jacqui Clay, Superintendent Cochise County Schools

The Cochise County School Superintendent's Office, under the leadership of Superintendent Clay is responsible for multiple far reaching projects intended to support and promote education and educators across Cochise County.

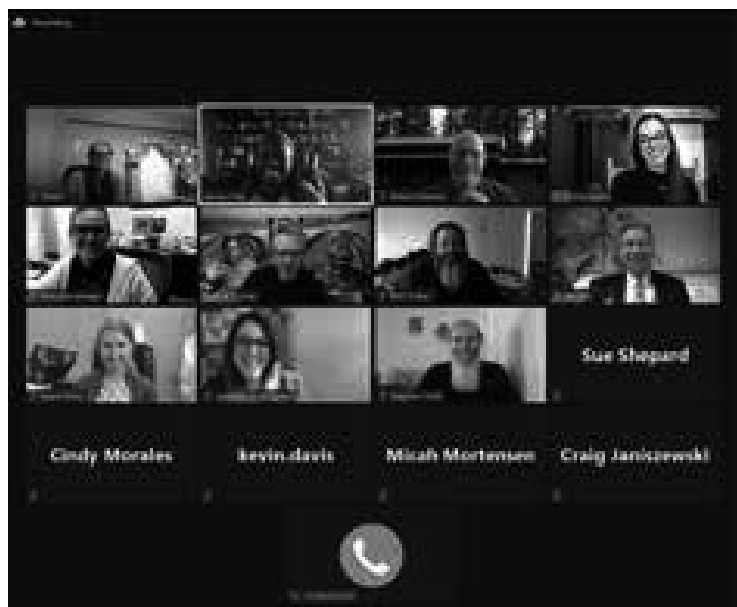
The Cochise County School Superintendent's Office is responsible for multiple far reaching projects intended to support and promote education and educators across Cochise County. The recent Drive-through Teacher of the Year Celebration honored the 27 Teacher of the Year Nominees across 3 categories, as well as a Special Project of the Year, and 10 Outstanding New Teachers, all selected by their peers, leadership and Communities. Honorees received a combined total of \$2700 dollars in awards at this event. The County Superintendent's Office continues to plan and implement programs across a wide range of educational support areas for the benefit of all educational stakeholders in Cochise County.

The County Superintendent's office has partnered with the AZ Department of Safety and we are available to serve educators and ANYONE who needs fingerprinting services. You can visit any of the two links below:

<https://www.azdps.gov/services/public/fingerprint>
<https://www.aps.gemalto.com/az/index.htm>

After you fill out the paperwork online, call our office for an appointment (520) 432-8950. CONGRATULATIONS to our first customer, Ms. Brittany!

Every Tuesday we have an Educator Leaders and Health Official's Roundtable. Our team consists of a Chief Medical Officer, a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, members of the county health department and emergency services and our educational leaders from the Unified School Districts, Charter and Private schools. We discuss the state and local COVID metrics, share best practices regarding school openings and any concerns. We have an amazing team knowing that we can do more together.



(continued on page 13)

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(continued from page 10- Arizona County Schools Superintendent Spotlight)

strong partnership with County Sheriff and County Superintendent's office to ensure equitable educational opportunities to our detained students. Sheriff Dannels, Jail Commander Bradshaw, Superintendent Clay and Deputy superintendent Madden discuss future educational plans for the jail.

Currently, services provided at the jail are Special needs services for students up to age 22 and educational services for minor students. Soon we will add transitional services for our students housed at the Santa Cruz Detention Center and provide adult education services which include GED preparation and testing. This collaboration will be great for our county and help lower the opportunity youth percentage rate which are students 16 – 24 years older not going to school or working

(see <https://www.expectmorearizona.org/progress/?location=State::Arizona>) which is now at 13%.

Collaborating with GradSolutions, LLC to form a County "Dropout Recovery" Accommodation school. This will potentially help reduce our Opportunity Youth rate (see Expect More Arizona www.expectmorearizona.org/progress/?location=State::Arizona) which is currently at 13% (our goal is 7%) and helps our schools. Opportunity youth are 16 - 24 year olds not going to school or working. More information to come. GradSolutions have also donated ten Chromebooks to our County Education center. THANK YOU!

We will use these devices for GED preparation or online education for our
(continued on page 26)

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Jan 26, 2021 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Feb 23, 2021 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Apr 27, 2021 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

(continued from page 5- SThe Story of Mountainside High School)

Connectedness means students feel their education relates to their real lives and future goals

Students will gain real-life skills that reflect what new jobs demand and careers that interest our students.

These opportunities are created by leveraging real-world learning mentorships, individualized learning plans and integrated technology across the curriculum.

- o **REAL-LIFE SKILLS.** Our economy and world are changing fast! Students will be better prepared for new jobs through internships, group projects, and work-based learning with local businesses.
- o **DEEP RELATIONSHIPS AND LIFE MENTORS.** Students will have a success coach (counselor/admin/teacher) who will get to know them well and meet with them at least once a week.
- o **INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS.** Every student is different. Students will learn at their own pace and make choices about the progress and timing of their lessons with the support of teachers and computer-based programs. Additionally, teachers will give students more personal support.
- o **SMART USE OF TECHNOLOGY.** Computers are the new textbooks. Students will be loaned their own computer or tablet to use for schoolwork, collaboration and homework.

