

2008-2009 Arizona Educational Foundation A+ Schools Program CERTIFICATION SHEET

Level: X Elementary Previous A+ School
 Secondary X Yes No
If Yes, Year(s) 2005

Name of Principal Dr. Sarah S. Hartley
(As you wish it in the official records)

Official School Name North Ranch Elementary School
(As you wish it in the official records)

School Mailing Address 16406 N. 61st Place Tel. (602) 449-6400 ext.
Street/P.O Box

 Scottsdale, Arizona 85254 Email Address shartley@pvschools.net
City Zip

Additional School Information

If your school is selected to receive a site visit, the review panel members will need directions to your school and will need to know dates that will present potential conflicts. Please complete the following:

 North Ranch Elementary School 16406 N. 61st Place Scottsdale, 85254
School Name Address City & Zip

 Dr. Sarah S. Hartley 602-449-6400 shartley@pvschools.net
Principal's Name Phone Email

 Between Bell Road and Greenway and between 60th Street and 64th Street. North on 60th Street from Greenway, turn right on Paradise Lane, turn left on 61st Place, turn left into the parking lot just beyond Jackrabbit Park. Traveling from Bell Road, South on 60th Street, turn left on Kings Ave. and right at 61st Place. The parking lot is just south of the school building.

Calendar information:

Time school buses begin arriving in the morning: 8:30 AM

Time classes begin: 9:00 AM

Time classes dismiss: 3:00 PM

Spring break dates: March 16th – March 20th, 2009

Standardized testing dates: March 31st – April 7th, 2009

PART I - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DISTRICT (To be completed by all schools) Paradise Valley Unified School District

1. Total number of students (pre K-12) enrolled in the district: 17,674

2. Number of schools in the district: 31 Elementary schools

8 Middle schools
0 Junior high schools
5 High schools
43 TOTAL

3. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6744

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

4. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
- Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
- Suburban
- Small city or town in a rural area
- Rural

5. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school. 8 years

If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

6. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school building:

Pre-K <u>22</u>	5th <u>71</u>	10th <u>0</u>
1st <u>66</u>	6th <u>77</u>	11th <u>0</u>
2nd <u>54</u>	7th <u>0</u>	12th <u>0</u>
3rd <u>54</u>	8th <u>0</u>	
4th <u>60</u>	9th <u>0</u>	TOTAL: <u>504</u>

7. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:

<u>0.8%</u>	American Indian or Alaska Native
<u>11.1%</u>	Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
<u>3.8%</u>	Black or African American
<u>7.5%</u>	Hispanic or Latino
<u>76.8%</u>	White
<u>100%</u> Total	

8. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 47.5%
 (This rate should include the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

9. Limited English proficient students in the school: .098 %
5 Total Number

Number of languages represented: 18 languages other than English

Specify languages: Filipino, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Indian, Japanese, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Sanar-Leyte, Spanish, Telugu, Urdu, and Vietnamese

10. Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals: 10.63 %
49 Total Number

Does your school qualify as a Title I school? Yes No

11. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
58 Number Served

Indicate below the number of students:

27 Specific Learning Disability
31 All others

Indicate if your school is the district site for any specific special education magnet program(s); if so, include student enrollment for program(s).

12. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below.

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>18</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>44</u>	<u>15</u>

Part II – Summary

North Ranch Elementary School is a neighborhood school that resides within the Paradise Valley Unified School District bearing a Scottsdale, Arizona mailing address while receiving services through Phoenix governmental departments. The milestone of 20 plus years from past to future includes technology, innovative special education programs, continued high levels of academic success, and an ever expanding leadership role within our school district.

Who are the North Ranch Wranglers? Listen, do you hear it? The gentle hum of laptops, the click of fingers typing as ideas fly from student minds to fingertips, that's a Wrangler at work. Listen, do you hear it? The laughter emanating from the 1st grade classroom as students celebrate an "All Time Best" on their L to J spelling chart, wouldn't you like to join them as they dance the *Toody Ta*? Look around, do you see it? It's cooperative learning teams, Socratic seminars, and independent study projects all happening simultaneously within the walls of North Ranch classrooms. Stop, do you feel it? The warmth that embraced you as you entered the Ranch, everyone comments on it, that's Wrangler compassion in action. It's teamwork, respect, and an understanding that everyone at the Ranch is valued. We are a community of caring, compassionate, hard-working students, teachers, parents, and staff members, who personify our mission and vision statements, "At North Ranch, we empower our minds with challenging inquiry and our hearts with compassionate action. We excel in every way and get better every day."

North Ranch is privileged to celebrate a multitude of diversity amongst our students. It is only through an in-depth look at the students we serve that our diverse population can be understood. We pride ourselves on the fact that as you walk our halls and peek into our classrooms you will see children at work, not labels. One-fifth of our population has chosen North Ranch as their home school though they reside outside our established boundaries. North Ranch has shown success in educating various levels of students. Reverse Inclusion is just one of the innovative strategies utilized to serve our diverse needs. A parent inquired at a recent IEP meeting, "Does everyone on staff know my son is a special needs student? I don't want him to offend anyone by his lack of response." Dr. Hartley smiled and replied in typical North Ranch fashion, "It really doesn't matter, he's a Wrangler." We don't work with labels, we work with children, all are accepted here.

Our willingness to engage in new learning is evidenced by several schoolwide initiatives. Write From the Beginning, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Arizona, and Brummitt-Taylor MusicFest all play a vital role in making North Ranch the excelling school that it is. North Ranch students and personnel have achieved numerous awards and recognitions over the past few years. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Arizona recognized North Ranch as an Exemplary School in developing and implementing our schoolwide program. For the past two years North Ranch was recognized as a Top Performing School by the Math Olympiad Problem Solving

Competition. Students at the Ranch have won a number of prestigious awards for their efforts: a 1st place district poetry contest winner, two students who won a national Exemplary Award for their student led GenYES project, we received 2nd and 3rd place last year at the ASU/iCademy Video & Photography Program for Arizona Living History Interview contest, and we had a 1st Place Winner for the Subway-Nascar Essay Writing Contest. In 2005, North Ranch was recognized by the Arizona Educational Foundation as an A+ School.

Learning is a risk taking process that seeks to push students out of their comfort zones. With this understanding our North Ranch team is committed to ensuring that risks can be taken with confidence and that all thought processes and ideas are valued. Our fully fenced and locked campus serves to help ensure our physical safety. From our outdoor learning centers to the rocker chairs found in our media center students have multiple settings to spread their wings. Treasured murals line our walls, both inside and out, highlighting our Wrangler theme. North Ranch is a place to learn, a place to grow, and it is truly the place to be! Sit back, relax, and learn what it means to be a North Ranch Wrangler.

Part III – Mission/Vision Statement/Values/Guiding Principles/Goals

Our school's Mission, Vision, Values, Guiding Principles, and Goal Statements have been written by the School Council and unfolded by ideas from the entire North Ranch community. We use the accordion method of decision-making, working with the leadership team, taking it back to team level conversations so everyone has input, then bringing everyone's ideas back to the leadership team for final decision-making. We continue to address these guiding principles as staff, students and community revolve in and out of North Ranch. These important philosophies apply to all and set the tone for unity and success.

Mission Statement

At North Ranch, we empower our minds with challenging inquiry and our hearts with compassionate action.

Vision Statement

We excel in every way and get better every day.

Crossing the threshold of North Ranch Elementary, one can readily see that diversity is accepted and celebrated. We are vibrant spirits with equal worth. At the Ranch, we develop citizens whose communication, technology, and thinking skills are integral components of the teaching and learning environment. We strive to make a difference in the lives of all who enter here - students, teachers, parents, and community members.

Values

We, the stakeholders of NRES community, value:

The right to learn and be in a safe environment

All students and their success in learning

Academic excellence

Collaboration of students, parents, staff, and community

Positive words and actions

Continuous growth in all areas

Character Education

Guiding Principles

Everyone has the right to learn and be in a safe environment.

All students can be successful learners.

We promote academic excellence.

Our success depends on students, parents, staff, and community working together.

We must always be positive in our words and actions.

Growth in all areas is a continuous process.

Motto

Roping Up Success

Goals

Goal I: Students will increase communication skills by demonstrating effective use of written communication skills across the curriculum.

Goal II: Students and teachers will increase the development of thinking strategies.

Goal III: Students will self-assess their own learning and identify ways they can strengthen their learning by using a variety of strategies.

