

# Kyrene Elementary School District Annual Report



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### Meet Jan Vesely, Ed.D



Dr. Jan Vesely began her first year as Superintendent in July of 2016, bringing with her more than 35 years of experience in a variety of educational settings—as a teacher, principal, principal supervisor, executive director, education business leader, and chief education officer. Regardless of the role she assumes, Dr. Vesely focuses on students first. Her message is that the moment to act is now.

Dr. Vesely hit the ground running, visiting each school and meeting with principals, staff, parents and community members on her listening tour of Kyrene. Drawing from her experience and work in the development, alignment, and improvement of curriculum and instructional programs, she quickly developed a 90-day action

plan. Working collaboratively with the Kyrene Governing Board, three priorities were identified: achievement for all students, student enrollment, and employee compensation.

Dr. Vesely initiated a curriculum audit that provided a thorough review of talents and resources. She and the Governing Board are using this information to support the building of a multi-year strategic plan that keeps resources in schools, championing Kyrene as the premier option for students and teachers alike.

By the end of her first year, plans to address enrollment moved forward, resources were redirected from the District Office to the schools, and a salary schedule was adopted for teachers. In 2017-18, Kyrene schools will launch initiatives that expand course options by content and rigor with a focus on academic excellence, responsive instruction, and student agency. Dr. Vesely looks forward to continued engagement with the community, defining the future of Kyrene together.

### Kyrene Governing Board

#### Governing Board Members (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2016)



**Bernadette Coggins**  
President

Term expires  
December 2018



**John King**  
Vice President

Term expires  
December 2016



**Michelle Hirsch**  
Member

Term expires  
December 2016



**Kristin Middleton**  
Member

Term expires  
December 2018



**Ross Robb**  
Member

Term expires  
December 2016

#### Governing Board Members (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2017)



**John King**  
President

Term expires  
December 2020



**Kristin Middleton**  
Vice President

Term expires  
December 2018



**Bernadette Coggins**  
Member

Term expires  
December 2018



**Michelle Fahy**  
Member

Term expires  
December 2020



**Michael Myrick**  
Member

Term expires  
December 2020

## We are Kyrene

### A leader in education and a partner in the community

#### Over 125 years of excellence

The Kyrene School District was established in 1888. Until 1914, instruction was delivered in a one-room school house covering grades K-8. Kyrene remained a rural district until the 1990s when rapid population growth in the East Valley resulted in multiple schools being built annually. Currently, Kyrene serves approximately 17,000 students from preschool to eighth grade. Many former “Kyrene Kids” return as teachers and/or send their children and grandchildren to the Kyrene schools. Kyrene is a major employer, and its reputation for excellence is a selling point for local realtors and chambers of commerce in appealing to home buyers and businesses looking to relocate to the area.



The District’s boundaries encompass all of Ahwatukee, and parts of Chandler, Guadalupe, Tempe, and the Gila River Indian Reservation.

Of the six middle and 19 elementary schools, 12 are located in Ahwatukee, a suburban village of Phoenix. Seven Kyrene schools are in Chandler and six are in Tempe. Kyrene is a high performing district and receives support from the business community. Kyrene School District proudly partners with city governments, economic development groups, chambers of commerce, and civic organizations in the Kyrene community.

*Kyrene School District celebrates  
the return of many former “Kyrene Kids”  
as parents, teachers, and staff.*

#### Comprehensive curriculum

Kyrene offers an impressive selection of courses and program options that occur before, during, and after school hours. Students participate in rigorous and engaging classes, beginning with preschool and extending through high school math. The combination of core curriculum and specials/electives creates a stimulating environment in which student interest is explored and college/career readiness is accomplished.

The curriculum in Kyrene is comprehensive for grades K-8. At the elementary level, school days include English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, physical education, library, and music. Middle school classes include standard and advanced studies. In addition, student interest inspires the menu of elective classes, creating exciting opportunities for students to explore their talents.

Kyrene’s nationally recognized Community Education Department offers PreK-5 families options from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., extending learning with engaging before and after school activities. Exciting classes are offered each semester and during school breaks. Examples include Lego Robotics, fashion design, ceramics, and chess. Middle school students round out their school day with club and athletic opportunities that capture their interest and expand their talents.

Kyrene also offers PreK-8 Leadership, Traditional, and Dual Language academies. In 2017-18, middle school work will focus on completing authorization for an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School and initiate Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programming.