We leverage technology to create opportunities for **STUDENT CHOICE** in their learning across 4 specific areas:

Time Students control the time of their learning

Place Anytime, anywhere learning

Pace Each student moves at their own unique pace

Path Students have individualized plans

Later start times, block scheduling, success coaches and small classes allow for individualized assistance and support.

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Leading up to the summer prior to the high school launch in August, it became quickly clear that adjustments and refinement would be required to open the high school safely in the midst of the pandemic. Wanting to be inclusive of all, surveys were implemented to gain feedback on how to best serve our students while maintaining the health and safety of everyone. Providing students with the opportunity to have their voice heard is crucial to the high school model. Doing so allows our students the ability to create, shape, and own their high school experience. The importance of voice inclusivity is also modelled as a district approach when it comes to staff and parent voice and was applied in the development of the district's Return to Learn Plan aimed at meeting the challenges COVID-19 presented. Despite the

obstacles that the pandemic introduced, the goal of meeting all students' learning needs remained a key focus of instruction. To better meet students' and families' needs, options were provided to students to engage in blended in-person learning or fulltime online learning.

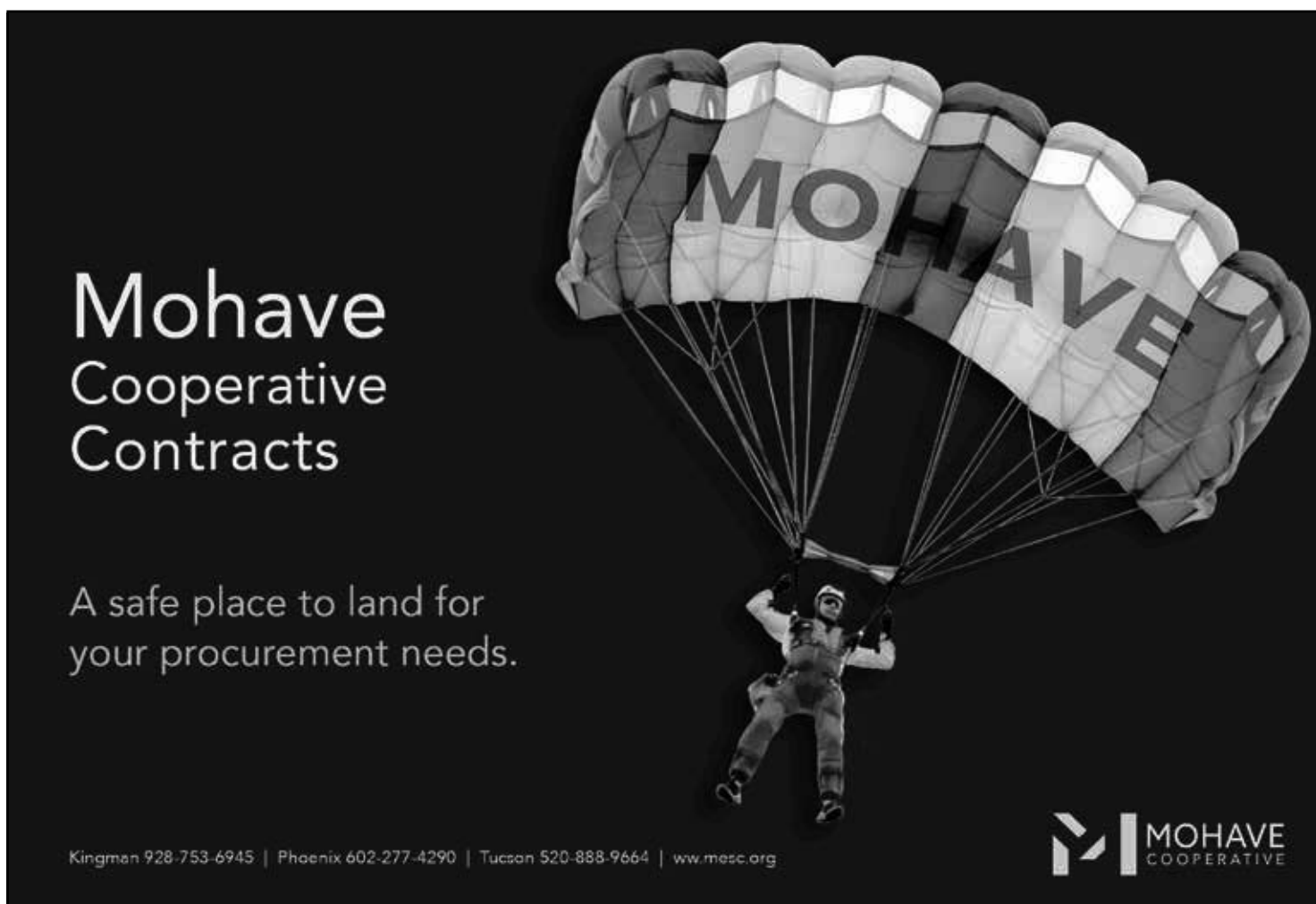
As a result, each student regardless of their chosen learning model, follows an individualized learning plan in which pace plans are developed and administered to suit their learning progress requirements. Additionally, in partnership with ASU Prep Digital, we are able to provide students with a greater variety of learning choices and pathways that are often not found in rural schools. To do so, we have leveraged a range of technologies, from issuing 1:1 laptops and the use of interactive digital curriculum to the implementation of Z Space's augmented and virtual reality tools and software to create relevant instruction.