Goal IV: Teachers will develop consistent homework practices that will be followed at each grade level.

Goal V: Enhance the learning climate and culture by promoting and validating student emotional and social well-being.

A. Student Focus Support

The diversity of our school may not be seen through a racial or socioeconomic lens but rather through a true understanding of our student population. Our main purpose is to provide the best education possible to each of our 504 preschool through 6th grade students. Although we are a neighborhood school, more than 100 students choose to be with us because of the open enrollment policy supported at the district level. Our ethnic population consists of: 11.1% Asian, 3.8% Black, 7.5% Hispanic, .8% Indian, and 76.8% Caucasian. We have 58 students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) receiving special education services, while 96 students are identified and receive services in our honors programs. We are privileged to provide two self-contained classrooms serving 19 students with specific learning disabilities. We also house 3 classrooms for Uniquely Gifted students serving 20 children who are classified as twice-exceptional. We have 4 special needs students with disabilities such as Autism who are fully included in the regular classroom. North Ranch has 18 languages other than English being spoken in our families' homes. These include Filipino, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Indian, Japanese, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Sanar-Leyte, Spanish, Telugu, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Ten percent of our population receives free or reduced lunches. Our wonderfully diverse population brings richness to our entire learning environment.

The teachers excel at accommodating and including these students within the regular classrooms to create a positive learning environment for each child. We utilize the SST process, which we call the Student Success Team. This team is composed of the school psychologist, the speech and language pathologist, the nurse, the principal, the resource teacher, a regular education teacher, the classroom teacher, and the parents. Together, we identify the student's strengths and concerns so we can develop an intervention plan to create successful learning experiences. This team meets weekly to discuss a wide variety of concerns that address academic or social-emotional needs. Most of our parents who participate in these meetings are very appreciative and sometimes surprised that so many people are concerned and want to help their child succeed. Sometimes these meetings result in a need for more information about the student. With parental permission, additional assessments are conducted. Our goal is to develop sustainable programs that work over time to assist all children. Based on the students' response to ongoing interventions, many research based programs and services are implemented. A child can be "at risk" anywhere on the academic continuum, however, we are not just paying attention to a child's academic needs. We are also concerned with the social, emotional, and safety issues of our students.

The honors program at North Ranch has a number of components. Students in grades 3-6 are serviced through a Content Replacement model in the academic areas of reading and math. Eleven students in grades K-2 are serviced through the Cluster Model in their classrooms. In a cluster model all the gifted students at the grade level are placed in one classroom as their teachers are either gifted endorsed or working toward that endorsement. Additionally these students are serviced through an extension pullout class, which meets twice a week for 25 minutes. We currently service 86 students through a Content Replacement model. Many of the students are serviced in more than one academic area, which means the Gifted Specialist has a total of 115 student contacts. Students are also serviced through a push-in model. In this format, the Gifted Specialist provides opportunities for students to participate in creative problem solving strategies by working with the whole class within the regular classroom setting. To meet the needs of the gifted and high achieving students at North Ranch, the teachers have developed a number of differentiated units in the areas of science and social studies. These units allow students to access curriculum that is more appropriate to their academic needs than found in the regular education curriculum. Students work independently and in small groups within their classroom to complete these activities. New units are developed each year as well as enhancements made to existing units, thus keeping the content fresh and challenging for students.

We have 5 ELL students receiving services. Arizona state law requires that students identified as non-proficient in English, as determined by the state mandated AZELLA test, be placed in a 4-hour English-Language Development (ELD) program. The program is designed specifically for ELL's, with the goal of students becoming English-Language proficient after 1 year in the program. We instruct students in all English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. When a student becomes proficient in English, as determined by

annual testing, he/she will be exited from the 4-hour ELD program and be monitored for success in the regular education classroom.

Students served in self-contained classrooms come from throughout the district; therefore, they usually come to us because their needs are not being met in their home school. North Ranch provides a comprehensive Special Education program which includes services such as: Resource, Learning Disabled (LD) Self-Contained, Uniquely Gifted (UG) Self-Contained, Speech and Language, Inclusion, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Vision, Hearing, as well as Adaptive PE. At the Ranch, we embrace the importance of the whole child's needs; academically, emotionally, behaviorally, and physically. Our school psychologist supports teachers and families by assisting in the classroom when needed. Our teachers appreciate the social and academic benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities. Whenever appropriate, special education students are included in general education classes. North Ranch teachers are skilled at providing differentiated instruction, accommodating students, and modifying curricula to meet the needs of all learners.

We have two LD Self-Contained classrooms, which serve students who qualify for specialized instruction in all core subject areas. These students join the North Ranch family from the PVUSD community. Curricula for our LD students includes multi-sensory approaches, alternative approaches, and discovery learning. There are 7 students in the primary and 12 students in the intermediate classroom. The students attend Special Area classes with their non-disabled peers and are included in all special events, field trips, lunch and recess periods. In our Resource Program we provide services to 13 students in the areas of reading, writing, math, and/or social skills.

Our 20 UG students describe a special population, which is often lost in the shuffle of a school environment. By definition our students are identified as twice-exceptional, children who are gifted but also have disabilities. Some of the special needs include Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Emotional Disabilities including anxiety/depression, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Tourette's Syndrome, or Specific Learning Disabilities. These disabilities have hindered their ability to access learning opportunities within the regular classroom. The program is open to children throughout the district. Using the students' strengths as a springboard, a non-traditional curriculum is planned to provide each student with a successful learning environment. State and district standards are presented, though not necessarily in a conventional format. We recognize that these students are facing, and will continue to face, immense challenges socially and emotionally. The major goal of the program is to facilitate emotional, social, and cognitive growth in each student. Autonomy in the learning process is the goal as students are encouraged to explore, invent, question, create, and become self-directed in using their unique talents. Operating in its 7th year, it is a safe place where the risks involved in learning can be fully explored by students for whom school has too often been a nightmare. This program was initially developed in 2001 to meet the needs of one student. We knew that the regular education program was not meeting her needs. We began a search for an educational setting that would provide her success. In doing so we created the only twice-exceptional classroom in Arizona. The culture at North Ranch promotes the success of our UG students by fostering a climate of thinking that views our students as being "at promise" rather than "at risk." This idea is a paradigm shift that allows students to celebrate their intelligence in both verbal and non-verbal ways. What children find in the UG classroom is a promise. A promise that they will no longer walk this path alone. There will be arms to hold them, arms to catch them, and arms to give them the push when they are ready to move on. We needed a program for one child and found a home for many others. Nationwide, others have sought our advice in trying to learn about these unique learners and the possibility of program duplication.

Our Speech and Language Pathologist provides services for all students who qualify. She currently services 52 students with IEPs approximately twice a week. Ms. Groth collaborates and consults with teachers and parents on an as-needed basis, attends parent teacher conferences, and is an important member of the Student Success Team. In addition to student services at North Ranch, she serves 10 students identified from a neighboring private school and preschoolers in our neighborhood. In addition, North Ranch has an Occupational Therapist (OT) who works in partnership with the Special Ed teachers to service students both in and out of the classroom. Thirty-six students are currently receiving OT services. The OT also attends Student Success Team meetings. North Ranch has 2 students receiving services/support from a district physical therapist and 1 student receiving vision services.

Children with autism or a variety of cognitive and/or physical disabilities are served in our inclusion program. To allow each child to spend the day in a regular classroom with their non-disabled peers, IEP guided support is provided by a full time aide. The Inclusion Specialist acts as a resource for information regarding academic and behavioral issues. To assist our teachers in effectively working through any behavioral issues, Ms. Hall trains and models interventions for our teachers to use in their classrooms. Teachers utilize the Inclusion Specialist to assist in creating smooth integration and effective accommodations and services for special education and disabled students

in the regular education classroom. Dr. Bast, our school nurse addresses and monitors the needs of all North Ranch students, including the medical needs of those students requiring special education services or accommodations through a 504 plan.