*On state test results,  
Kyrene students  
consistently score  
higher than their  
statewide peers.*







*Kyrene teachers are dedicated to fostering student learning through rigorous and engaging experiences.*



# Achieving Results

## Organizational Design

### Shifting resources to schools

Kyrene continues to be leader in innovation and educational excellence, confronting a challenging financial landscape with cost effective solutions. Administrative and district functions have been streamlined and organized to reduce costs and shift valuable resources to schools where they are needed most. In the design work, the District created new positions for schools that focused on academic and social/emotional student need. Academic interventionists were identified for all schools, increasing support for students in English language arts and math. At the middle schools, social workers/counselors and academic & behavioral specialists were also included. A focus on teaching and learning remains prominent in the organizational structure through the identification of department work in curriculum and assessment, instruction, exceptional student services, and information technology.

*Kyrene is committed to advancing its work in delivering quality-first instruction for all students.*

### Defining the difference—curriculum audit

Kyrene students outperform their peers because the Kyrene School District is committed to continuous improvement. This year Kyrene joined an exclusive list among school districts in the United States by submitting themselves to an intensive curriculum audit, one of the most rigorous review processes a district can impose upon itself. Only 4% of school districts across the nation participate in this work. The curriculum audit focused on work across the District, reviewing how and what policies, practices, and systems influence student learning in Kyrene. A multi-member team poured through District policy, evaluated curriculum and resources, conducted interviews, facilitated focus groups, administered surveys, and visited all Kyrene schools. They used this information to make recommendations of where work could be focused to keep Kyrene in the forefront of innovation and quality-first instruction. Kyrene's difference is defined in its purposeful and deep analysis of what works and what doesn't. A curriculum audit serves as an independent and highly-structured intensive exam, and is instrumental in identifying the greatest opportunities to realize the vision of growth in student achievement. The audit findings create the foundation for the next multi-year strategic plan, maintaining a focus on teaching and learning.



# Enriching Education PreK to Grade 8

## Innovation in practice and design

### Early learning

More than 750 preschool-aged students in Kyrene learn from committed staff members including: certified teachers, speech and language pathologists, instructional assistants, and early childhood specialists. In 2016, Kyrene added both an Early Learning Academy and a Reggio Emilia option to the menu of preschool programs. The former complements traditional learning at Kyrene Traditional Academy (KTA), while the latter allows children to seek their own knowledge through investigation, experience, and interactions. These new programs reached capacity quickly and remained full. Two Bienvenidos Dual Language Spanish Immersion programs continued to be popular. While 13 elementary schools offered preschool programs in 2016-17, all elementary schools will offer a PreK option by 2018-19.