Z space in action:

https://fb.watch/1px_wJOBma/

As a school and district, we have set strict guidelines and protocols to maintain the health and safety for all who step foot on campus, but the success of remaining open to in-person learning is due in great part to students' adherence to these protocols, reflecting their continued desire to keep in-person learning operational. Even though students' school experience has been a little different than what was originally planned, it has become very evident that students have a desire to attend school in-person and seek to make connections with their peers, staff, and broader community. It is due to their perseverance and resiliency that they have begun to make gains academically, socially, and emotionally as they work to close any learning gaps that were created from school shutdowns in March. Being aware of

(continued on page 24)

The advertisement is a black and white image. On the right side, a parachutist is shown in mid-air, with a large parachute. The word "MOHAVE" is printed across the canopy of the parachute in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. On the left side, the text "Mohave Cooperative Contracts" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, in a smaller white font, is the tagline "A safe place to land for your procurement needs." At the bottom left, contact information is listed: "Kingman 928-753-6945 | Phoenix 602-277-4290 | Tucson 520-888-9664 | www.mesc.org". At the bottom right is the Mohave Cooperative logo, which consists of a stylized 'M' icon followed by the words "MOHAVE COOPERATIVE" in a sans-serif font.

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(continued from page 21- SThe Story of Mountainside High School)

the effects that the school shutdown had on our students, we have also implemented the Leader in Me program, which is designed to use Covey's 7 Habits to address students' social, emotional, and academic requirements. Through Leader in Me, students are taught leadership skills that help develop a culture of student empowerment, resulting in a system that drives academic results.

To help further and support these gains, we have included our students in decision-making processes, everything from determining our school identity, to developing opportunities to set school traditions. Though the majority of our students opted for in-person blended learning, we as a school also work to keep connected with our online students. We do so through frequent communication as well as by surveying their interests and wants to include their voice in our decision-making and planning processes. Our goal is to ensure that when and if our online students chose to attend in-person that they will make a smooth transition to the school that they helped to design. Whether students chose to learn in-person or online, they are all MHS students and we collectively hold a high honor in being chosen by them to serve their educational needs. It is a responsibility that we look forward to meeting. We also look forward to all of the possibilities that the future holds for MHS as we work together with our students, staff, parents, and community to create the best high school experience.

As Nadaburg Unified School District's (NUSD) first high school, MHS has been a longtime in the making and marks an important milestone, not just for the district, but also for the community. Though NUSD resides in what most consider to be a rural town, the Wittmann community is growing with several planned communities to develop into one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Though COVID-19 posed unique challenges to opening MHS, it also presented the opportunity for us to reimagine and redefine what a 21st century education looks like, keeping the goal of doing what's best for students front and center. As we look to the future, we have many more milestones to reach, from developing all of MHS' high school traditions to the building of our comprehensive high school site. In doing so, we are excited at all the opportunities that will be afforded to our students along the way and how their voice will shape MHS. After 100 years since NUSD's first school (the Little Red School House was built in 1920), to the opening of the first high school this past fall, MHS represents possibility in impossible circumstances. MHS exists because it overcame many obstacles, from legislation to bond passage to a global pandemic. It is this spirit of resilience and determination that we see in many of our students and epitomizes our campus, district, staff, and community that makes MHS such a success.



Ribbon-cutting: A historic day!

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students who are released from the jail or detention center. Did you also know that we are now a GED testing site for our jail/detention center students? Everyone should have a second chance and we love ALL of our students.

Cochise Education Foundation Mini Grants to Teachers

Twenty-three \$200 grants were awarded to teachers and one \$500 grant. The entries were based on Creativity, Relevance and Impact. The spotlight award of \$500 was presented to Sister Caridad during a parent/teacher/student dinner at Lorreto Catholic School in Douglas, AZ.

Sister Caridad of Loretto Catholic School and her winning entry!



Jacqui Clay, a native of Queens, New York, is a retired Army Command Sergeant Major of 25 years and has lived in Arizona for 20 years. Ms. Clay has been married to Dale Clay for 31 years and has 7 children and 20 grandchildren. She has been an educator for 15 years, serving as Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE). Ms. Clay currently serves as the Superintendent of Schools in Cochise County; her responsibilities spans 21 school districts, and over 23,000 students. She also provides support for private, homeschool, detention and county jail students. She is also a Certified True Colors, International Facilitator.

Please visit our website at
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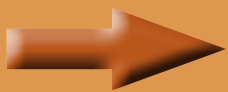
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