Our Reading Specialist provides small group instruction to 60 K-3 students who demonstrate a need for extra assistance in reading. Research-based instruction and periodic assessments allow her to monitor students' progress. She schedules several groups of up to 6 students on a daily basis for reading intervention. The Reading Specialist conferences with parents and teachers of each student served and provides resource materials and consultation to all grade levels. In addition to the Reading Specialist, North Ranch is fortunate to have a K-3 Specialist to support 66 primary students as they experience the learning world. Classroom teachers and parents help identify students needing additional interventions. The groups are flexible and designed to exit students as they progress and enter other students who have needs. Parents have been very pleased with the program as it offers both remedial services and enrichment opportunities allowing students to progress toward grade level or move above grade level according to their own ability. Additionally she is available to work with teachers in the classroom, training staff in methods and strategies that will further enhance instruction of all students. Ms. Strachan also services the entire staff as our Math Master. Rise, Read and Shine is a remedial intervention program for K-3rd grade students where the focus is on phonemic awareness, phonics and reading strategies. Twenty-four students, 6 each quarter, receive an extra "boost" of confidence and self esteem in regards to reading. This program helps at risk primary students gain knowledge and close the learning gap. Students attend 1 hour class before school Monday-Friday. Grades 4-6 have the Read Naturally program which improves reading fluency and comprehension. We serve 40 students, 10 students per quarter in this tutorial program that is offered before school, 2 days a week. Also, one-on-one tutoring is provided by staff members before and after school. Currently, 28 students are tutored in 2 separate math tutoring classes.

Our school community expects high student achievement and we work toward that goal. To ensure that "we excel in every way and get better every day"; we provide a wide variety of programs for our students. We believe in a continuous learning environment for students and staff. There are many examples of how our culture is enriched as a community of learners. Although we recognize the length of this section, we believe each piece contributes to the whole picture; therefore, we are going to provide a list of programs, clubs and activities. We have achieved outstanding results with these academic and non-academic activities as evidenced by high student participation and positive parent feedback. Many of these activities will be further explained within the context of the entire document.

- After School Enrichment Clubs: Chorus, Guitar, Keyboarding, Gymnastics, Karate, Chess, Hip Hop Dance, Tennis, Young Rembrandts, Lego Engineering, and Performance Class - 161 students (See Section G.)
- Assemblies: Kids on the Block, APS Big Mouth Presentation, Poetry Alive, Veterans' Day, Phoenix Water Department, Band, Strings, Chorus, and Mrs. B. the Storyteller, which enhance both academics and character education for all of our students.
- Cross Country Club – 110 students.
- Friendship Friday occurs each week in the lunchroom. Students are encouraged to sit with any friend they would like. This allows children from other classrooms to spend time together, thus promoting schoolwide friendships.
- Friendship Lunch students earn a coupon to invite a special person to have lunch with them in the classroom. This can be a parent, sibling, or friend.
- GenYes Leadership Club is a program that creates leaders and learners by teaching students how to help teachers use technology in classrooms and supports effective technology integration school-wide for 20 student technology leaders (see Section C & E).
- The Giving Tree is an outreach program to help children experience the gift of giving to others during the holiday season. Led by our nurse, this opportunity allows children and families to purchase gifts and essential items for others in need.
- Grade Level Buddies pair older students with younger students. Classes meet and work together doing a variety of activities. Lessons are driven by grade level standards, encompassing both academic and socialization skills.
- Homework Club is an after school program offered to students who need assistance in completing homework. Certified teachers are available for any necessary help or instruction. Scholarships are available to families who are unable to afford the nominal fee.
- International Walk (iWalk) to School Day is an annual event sponsored by the PTA encouraging students, parents and staff to walk or bike to school. Dignitaries are invited to attend and pass out prizes to students. The

goals of the program are to promote safety, health and exercise, and parent-child interaction. More than 300 parents, students, and staff participated this year.

- Lunch Bunch is a small group of students that eat and converse together at least once a week. It is a way for our special needs students to build friendships in a natural and supported manner.
- Math Tutoring provides small group instruction before and/or after school to 28 4th–6th grade, students who demonstrate a need in this area.
- Mix-it-up at Lunch Day is a nationwide campaign that encourages students to identify, question, and cross social boundaries that may separate them from each other. The goal is to build inclusive learning environments for all students during lunch.
- Prevention Programs involve educating students about the dangers of drug and tobacco use. Students are taught refusal skills, strategies to develop healthy peer relationships, and promote self-esteem. Research-based prevention activities and programs include: Get Real About Tobacco, Second Steps, Red Ribbon Week, Great American Smoke-Out, and Tobacco Trivia contests.
- Student Council with 36 student representatives (see Section F)
- Wrangler Club provides a safe and fun place for more than 120 students before and after school.

Instruction at North Ranch is driven by the Arizona State Standards. All teachers employ some form of academic as well as nonacademic differentiation in the classroom on a daily basis. Modifications to curriculum, instruction, and individual assignments are made with an ease to ensure students are engaged in appropriate challenging standards based activities throughout their day. Pull out programs, such as honors, resource and reading accommodate many students with specific needs. Our teachers are well trained and willing to individualize learning opportunities in the regular classroom for those who do not qualify for special programs but still need additional assistance to be successful learners.

B. School Organization and Culture

Phoenix is a place known for its warmth as is North Ranch Elementary School. We are the Wranglers and our western theme will make you feel right at home. From the moment you enter the Ranch, hand-painted murals created by our own family artist, Susan Reidy, hint at the adventure that awaits. A few steps down the hall, you will be warmly welcomed by our office staff. Everyone who comes to the Ranch is greeted with a warm smile and a hello. It is no secret that the North Ranch community makes a conscious effort to create a caring environment.

We have incorporated the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) approach to enhance the positive culture of our school community. Everyone at North Ranch participates including certified and classified staff. It is designed to provide a link between research-validated practice and the teaching and learning environment. PBIS, evidence-based practices and procedures, is based on the continuous collection and review of data, was developed by the University of Oregon and is supported by the Arizona Department of Education, along with our three state universities. The system also supports the state endorsed principles of Character Education. The key elements concentrate on outcomes, practices, data collection and analysis, along with systems development. The PBIS leadership team regularly reviews academic and behavior targets, develops interventions and strategies, and identifies the effectiveness of the interventions. The team also supports staff by providing ongoing training for sustainability. The purpose of PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. North Ranch has been involved with designing and implementing positive supports through an initiative with the State Department of Education since the 2006-2007 school year. Our PBIS team includes teachers, classified staff, parents, and the principal who attended training and spearheaded the development of the model. Everyone at North Ranch participated in defining expectations that embody our positive culture.

Each morning before the Pledge of Allegiance we recite: "As a North Ranch student I will follow the 4 Bs. I will be safe, I will be responsible, I will be respectful, and I will be caring towards others". We give "I was caught being good" coins to students who are following the 4Bs. When they earn 10 coins, they turn them in for a "Wrangler Clip"; after receiving 10 clips they can turn them in for a 4B dog tag. The following stories exemplify our North Ranch culture. One of our 3rd grade students found a \$5.00 bill. He turned it into the office and Ms. Jennings, our Records Secretary, gave him a coin for being responsible and honest. She told him if no one claimed the money after a week, it would be his. A week later he came to the office to ask Ms. Jennings about the money. She asked him if he wanted the money, since no one reported it missing. He said, "No, I want to donate it to one of our school charities." Another student found a 4B dog tag on the school grounds. He turned it in to the office and in return he received a coin for being honest. He asked Ms. Jennings if he could show the dog tag to his mother when she picked him up since he had told her about the program. Ms. Jennings let him borrow one, but as he started walking out of the school he turned back and said, "I'd rather wait and show her the dog tag that I earned myself".

May 11th is a special day at North Ranch because it's Mr. Foos' Day! We are a family and we care for each other. Mr. Foos is a para-educator in one of our self-contained LD classrooms and is also "in charge" in the lunchroom. He makes a positive impact on EVERYONE at the Ranch. A former employee nominated Mr. Foos to the Shea Homes Make a Wish program. He won and they sponsored a Mr. Foos' Day. Part of his prize from Shea Homes was a trip to Seattle, Washington to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame along with several other items. The parents, students, and staff donated money to buy Mr. Foos a new wheelchair. Shea Homes also hired an artist to paint a "Mr. Foos' Wall" to memorialize him at North Ranch for years to come. We have continued to celebrate Mr. Foos' Day each May 11th. This is yet another demonstration of the compassionate heart found at North Ranch.