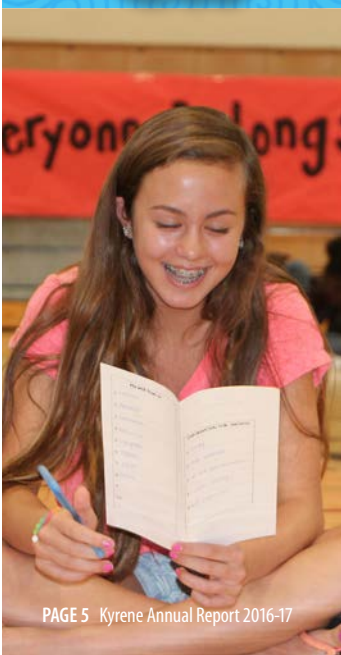
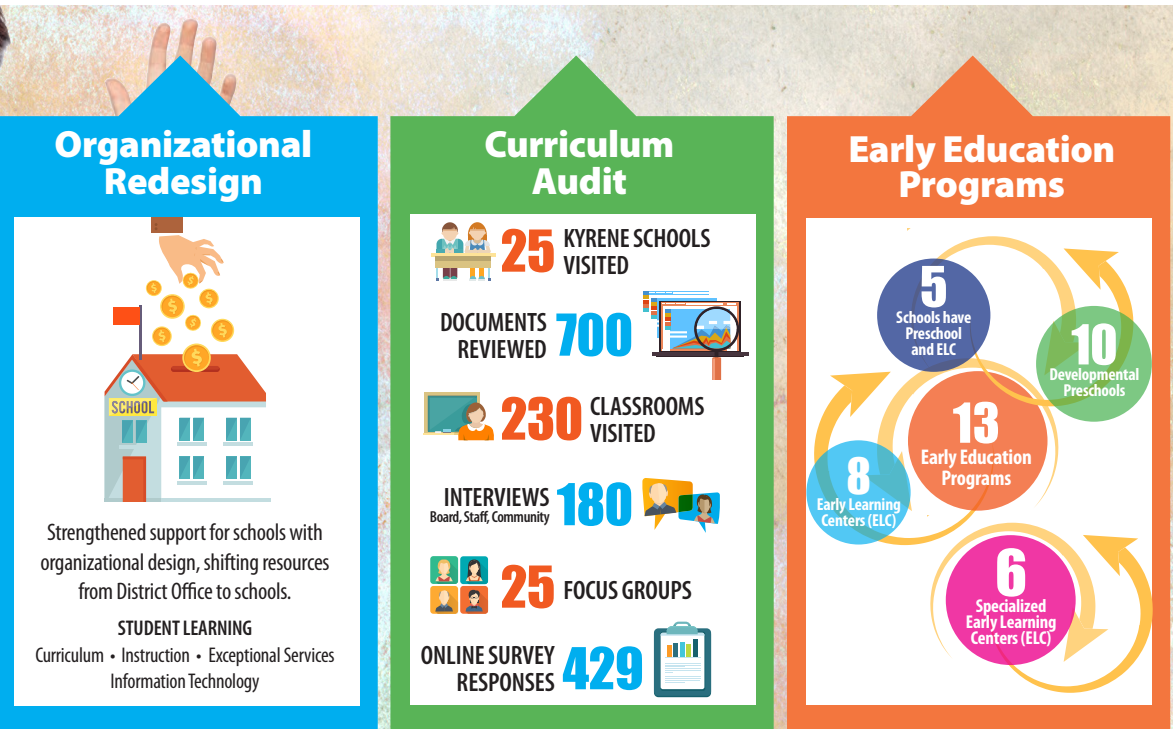
### Elementary school

At the elementary level, school days include English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, physical education, library, and music. Highly qualified, state-certified, and caring teachers provide support for learning in the classroom. Students experience inspiring hands-on curriculum in all classes, integrated with technology. All schools support positive behavior interventions and provide gifted and special education services.

### Middle school

The 2016-17 school year launched with innovative middle school elective classes. Examples of new offerings included: engineering, culinary arts, theater crew, guitar, Mariachi band, show choir, and advanced options in already existing areas of study such as Art 2/3 and Theater 2/3. The year concluded with Governing Board approval of a redesign that emphasizes a three-pillar framework that addresses academic excellence, responsive instruction, and student agency. This brought forward new programs for 2017-18 that encourage students to take purposeful initiative or *student agency*: The Leader in Me, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and International Baccalaureate (IB) candidacy programs. In addition, expanded opportunities in advanced studies in science and social studies, as well as additional supports in English language arts and math, were made available for 2017-18. Each year, over 3,000 middle school students participate in intramurals and athletic programs including soccer, basketball, volleyball, cheer, softball, baseball, cross country, wrestling, and track and field.

*Middle School Redesign emphasizes a three-pillar framework that addresses academic excellence, responsive instruction, and student agency.*







## Budget by the Numbers

### Kyrene is a fiscally sound district

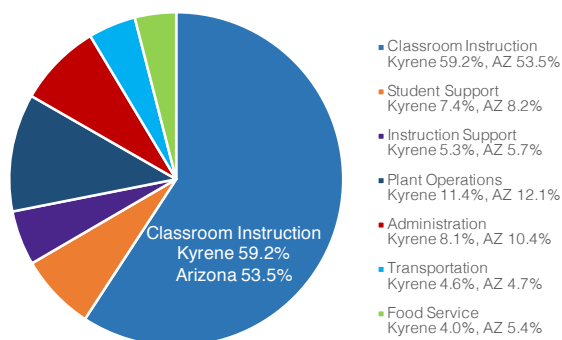
#### Fiscal management and accountability

In Fiscal Year 2016 Arizona districts spent 53.5% of their available operating dollars on instruction. Kyrene spent 59.2% of its budget in the classroom; higher than the state average. Kyrene ranked first among its peers in the state (very large and large elementary school districts in cities and suburbs).

