



## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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### SUPERINTENDENT

Todd A. Jaeger, J.D.

November 6, 2023

Dear Amphitheater Community:

The State of Arizona Department of Education recently released its “A – F grades” for all Arizona public schools (district and charter) for last school year (2022-2023). The state determines these school grades based primarily on student achievement as measured by the once-annual state tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. These tests are designed to measure both academic growth and overall proficiency of all students, as well as specific subgroups of students. Other factors used in the school grade calculations include graduation rates and college and career readiness measures at the high school level.

Here is a summary of the school grade results in the Amphitheater District:

- 40% of our District schools received “A” or “Excellent” grades, compared to 34% of schools statewide.
- 35% of our District schools received “B” or “Highly Performing” grades.
- 20% of our District schools received “C” or “Adequately Performing” grades.
- 1 of our schools received a “D” or “Minimally Performing” grade. Amphitheater had no “F” schools.
- Amphitheater District had higher percentages of students meeting or exceeding state ELA standards in every grade when compared to the Arizona state average.
- Amphitheater also demonstrated higher percentages of students meeting or exceeding state Math standards in every grade, except for grade 6, when compared to the state average of school districts.
- Amphitheater performance trends in both ELA and Math mirror those of our neighboring districts, and when compared to our neighboring “peer” or similar districts, Amphi performed as well as or better than those districts.

Table 1 below details each individual school grade in our District. Please note that these grades are preliminary, and we are in the process of appealing some of them which we believe were miscalculated.

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Amphitheater High School • Canyon del Oro High School • Ironwood Ridge High School  
Amphitheater Middle School • Coronado K-8 School • Cross Middle School • La Cima Middle School • Wilson K-8 School  
Copper Creek Elementary • Donaldson Elementary • Harelson Elementary • Holaway Elementary • Innovation Academy • Keeling Elementary  
Mesa Verde Elementary • Nash Elementary • Painted Sky Elementary • Prince Elementary • Rio Vista Elementary • Walker Elementary • Rillito Center • Amphi Academy Online

Amphitheater Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion/religious beliefs, gender, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, creed, citizenship status, marital status, political beliefs/affiliation, disability, home language, family, social or cultural background in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding the District’s non-discrimination policies are handled at 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson, Arizona 85705 by the Equity & Safety Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator, (520) 696-5164, [TitleIXCoordinator@amphi.com](mailto:TitleIXCoordinator@amphi.com), or the Executive Director of Student Services, (520) 696-5230, [studentservices@amphi.com](mailto:studentservices@amphi.com).

Table 1 – Individual School Grades for Amphitheater District Schools

Canyon Del Oro High School	A
Copper Creek Elementary School	A
Cross Middle School	A
Donaldson Elementary School	A
Harelson Elementary School	A
Innovation Academy	A
Painted Sky Elementary School	A
Wilson K-8 School	A
Coronado K-8 School	B
Ironwood Ridge High School	B
Keeling Elementary School	B
Mesa Verde Elementary School	B
Prince Elementary School	B
Rio Vista Elementary School	B
Walker Elementary School	B
Amphitheater High School	C
Amphitheater Middle School	C
La Cima Middle School	C
Nash Elementary School	C
Holaway Elementary School	D

As you may be aware, Arizona’s A-F school grading system has been the subject of controversy since its inception because of the extremely limited factors which comprise the scoring formula. Nonetheless, it remains the single system by which all Arizona public schools are compared with one another, and the primary components of the system (measures of student proficiency and growth) are certainly among the most important considerations for evaluating any school. But the inherent limitations in the formula can result in fluctuations and inconsistencies with other measures of school performance. For example, our single school receiving a “D” for last year not only received a “B” just the prior year, but it also qualified for “Results Based Funding” last year, which is only awarded to schools with exceptional performance.

Apart from these school grades, there are obviously a variety of other important factors which contribute to a positive and successful school environment. Accordingly, we believe we have an obligation to not only produce high academic outcomes for students but also maximize our performance in other ways such as:

- the social and emotional environments we provide for students;
- the level of skill and qualification of staff who serve our students;
- the quality and diversity of programs and services we offer to students;
- the level of active involvement and support we receive from our community; and
- the personal and collective achievements of our students and staff.

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None of these factors are measured by a standardized test, nor are they reflected in our current school grading system. It is not surprising therefore that most parents' perceptions of their child's school are not driven by state level school grades but rather by their firsthand experiences.

Overall, our District-wide academic results from last year demonstrate that students are continuing to rebound from the significant impacts of the pandemic experienced all over the country and throughout our state. We are encouraged by the growth and improvements we have already seen, but we remain absolutely focused on our continuing obligation to see that all children reach their full potential. Thank you for your continuing trust in our efforts to do so.

Should you have any questions about the school grades, please let us know by contacting [answers@amphi.com](mailto:answers@amphi.com).

Yours in service,



Todd A. Jaeger, J.D.  
Superintendent  
Amphitheater Public Schools