North Ranch has had a stable population. Many students begin in pre-kindergarten and continue through 6th grade. Our staff takes student transitions seriously, whether it be to the next grade level or a new placement. We have a well-organized system for placing students into classes. Student academic performance, social interactions, learning styles, and parent and teacher input are taken into account. Grade level teachers meet to "balance" the classes in order to best nurture each individual student's further learning. When 6th graders move on to middle school, they visit the school as a group to get a taste of what's ahead. When a new family transitions into our school, they are almost always taken on a tour of the entire school by our principal. The new student is then paired with a student in the classroom who will introduce them to the ways of our school. The week before school starts, there is a "Meet the Teacher" event when families can come to school and be introduced to their new classroom, classmates, teacher, and PTA. The enthusiasm for a new school year begins that day. This year there was a "Yahoo Boohoo" breakfast on the first day of school, sponsored by the PTA for parents of students in kindergarten and first grade. Some were yahooping and others were boohooing, but it was a great way for new parents to meet other parents.

Everyone has the right to learn and be in a safe environment. We have many procedures in place that are practiced and reviewed regularly. We have a fenced and locked campus to enhance building security. We conduct quarterly Health and Safety meetings to determine overall school safety. This committee is comprised of our nurse, three teachers, custodian, two parents, and principal. Our Threat Assessment and Crisis Team, made up of the nurse, school psychologist, custodian, and principal annually review our plan for evacuation and off-site containment. Monitoring the flow of monthly fire drills and quarterly lockdown drills allows our school to have a smooth, organized evacuation procedure. The full time nurse, Dr. Bast (aka Dr. Nurse), is responsible for annual training on safety issues such as CPS, OSHA regulations, and Automatic External Defibrillator usage. Dr. Nurse also distributes medication, medical care, and medical information to students, staff, and parents.

To make each day safe and secure for our students, all visitors, including volunteers, are required to sign in at the office and wear badges indicating appropriate procedure has been followed for admittance. In the event of a security emergency we have an automated telephone call-out system to communicate necessary information expediently to our community.

Student curriculum such as our PBIS, Steps-to-Respect, and Second Steps programs teach students that they, too, hold responsibility in the creation of a safe and healthy environment. Grade level buddies pair younger students with an older student. The older students act as mentors and helpers to our younger students. It's a treat to observe our little Wranglers see their older buddies in the hallway and share a smile and wave. Our bullying and harassment policy is reviewed and signed by students and parents annually. We are responsible to each other to create a safe learning environment.

We are concerned with safety both in and out of school. The establishment of a safe student drop-off and pick-up zone was developed in conjunction with Phoenix traffic officers. Bike riders are required to participate in and pass a Bike Safety Rodeo. Under the direction of a local police officer, the students review and practice bike safety procedures before receiving their school bike permit. The sidewalks are festive and crowded when we participate in the annual Walk-to-School Day. Families are given the "Safest Route to School" map, which promotes family discussions regarding safety before and after school. In addition, the School Council worked with school neighbors, PTA, district office, and the city of Phoenix to purchase three speed humps in a joint effort to create a safe traffic environment around the school. Our positive, caring, respectful school climate with an emphasis on safety allows students and staff to focus on the teaching and learning process.

Teachers go above and beyond to create warm caring relationships with students and their families. We know that when students feel comfortable and safe with unconditional support, they are more open to learning and growing. Giving up a break at lunch to lend an ear or give additional academic assistance to students doesn't feel like a burden, but an opportunity to give a little bit more. Teachers are available to parents before and after school and

are constantly accessible via email and phone calls. It's not unusual for parents to have their child's teacher's cell phone number programmed into their own. You will see a smiling posse of teachers at all evening events and fundraisers. Serving up burgers at McDonald's or participating in ice cream eating contests at Chick-Fil-A to help out the PTA, is not considered work, but an evening of enjoyment. You will regularly find teachers at their students' birthday parties, dance recitals, sporting events, and other noncurricular events that are important to students. Everyone at North Ranch knows that all students are precious children who need to feel important and valued.

C. Challenging Standards and Curriculum

The careers that many of our students will have as adults do not exist today. Understanding the high speed pace of technological advancement and the demands of our fast paced, ever-changing world drives our curriculum choices. Students are learning to become independent problem solvers, articulate communicators, open minded listeners, enthusiastic learners, able to adapt to change with a solid base of fundamental skills in all subject areas. Focusing on the essential allows us time to dive deep into our learning. The differentiated, relevant, and comprehensive curriculum that we provide will prepare our students for careers of the future. We schedule our days to maximize learning for all. Primary students have an uninterrupted 90-minute block for language arts to ensure that they have a solid foundation of reading skills to be successful in all academic areas. Resource, Honors, and ELL students follow the schedule of their particular grade level so they can participate in regular classroom activities as much as possible. The Resource and Honors teachers worked as a team to redefine the time structure of the replacement service model for their students. Juggling minutes meant that they were able to structure the day to maximize in-class, on-task time. Self-contained students attend special area classes, lunch, field trips, assemblies, special events, and appropriate curricular lessons with their regular education peers.

Initially, Uniquely Gifted (UG) students are self-contained in a setting that maximizes their educational gains specific to their needs. However, there is always an inclusion goal in place so that long term, our students have the opportunity to practice social competence in a stimulating and appropriate educational setting. We also use reverse inclusion, especially when we run into barriers with inclusion; i.e., daily logistics, shortages of additional trained support staff, scheduling obstacles or when students are not socially or emotionally ready to enter the mainstream setting. When we determine a need for reverse inclusion, our multidisciplinary team, including parents, works together to identify age/grade appropriate peer role models who might come into our special education classrooms for a particular subject, or for socialization time. Occasionally, we select students who can be good role models, but who are also slightly at risk in some area and might benefit from some smaller group instruction, or some extra support to grasp particular concepts. Through reverse inclusion connections, North Ranch has been successful in providing at risk students with expanded social opportunities, i.e., track and field days, science fair projects, extra curricular events, and assistance with setting up "play dates". In general, our goal is to pair students so that they can work together collaboratively and hopefully in the process they will develop some mutually reciprocal friendships. Through differentiated instruction, accommodations, modified curriculum and peer partnering, our students have experienced many triumphs. Success is measured in small steps within the UG program; each step is a celebration on the road to independence.

Language Arts

Writing is fun? You bet! Our students would tell anyone writing is fun. Our teachers have been diligently improving their technique when instructing the writing process. After many hours of training, teachers are now comfortable creating mini-lessons and projects to improve students' writing across the curriculum. Using a variety of media makes even 'dry' lessons fun and motivating. Sidewalk chalk, shaving cream, dry erase boards, and computer presentations allow students to practice and develop an in-depth understanding of our language patterns, grammar rules, and the writing process. Similes, descriptive words, prepositional phrases, paragraphing, and sentence building, are not seen as chores but as a means of learning to create masterpieces of self expression. Students enjoy writing because it allows them to voice their beliefs and showcase their creativity. Through the use of Write From the Beginning, Step Up to Writing, 6 Traits, and a heap of enthusiasm, our North Ranch authors are the cream of the crop!

All teachers have received extensive training with the above writing programs, but it doesn't end there. We meet and score writing samples as a team, using common grade level rubrics. Teachers grade the papers of other classes to ensure inter-rater reliability, consistency, and cohesion with scoring practices. We take our assessment practice further by sharing and scoring writing samples of grade levels above and below, so that the staff as a whole can see where the students have been, and where they are going. During staff meetings, we review typical writing samples from each grade level and discuss the rubric scores, thus allowing teachers a full picture of student progress through the years. Rubrics are shared with students before any writing assignments are given, so that

students are clear on expectations. Students self-score papers utilizing the same rubric as the teacher. The teacher and student can discuss the scores and determine next step instruction. Quarterly grade level writing benchmarks are given to all students to monitor progress and focus on areas needing improvement.

Excellent literature is a wonderful model of what inspired writing looks like. We surround and immerse our students in a vast array of quality reading. Literature studies, reading performances, schoolwide literature events, along with our district-adopted material, are sources of our reading instruction. The Literacy Committee is a group comprised of the Reading Specialist and regular classroom teachers. They discuss ways to increase literacy in an enjoyable yet beneficial manner for our students. This committee establishes support for struggling students who may not meet the district's Project Read requirements.