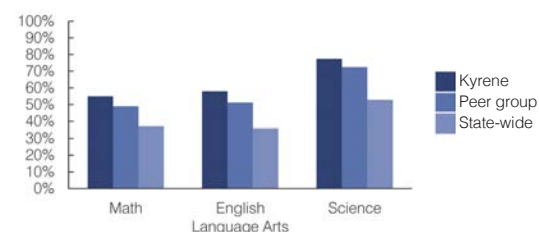
In the 2016 Annual Report on School District spending, the Arizona Office of the Auditor General reported: "Districts that operate efficiently and outperform their peers, tended, on average, to spend higher percentages of available operating dollars on instruction." Administrative costs at Kyrene are ranked "very low" in terms of the cost per pupil. Kyrene spends \$553 per pupil in administrative costs compared to the state average of \$806 per pupil. Kyrene operates efficiently and exercises responsible budget management with impressive student achievement results.

The Auditor General assessed the financial stress level at Kyrene as low. This assessment is based on steady student enrollment, no overspending of operating or capital budgets, a 6.3% operating reserve percentage trend, more than 3 years of capital reserve held, plus compliance with current financial and internal controls. Kyrene has managed to weather years of decreased funding for education without compromising its credit rating, which is at the highest level possible.

Spending - Fiscal 2016



Students who passed state assessments (2016)



*Ranked as a leader in the state in terms of efficient budget management. Kyrene spent 59.2% of its budget in the classroom which is higher than the state average of 53.5%.*



## Engaging Community

One of the strengths of Kyrene is the level of engagement and support it receives from its community of parents and businesses. Community input and direction are critical in the development and success of Kyrene's strategic plan.

#### Kyrene Business Alliance

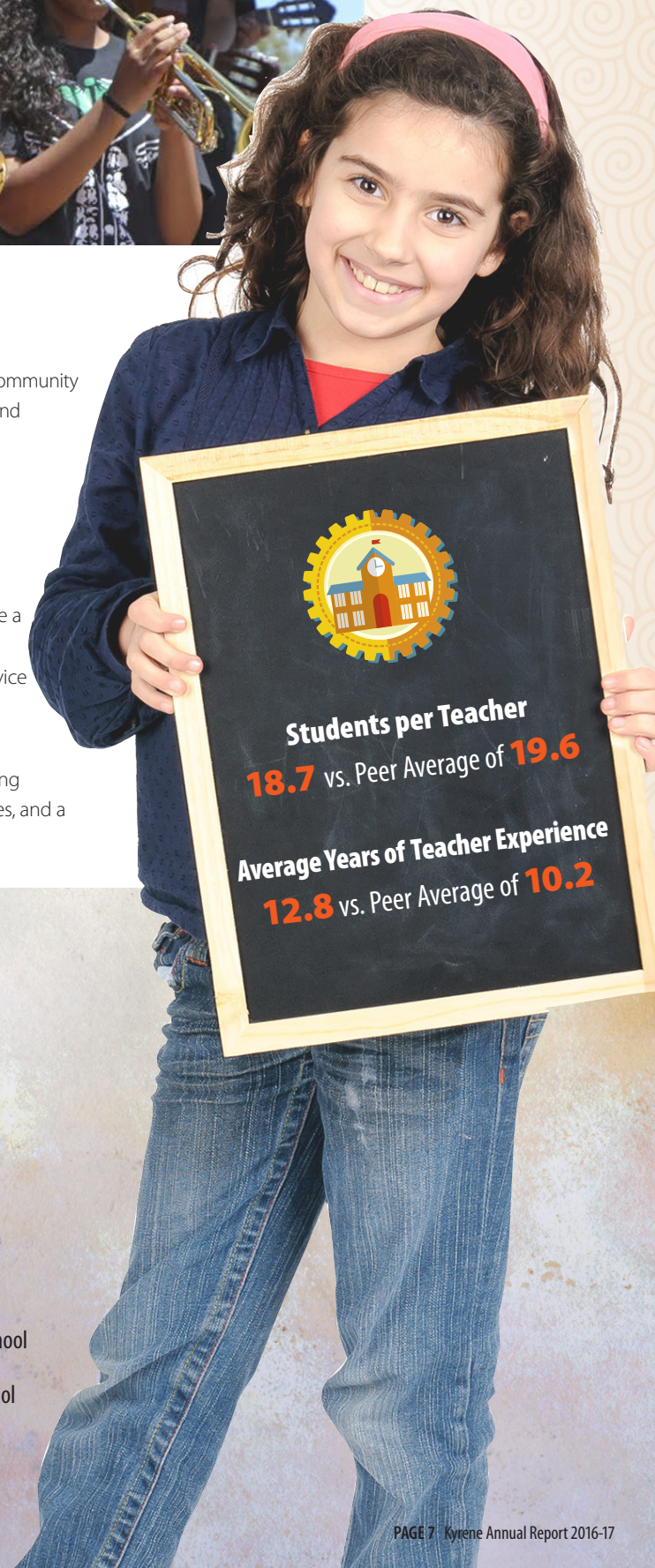
Representatives from the business community met regularly, discussed key issues, and identified ways to support teachers and classrooms.