We have a variety of literary activities that keep our students reading and reading and reading some more! Here are a few examples: Blogging allows students to interact and discuss literature read in class in a new and exciting manner. Reader's Theater groups can be seen performing throughout the school. Primary students create "Photo Essays" to model a non-fiction story told with the use of photographs and words. Comparing a wide variety of Fairy Tales using Thinking Maps allows students to compare and contrast this entertaining genre. Discussion groups buzz with conversation as primary students discuss the *My Father's Dragon* book series. Reading about colonial times and enjoying foods and games from that period in history ignite the imagination of our students. Folktales come alive as students illustrate and act out various parts for their classmates. Reading tales of Greek Mythology with a teacher who dresses and acts the part delights the intermediate students. Chat and Chew is always a treat for 3rd graders. Parent volunteers lead a group of students once a week in a book club format with snacks included. Hence, the chatting and chewing. Students "present" their book to the class in a creative manner whether it be in a skit form, poster, game show, or rap song. Some groups have done iMovies, slide shows and video presentations. Creating their own Google Lit Trip with Google Earth has added knowledge of geography to their literature study in the intermediate grades. In our annual Reading Race, grade levels compete to see which class reads the most for the month. Students set individual reading goals when utilizing the schoolwide AR and KidBIZ programs. Get Caught Reading! Students are called at home, if they're 'caught' reading, they win a prize at school the next day. Each student receives a new book on their birthday provided by the PTA. Read More on the Floor Day is a festive reading event for the whole community. Students invite district administrators and community members to come to their classrooms to read a book. Students wear their pajamas, bring pillows and make a big day of it! Because of this wonderful community outreach event, our school won an award, which included \$1,000 to spend on new books for our school library. 6th Grade Literacy Lock-in engages students in an all night extravaganza of reading, writing, games, movies, and physical challenges. Read-a-thon is a fundraiser we hold annually, funds are used to help purchase the KidBIZ/TeenBIZ on-line computer program.

Mathematics

Logic and reasoning skills are the heart of the math program, along with an emphasis on computation and real life problem solving skills. The mathematics curriculum has been aligned to the new state standards for the 2008-2009 school year. Teachers in our district worked to develop "Power Standards", which are the "big ideas" of the Arizona Standards. Our programs and teaching methods have improved our test scores for AIMS and Terra Nova in recent years. They also include other unique features such as computer software, math journal enrichment, a website to reinforce concepts and provide school-home resources for parents, and remediation components to meet the needs of all learners. Online district math assessments known as SAMS are given to students 5 times a year to monitor mastery of grade level standards. Unit pre- and post-tests allow students to identify math progress and enables teachers to streamline lessons based on student needs.

Instruction is manipulative-based across all grade levels. Students are provided with hands-on instruction to explore and understand varied math concepts. Utilizing manipulatives is an important component as it allows students a concrete experience before moving on to abstract calculations. Unifix cubes, card games, pattern blocks, counters, fraction tools, geometric blocks, tangrams, and a vast array of other math tools can be seen in action in each classroom. Tiered lesson planning allows students to start with what they know so that they are comfortable challenging themselves to attempt new tasks. For example, Hands-On-Equations make algebraic equations easy to understand as students manipulate the equation using pawns and a balance scale. The program allows students to solve upper level algebraic functions using a clear and systematic approach. Fifth grade honors students design their dream house using their new knowledge of geometric principles. Another example of math in action is our classroom stores, which allow students to earn money, manage their accounts, and make purchases. This offers the opportunity to count change, add money, and compare pricing to make wise choices. We have to remind students that they are actually 'doing math' because they are so busy having a great time! Family Math Night provides an evening of hands-on math games and projects that families can do together at home. Set up in

stations, families rotate through the centers and enjoy a night full of math and great fun. Students use journals to write about math because math has a language all its own. Journal writing is used in a variety of situations to strengthen and expand their mathematical understandings. Another form of journaling can be observed as students participate in blogs to discuss various mathematical processes.

Imagine students wanting to “do schoolwork” over the summer. We found that 75% of our students use the web-based differentiated programs such as Achieve 3000 (KidBIZ/TeenBIZ) and Study Island during the summer months. These programs assess students and provide material at the students' instructional level. With KidBIZ/TeenBIZ, students can complete math problems or learn to invest in the stock market. We have students who are increasing “their income” even while the market is in a downward spiral. Study Island, a web-based, data-driven program built from state standards is very user-friendly and provides math assessment, instruction and practice for students. It also offers a variety of mathematical games. Teachers use Study Island as a supplement to the curriculum, for remediation or acceleration. Parents like the at-home practice students have available. Study Island records statistics for each user session in a real-time report. With both programs, teachers have access to a private page where they can create differentiated assignments and/or view usage statistics and results for each student or their entire class. Real-time reports help teachers measure progress and identify deficiencies as they relate to specific state standards.

Fifth and sixth grade students participate in the international math competition, Math Olympiad, as part of the honors math program. The program emphasizes problem solving and higher level thinking skills with over 105,000 participants worldwide. The North Ranch team was twice named to National Math Olympiad Honor Roll for placing in the 90th percentile of the 6,500 teams entered in the competition. Sixth grade honors students are given a full year of Pre-Algebra instruction, further demonstrating the North Ranch commitment to differentiated instruction that truly meets the needs of the student.

Social Studies

Our North Ranch Social Studies curriculum focuses on helping students learn about our world through a building block format. This plan begins with helping children understand how they are first part of a family. Curriculum is used to guide students to see themselves as important parts of our school, community, state, country, continent, and world. Our students are able to develop life skills while gaining an in depth understanding of historical and current events. Through a wide variety of projects, activities, and motivating lessons, students also learn that people who lived before us and in different cultures are more like us than not.

Current events are studied in a number of ways. As previously mentioned, one approach is through using KidBIZ/TeenBIZ. Each student is able to read articles at their assessed reading level about important current happenings in our state, country, and world. Time for Kids, Scholastic News, and Weekly Reader magazines along with local newspapers are used in the study of current events. It is not unusual to find a student giving an oral presentation on a current event topic of their choice.

Geography and social studies come alive for 3rd grade students with the help of travel journals. Travel journals are writing journals that are sent to friends and relatives around the globe. The person who receives the travel journal adds information about his/her culture, and the city in which he/she lives. The individual then sends it on to another friend or relative. Additionally, a postcard is sent to the school for the students to view and track each journal's location. In this way students follow their travel journals around the world. The travel journal is completed at the end of the year and returned to school where the students read about its adventures.

After an extensive study of Arizona, 4th graders experience first hand what they have learned in class as they visit the Grand Canyon, a much-anticipated trip. In addition, the curriculum is expanded through the use of the Grand Canyon National Park's Traveling Trunk Program. All grade levels support the Social Studies curricula with field trips to a number of learning environments: Arizona State Capital, Botanical Gardens, Phoenix Symphony, Renaissance Fair, Arizona Discovery Camp, and Arizona Mining and Mineral Museum to name a few. Use of our community resources adds flavor, color, and flare to the curriculum. Students at all grade levels explore, participate, and understand the history of our world through a variety of simulations. After studying about pilgrims, the 3rd graders write Pilgrim Journals in which they vividly share their journey across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World. Colonial America is the focus for 5th graders while Ancient Egypt, Greece, and the Middle Ages are areas that 6th graders actively explore. A culmination of the 6th grade study is evident when the students are seen wearing togas down the hallways!

Workplace, Job, Business Skills

Another wonderful program is Junior Achievement (JA). This program offers an opportunity to learn from parents or volunteers who work in the business community. The JA curriculum extends real life experiences that classroom educational curriculum sometimes overlook. In 2nd grade, students are introduced to what a community looks like. Other grade levels explore the workings of governments, city planning, and types of resources through a variety of group activities and simulations. Fourth graders apply real world principles by creating their own businesses and coming up with a plan to get the business up and running. They must think about the products or services they are providing and research which regions have the resources they need. Washington Mutual/Chase Bank invites students to set up and manage a checking account through the school. Wednesdays are known as "banking days". Students learn the value of saving and love to watch their accounts grow.

Biztown is a place where our 6th graders can apply the JA economic skills they have been learning since Kindergarten. Biztown, formerly known as Exchange City, is an experiential-based, elementary school program. Students participate in a community simulation designed to support different learning styles. Participating in jobs such as mayor, attorney, CEO, CFO, designers, and reporters, students develop an understanding of what it takes to participate in a local economy. Local businesses sponsor Biztown because they realize the importance of citizenship, government, reading, writing, and math skills. By the end of the day the smiling, though exhausted, students have learned some of what it takes to work in the real world.

Primary students enjoy occupational speakers. This is a time when parents, family members, neighbors, or members of the community come in to school and share their occupation. We've had amazing visits from doctors, scientists, lawyers, salespeople, marketers, firemen, engineers, artists, even a police dog! Imagine primary students extracting DNA from strawberries. It happens at North Ranch!

Science

Students spend time investigating scientific principles through a variety of hands-on activities and experiments. Lessons taught are inquiry based so learning is driven by students' questions. As students learn concepts, they are encouraged to write, discuss, and explore any phenomena they have observed. The main areas of study are Earth Science, Life Science, Physical Science, and Space and Technology. Thanks to our amazing PTA, our school has two Outdoor Learning Centers providing a setting for outdoor experiential learning. Enjoying a science lesson outside is a treat for students and teachers!

Science learning is broadened through field trips to a number of locations. Challenger Space Center culminates a space unit for our 5th graders. In their classrooms students participate in "mission" activities created by the Space Center thus ensuring that their site visit will be meaningful. Third graders visit the Botanical Gardens as they study about life cycles of plants and animals. In this beautiful natural setting, it is exciting to see nature in action. Long gongs? Pendulum Swings? Standards based Foss Science Kits provide students with hands-on experiences focusing on different topics such as sound, geology, chemical reactions, and life cycles. Along with lesson objectives, students are also able to explore and create their own hypotheses. A favorite 3rd grade activity is Scientist of the Week. Each student demonstrates to the class an experiment. Students observe the experiment and then write a brief letter to the scientist sharing with him/her the principle learned. The letters are organized into a book, which is given to the Scientist of the Week as a keepsake. At our school Science Fair visitors are invited to witness the world of science in action. Students design, create, and present experiments from the fields of science. Amazing learning takes place during this hands-on community event.

The AIMS Science Assessment was given to 4th graders statewide last year. Eighty-six percent of North Ranch students tested scored in the Meets or Exceeds range. This was 15% higher than the district average and 33% higher than the state average. Student performance on this assessment, as well as their performance on additional classroom assessments, demonstrates that the hands-on approach along with the use of Study Island Science is working!

Fine Arts

The Brummit Taylor Music program provided by MusicFest has been a unique schoolwide endeavor to expose students to the wonder of music. This daily listening time introduces students to composers and music of various time periods. Our students are very familiar with the works of Bach, Mozart, Stravinsky, Copland along with many other musical giants. The repeated listenings sprinkled with facts, anecdotes, and information about the composers' lives allows students to gain insight and appreciation of classical music. For the past three years our 4th-6th grade students have been invited to attend the rehearsal of Robert Moody's performance that is sponsored by MusicFest. Primary students in grades 1 and 2 attend opera performances, which are enhanced by their background knowledge provided through the Brummit Taylor Music Program.

Night of the Arts is a huge event showcasing the broad brush of our fine arts program. Integrating technology with other art forms such as paints, chalk, pencil, paper cutting, and sculpture, students make a variety of visual pieces that are displayed gallery style. Chorus, band, and strings players provide the evening's musical entertainment as guests walk the halls of the Ranch enjoying the beautiful, creative, and unique work done by all of the students. Our Music Extravaganza evening is enjoyed by many of our 1st-6th grade students. Demonstrating all that is taught in the music curriculum, students perform an array of vocal and instrumental pieces to the delight of friends and family. Performing on stage in the evening for a large audience is a highlight for many of our budding musical artists. Because we offer art, chorus, band, strings, after school guitar, and piano keyboarding classes, we have a wide array of talents that are being discovered each and every day!

Technology

The purpose of our One-to-One technology program is two-fold; to improve the academic achievement of every student and to prepare him or her with the necessary tools that will create success for them in a global workforce. Collaboration among teachers is enhanced through the use of blogs, wikis, and other tools available through pvLearners and Google. Students are replacing their textbooks and pencil and paper with tools that mirror the 21st century corporate work environment. Primary grade levels have the opportunity to use technology with two roaming laptop computer carts. These tools are used by students to produce PowerPoint presentations, use word processing programs for writing, and the Inspiration program to create Thinking Maps. They are also trained in appropriate methods to use when searching for educational research information using powerful web browsers. For example, two of our primary teachers learned how to create podcasts within the GarageBand program to enhance their science lessons. Creating a podcast combines making or importing music, audio, and video files, and recording voice-overs. Students are able to apply these skills by taking pictures of one another doing their science experiments and then recording their voice as they explain what they're learning. Students create their own music that appropriately matches the tone of the podcast. The students made a podcast using an experiment from the Wood and Paper FOSS unit. Pictures were taken while students created a piece of particleboard. They made an audio recording of what they had learned. When reviewing the lesson with the whole class, students loved hearing their own voices.

Our 4th grade students participated in the 2008 ASU/iCademy video and photo essay competition. The goal of the program was to encourage diverse groups of students to enter into a statewide multimedia dialog about Arizona. Their entry provided a unique learning experience based on 4th grade Arizona History Social Studies standards. Students had the opportunity to capture stories of life long Arizona residents who lived during the early 20th century. Students developed inquiry questions, storyboarded the five-minute video, filmed it, and edited the project using the iLife program iMovie. They imported still photos using iPhoto, and created their own music using GarageBand. The students earned a 2nd and 3rd place for their two projects in the 2nd-5th grade category. The students' success of integrating technology and social studies curricula was heightened by winning this prestigious award.

Creativity and content of student writing has improved tremendously with easy access to classroom laptop technology. Students create writing pieces using a word processing program or a districtwide secured web based product called pvLearners. Developed by PVUSD for our district community, pvLearners is our online communication and collaboration website. Our students use their pvLearners accounts to create websites, blogs, and reports. Using this tool they are able to access the information from both home and school. In the classroom and computer lab, students learn the use of proper email etiquette. Students participate in reflective learning as they video themselves during Socratic seminars in the honors classroom. The class then views the video and the success of the seminar is analyzed. Students make adjustments and learn how to modify learning experiences. In this way, students take an active role in defining the educational process. Without technology, students would not have the opportunity to be exposed to this type of reflection.

Rich reading stories, previously found only in textbook form, have been replaced in several classrooms by e-books engaging students in the enjoyment of reading while learning valuable lessons using a web based learning environment. Students respond to questions about their story through a classroom blog. Fourth grade students have completed Animal Report presentations using a classroom on-line Wiki page, which allows other students to interact with the author of each presentation through question and answer correspondence. Fifth grade students create a PowerPoint presentation on the presidents while studying the Americas. The 6th graders complete their autobiographies, country reports, and science experiments using documents and spreadsheets. Special education students have use of a multi-curriculum technology device called the Purple Cow, which engages students with animation, and music based learning tools in the area of reading, math, science and social studies. All 1st- 6th grade students are sharpening their reading and writing skills even further with KidBIZ/TeenBIZ. Students leisure reading

is monitored by their teacher using a web based on-line program call Accelerated Reader (AR). This program provides quarterly assessments and defines students' reading levels, thus allowing students to select books within their reading range. After reading, students take an on-line assessment to demonstrate their comprehension of the text read. Our Study Island web based program is expanding young minds in grades 2-6 on important math concepts and 4th graders with science knowledge. GenYES computer curriculum is creating a school full of tech savvy students. Some examples of this program at work are: students working with teachers to create classroom websites, a 5th grade student working with a 3rd grade teacher to develop a PowerPoint presentation on computer safety, a 6th grade student working with a 3rd grade teacher to put together an iMovie on early explorers, 5th graders teaching classmates how to create iMovies, and 4th grade students working with Kindergarten teachers to videotape students in order to create a digital archive of reading progress. Through this program, our students are learning practical applications and maintenance of computers.

Utilizing technology has given us the ability to increase the productivity of our children. All teachers have the ability to input information into the online grade book program called pigB, which connects to the District Standards Based Reporting System. Parents have access to their child's classroom assignments, the Arizona standards, and the overall grades for each subject taught from any Internet connected computer. Special education teachers have the ability to access and prepare IEP's online through pOSE. A past concern was how to manage the vast amount of data generated. These issues are being addressed through the use of the district developed pDat database. This allows our staff to integrate modern technology with data-driven decision-making, team approaches, and differentiated instruction. North Ranch has been fortunate to lead the district in their technology quest.