#### Student and Parent/Superintendent Councils

Student and parent representatives from each elementary and middle school met once a month to give feedback on school experiences, visioning, middle school redesign, and more. In addition, students visited the State Capitol and learned about community service and college/career opportunities.

#### Kyrene Citizens' Budget Committee

Community representatives met to review and made recommendation to the Governing Board on continuing Maintenance & Operations, District Additional Assistance Overrides, and a reauthorization of the bond.



## Spending by operational areas

**59.2% Classroom Instruction:** Costs associated with classroom personnel, supplies, aids and activities

**11.4% Plant Operations:** Costs associated with utilities, equipment repair, security, custodial services, groundskeeping

**8.1% Administration:** Costs associated with the office of the superintendent, business services, human resource activities, administrative technology

**7.4% Student Support:** Costs associated with attendance clerks, social workers, counselors, nurses, speech pathologists, student support services

**5.3% Instruction Support:** Costs associated with school libraries, teacher training, curriculum development, instructional technology

**4.6% Transportation:** Costs associated with transporting students to and from school and activities

**4.0% Food Service:** Costs associated with preparing, transporting, serving meals and snacks.

## Kyrene facts and demographics

#### Demographics

**45.1%** White  
**28.2%** Hispanic  
**10.4%** Black  
**5.6%** Asian  
**6.6%** Two or more  
**3.7%** Native American  
**0.4%** Pacific Islander

#### Kyrene Facts

**17,297** Students Enrolled K-8  
**25** Campuses  
**12** Schools in Ahwatukee  
**6** Schools in Tempe  
**7** Schools in Chandler  
**79,260** Sq. ft. Average Elementary School  
**152,543** Sq. ft. Average Middle School



## Kyrene by the Numbers 2016-17

**13 A+ schools** Kyrene Schools are Arizona Education Foundation's A+ Schools of Excellence™ - Estrella and Lagos newly designated

**32** (active) Board Certified Teachers 2016-17



**1st year**  
Paloma/Pueblo – Fine Arts Amphitheater and Black Box Theater

**30 years** Mariposa and Colina celebrate

**1st courage award**  
First student from Ahwatukee honored: Michael Cooke, Altadena Middle School - City of Tempe "YouthFest" Courage Award

**1st rodel**  
Tonja Yalung, Rodel Exemplary Principal at Niños

**13 recognized** City of Tempe "Kid Zone" recognizes 11 students, plus two administrators—Lisa Gibson of Waggoner and Danielle Whittaker of Mariposa

**46 awards**  
43 students and 3 staff members received Kyrene Kids Club Superintendent Awards

**In the Top 5**  
Maria Plata, for Arizona Education Foundation's "Teacher of the Year Ambassador of Excellence"

**4 employees of the year**  
Lisa Gibson, Principal; Amy Dean, Teacher; Bonny Dolinsek and Dixie Prosser, Support Professionals - Kyrene Foundation Employee Appreciation Awards

**13 years** of service to Kyrene, Deb Spurgin named 2016 Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association's Administrator of the Year

**7 diablos awards**  
Tempe Diablos "Excellence in Education" Awards to:

- Shari Lill, Lagos
- Nancy Howell Randolph, KTA
- Andi LeVecke, Lagos
- Jennifer Sadallah, Altadena
- Kelly Alexander, Pueblo
- Paige Jeanty, Niños

**1 GCU STEM principal**  
Nancy Branch, Mirada, Grand Canyon University STEM Principal



 **KyreneSchoolDistrict**

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Find us @KyreneSchools