Physical Education

Exercise is something that everyone needs for a long and healthy life. Our Physical Education program teaches students many ways to experience an active life. In addition to the more traditional sports of basketball, baseball, football, and hockey, students are also learning a variety of healthy activities to help fight childhood obesity such as walking, jogging, jump rope, and Frisbee. Our school is one of the few in the district that does Speed Cup Stacking to help improve hand/eye coordination. Technology has found a place within our P.E. classes through the Dance Dance Revolution (DDR) program. DDR is presented in a video game format and utilizes quick dance steps that keep kids motivated and moving to music. It is an excellent way to exercise and get in shape. We are the only school in the district currently using the DDR program. Intermediate Track and Field day is an event students look forward to each year. School winners in each event move on to District Field Day. We also have an after school cross-country team that runs 4 days a week. Students train for a large districtwide race. During training we had an amazing moment. One of the less athletic boys in the school said he wanted to try out and, of course, was encouraged to give it a shot. His goal was to just come out and walk the course to help lose some weight. During one of the timed races he was having trouble finishing. When the other boys finished their race, they decided to run alongside him to cheer him on. They ran next to him, encouraged him, and he finished. He was so proud of himself for finishing and was overjoyed that the other students supported him through his success - a win and a wonderful life lesson for everyone.

Schools Working Together

We are fortunate to reside within a school district that affords us the opportunity to meet with our feeder schools. Grade level teachers from the neighboring schools meet once a year to communicate what's working and gain insight on school improvement opportunities. A smooth transition to middle school is extremely important. Our 6th grade teachers work with the Desert Shadows Middle School staff to provide information and visits so our students will be more comfortable when they finally become middle schoolers. Many of our honors students will transition to the International Baccalaureate Program at Vista Verde Middle School. This move is enhanced for students through a "shadow" experience with a current IB student.

Building Educational Supports Together (BEST) meetings are held several times each year. PTA/PTO presidents and feeder school administrators work together to develop programs for the parents in our feeder system. The purpose is to prepare for the challenges and opportunities those students may face as they travel through the educational system. Everyone in the Desert Shadows feeder system, which consists of Horizon High School, Desert Shadows Middle School, Sandpiper, Desert Springs, Sonoran Sky, Desert Shadows, and North Ranch Elementary Schools are invited to attend the meetings that are designed to meet the needs of the entire feeder community. This year the topic North Ranch hosted was "Health Concerns for our Children In Today's Society".

Our unique, engaging, innovative curriculum is sound and effective as evidenced by our assessment data and our content families. Students see North Ranch as their home, a place where their ideas are valued and their academic talents enhanced. Students are confident that they will be well prepared for the challenges they will face, not only

because of the knowledge they have gained here at the Ranch but because of the zest for learning with which they leave our doors.

D. Active Teaching and Learning

Bringing the Arizona State standards to life in the classroom is the task of the teacher. With the standards as a framework, the staff know that teaching students requires the ability to make critical decisions on a daily basis. We are actively involved in decision-making about our students' learning. We understand that the teaching and learning of our students is governed by the decisions we make. It is a responsibility that we do not take lightly. This is evident in the diversity of methods that are used within our school and by the variety of supplemental materials that are brought into classrooms to enrich and support those students who require other methods of instruction.

Reflective teaching means taking a good hard look at what we do as educators and asking ourselves the tough question, "What is the reason for doing this lesson or activity?" The discoveries aren't always pleasant, but when part of an on-going growth process, they are enlightening. Our goal is to be the best we can be, thus careful examination of our strategies, methods, and decision-making processes serves to create better practitioners. As teachers we strive to utilize best practices in our instruction to provide the optimum learning environment for students. We continue to further our understandings of best practices as we work to implement instructional strategies learned through our study of Robert Marzano's educational research. Currently, we are exploring the language we use daily with our students. Chick Moorman's *Teacher Talk* is opening our eyes, ears, and mouths to the impact that our well-meaning words have upon the students we serve. Staff members are participating in a schoolwide blog to share ideas in an interactive and innovative manner.

This story is from one of our 1st grade teachers, "A teacher's words really do have an impact. A student who is very impulsive and often has trouble getting along with other classmates recently demonstrated this to me. In my classroom I had begun to use the phrase "Take a risk" from Chick Moorman's *Teacher Talk*. We were having a class discussion and I had called on a student who was hesitant to answer. While we were waiting, the student said, very encouragingly, 'Go ahead, take a risk.' To hear such a positive supportive statement, especially from this student, was wonderful!"

Because we know that active involvement with literature engages students in the learning process, teachers utilize a variety of active learning strategies. Students dramatize stories they have read, use Reader's Theater to interpret and orally present a written text, and are involved in literature-based projects of their own choosing. Some of their project choices include character puppets, story maps, brochures based on the setting, compositions, poems, journal entries, time lines, and oral presentations. This develops both an appreciation for literature and a motivation to read. Fluency is said to be the "bridge" between recognition and comprehension, which is the ultimate goal of reading. When a group of struggling students in a 5th grade class were given the opportunity to spend recess time with their teacher working on a Reader's Theater project, the results far exceeded the teacher's expectations. Fluency rates increased dramatically but that wasn't a surprise. The surprise came when the study group was over and the students didn't want to stop. Their pleas to continue the Reader's Theater projects even though it meant missing recess stunned their teacher. Reading had become an experience to enjoy rather than one to dread.

Data driven instruction is more than a catch phrase for teachers at North Ranch, it is a daily way of life. Time is of the essence; therefore our instruction today cannot be based upon what is next in the textbook but rather on data derived from assessments taken by our students. Teachers use data collected from many sources to inform teaching practices. Our district based data system, pDAT places information about students at teachers' fingertips. This ability to locate, manipulate, and organize data has been fundamental in our efforts to truly provide data driven instruction. Data on literacy skills comes from standardized testing such as Dibels, Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA), Terra Nova, and AIMS. Information is also gathered through fluency tests, reading logs, and more informally, but just as importantly, through careful observation and documentation of students' reading behaviors. Pre-testing of students in math, science, and social studies allows teachers to focus on concepts in which students need the most support. An examination of instructional methods utilized by teachers showed differentiated instruction, teaching to multiple intelligences, cooperative learning strategies, use of manipulatives, investigative experiences, and higher level thinking skills are the norm. These methods are presented through a combination of whole class, small group, and individualized instruction. Data received from cross grade level articulations, specifically between middle school educators, the 6th grade team, and the honors teacher, lead to the training of 5th and 6th grade students in the use of Cornell notes. This note taking strategy allows students to identify key information through the development of thought questions. It also provides a fabulous method for creation of study guides by the student. Students returning to visit North Ranch from middle school are quick to

remind us of the value of Cornell Notes. "I don't know what I would do without my Cornell notes" and "So many other kids don't know how to take Cornells, I am really glad I do", are just a few of the comments shared.

This year the leadership team attended an L to J Workshop with Lee Jenkins. L to J can be characterized as a way to gather and track better results through the establishment of high student expectations using methods that motivate rather than de-motivate students. L to J provides teachers and students with a toolbox of time-saving, yet powerful strategies, to measure and promote student achievement and long-term retention. It is essential that we instill in our students that they no longer have "permission to forget". The days of repeated review are gone. Engaging students in learning that makes them want to come to school each and every day to become part of their learning community is a goal for the staff. L to J places students in the driver's seat as they become aware of and responsible for their own specific learning goals. Currently L to J is being used in a 1st grade classroom, the computer lab, and in the honors class. Our goal is to spread it throughout the walls of North Ranch.

Curriculum compacting, tiered lessons, and Prove It are all strategies utilized for Mathematics instruction. Students demonstrate their current knowledge of material through pre-tests and are then placed in appropriate, stimulating, and challenging activities, which coincide with their level of proficiency. Demonstrating competency allows the students to expand and extend their understandings through higher-level critical thinking activities thus deepening and solidifying their knowledge base. It allows students to learn to take responsibility for their learning.

"Hands-on" is the way to the heart and mind of a child and helps us fulfill our mission of empowering our students' minds with challenging inquiry. The FOSS Science kits allow us to provide a strategy to our students that motivates and actively engages them in the learning process. We observed this with a student who had difficulties sitting in his chair and staying focused. With the introduction of the first kit he was hooked; he not only stayed on task but also was an active participant coming up with solutions to the problems set before him. This young man wasn't doing "schoolwork", he was participating in real world experimenting. In classrooms throughout the Ranch one will see a variety of tools and methods to improve student concentration. Wiggle seats, T-chairs, and large seat balls are not viewed as distractions within the classroom environment but rather as a means of support for student learning.

In our ever changing technological society, the ability to articulate one's thoughts and ideas has become a vital skill. Students must be able to clearly and concisely state not only their understandings but also their beliefs and convictions. To this end, the entire staff was trained in Thinking Maps, a research based program that teaches students to clearly organize their thoughts and ideas. Thinking Maps are integrated throughout the curriculum as students learn to articulate their understanding in each area. This type of collaboration by all members of the North Ranch family works to ensure that students have a consistent and clear understanding of the importance of what they are learning. Student writing is assessed throughout the year on genre specific rubrics thus allowing staff to provide accurate next step instruction. Students utilize these strategies and the common language of writing they provide, as they strive to refine their written communication skills in preparation for the challenges to be faced in the future. Students are trained in the use of the genre rubrics to enable them to accurately self assess and evaluate their writing and the writing of their peers. Understanding why a piece of writing was given a particular score is critical in order for the student to improve their writing and advance within the writing continuum. When asked to evaluate a paragraph in class, a 5th grade boy who found writing a challenge was heard to comment. "It's missing the 'reds', this paragraph needs help. Can we rewrite it the way it should be? I've got a great 'red' to go with the first 'yellow'. Can we fix it?" Is this student asking for an assignment? Yes! When understanding is present, excitement follows. Students are excited about writing at North Ranch!

Students can access many learning tools through the avenue of technology. Study Island and KidBiz provide mathematics and reading comprehension opportunities. Our honors students participate in teacher created blogs to discuss the novels being read in class. Blog entries fly throughout the afternoon and evening as students share thoughts with each other. Student response to the blog opportunity has been outstanding. "Can we blog today?" is the first question heard as students enter the classroom. Their teacher was thrilled when students requested to be able to generate questions to be incorporated into the blog. Her students were actively engaged in their learning and loving it.

E. Professional Community

Professional growth is not a special event at North Ranch; it is an everyday occurrence. It happens in the hallways, teachers' lounge, principal's office, and in classrooms. It happens at conferences, in college classrooms, and online. It can be found at social functions, family vacations and neighborhood gatherings. Not only is professional growth happening everywhere, it is occurring in all different forms. Learning takes place teacher-to-teacher, in Professional

Learning Communities (PLC's), with and among paraprofessionals, and when GenYes leaders work with teachers. Presentations are also made for parents. Professional development is a part of our school culture.

Every moment at North Ranch is viewed as an opportunity for growth. Staff meetings are no longer for giving routine announcements, but for staff development. These once a month meetings are often started with a "Consulting Line" which gives teachers time to consult with other staff members about a current situation. A consulting line is made up of two lines of people facing each other, then conversing with each other on given topics. After a few moments the line moves so as to have a new partner with which to consult. Teachers' lunch and preparation periods are always scheduled with grade level teammates giving time every day to collaborate. On students' early release days, 6 times a year, the afternoon is set aside for structured professional growth programs for both teachers and paraprofessionals. Multiple times throughout the year, technical support staff, referred to as KOA, "camps out" at North Ranch to provide one on one support throughout the day, with training related to technology equipment and programs. Professional growth often starts before a teacher is hired. There is a constant stream of student teachers at North Ranch who are mentored by the current staff. When new positions are available, there is a pool of people to draw from who have already proven their capabilities.

Not only is time valued, but so are resources. It has been said that North Ranch teachers volunteer for every pilot program that comes to the district. We were the first in the district to have online grades, DANAs, Palm Pilots, laptops for every student in grades 4-6, (4th-6th grade teachers had 76 hours of instruction from Apple) updated laptops for teachers, and the Purple Cow (a technology and science integrated teaching tool). We were the first school in the district to have recess before lunch. We started the first twice-exceptional program in the state (UG). Other innovative programs include Thinking Maps, Write from the Beginning, the Brummit Taylor Music Program, and the GenYes program. A great benefit to piloting programs has been training and the opportunity to provide feedback for improvements and implementation to other schools throughout the district. The newest way of using both time and technology to our benefit is having our teachers participate in an online PLC blog. All teachers were provided with a common book, *Teacher Talk* by Chick Moorman. Here is what one teacher had to say on the blog: "My first thought after reading the first 9 snippets was that I needed to put them on index cards so I could flip through them as needed. There were so many great ideas in the first few pages. I also enjoyed 'Thank you for taking a risk' because this is my first time blogging. I also felt this strategy values all students for contributing. I could see a real benefit for inclusion students, or struggling students, where they are encouraged to contribute for the sake of their own learning, and not just for the right answer." Many teachers are now taking this learning tool and using it with their students in the classroom. It is exciting to share new ideas and strategies. One outcome of the *Teacher Talk* PLC blog was a desire by staff to learn more about strategies being used in the honors classroom. Ms. Brown referred to the use of Socratic seminar techniques as well as the value of Cornell notes in one of her blog entries. Bingo, a new staff development opportunity presented itself. During a staff meeting the elements of Socratic seminar were presented and teachers were invited to come and observe students engaged in the process. Sometimes the information is best presented through modeling, this is definitely the case with regard to Cornell notes. On her prep time Ms. Brown elected to model the use of this powerful study skills strategy in 5th and 6th grade classes. Sixth grade honors students already skilled in using Cornell notes served as buddy instructors in 5th grade classrooms. That's what we do at the Ranch, use every opportunity to improve our teaching and learning experiences.

We have district requirements for our Teacher Evaluation System (TES) for the teachers and Education Support Employee Performance Evaluation for our paraprofessionals. The TES has an extensive rubric with teaching standards that challenge teachers to reach the next level of expertise. Within the plan, there are individual meetings with the principal, during which new goals are discussed and set. Our principal often makes recommendations encouraging teachers beyond their annual goals, and teachers regularly take her advice and run with it. As a result, we have 4 teachers currently working for National Board Certification, a teacher applying for Arizona Teacher of the Year, many paraprofessionals who have completed teacher certification and others working towards it. Even with our experienced, highly educated (nearly 80% with Masters degrees), and highly qualified staff, we still continue to look for ways to grow at all levels.

We not only take advantage of outside resources, we also have excellent resources within our school. Our staff has a high concentration of not only the trained but also the trainers. Because so many trainers are on the campus, they are readily available for consultation and support on a daily basis. The high saturation of technology on campus has resulted in two teachers who have earned the title of STR (Site Technology Representative). They are continually trained in cutting edge technology and then passing the information on to the entire staff. Our librarian has received extensive training with Accelerated Reader and continues to train the staff in that area. Three teachers and the principal are certified as trainers in Write From the Beginning (the writing curriculum). Once again, new

knowledge and skills are dispersed through ongoing training for the entire staff as the certified users make themselves available for consultation and support. Learning what is needed by students and staff is a vital part of the professional growth process. In many cases, areas of professional development are determined based on student test scores on both the state wide AIMS assessment as well as district and school assessments. Asking staff how they can better be supported is critical too. A survey is sent to staff members each 9 weeks by the honors teacher who serves as our differentiation specialist. Staff members have an opportunity to share areas in which they would like further training. The creation of "experts" is evident as teachers return from workshops revved and ready to share the strategies and methods they have learned.

For the past three years, the major focus for growth has been writing. This focus was determined by the entire staff analyzing and evaluating our AIMS Writing Assessment scores. Based on research from Dr. Douglas Reeves on improving student achievement and educational equity, we determined our course of action. Our writing scores had not been consistent and research shows that increased writing abilities carry over to all other subject areas. The trainers on staff have used in-service days to strengthen whole staff skills. Grade level and cross grade level teams meet 3 times a year to score writing samples and discuss scoring reliability. This also serves to define the areas where further training and teaching strategies are needed to facilitate the best within our students. This year the staff has been introduced to pDAT, a new database that provides teachers with access to student test scores, Project Read scores, and report card grades. These histories can now be used by teachers to make instructional decisions and provide differentiated instruction for their students.

Three years ago, while reviewing our discipline plan, we determined that a more consistent system was needed. In typical North Ranch collaborative fashion, the entire staff reviewed four discipline plans. We researched plans, gathered information from schools already implementing them, and identified the pros and cons of each system. Through a full staff consensus, PBIS was selected. Prior to implementation, a year was dedicated to gathering information specific to our school. Using this research, the program was customized to fit our needs. Several teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents attended many training sessions. They in turn trained the staff. Next, it was the students' turn. Student Council members created skits to share with the rest of the school to teach the newly defined expectations. Only after all were prepared was the program implemented. Since beginning PBIS last year, every staff member has taken on a renewed responsibility for all students. This fall staff members were given tokens to carry to reward students throughout the school for responsible behavior. The effect has been that students feel accountable to all staff members, not just their own teacher and in their own classrooms.

Our culture of everyone working together is further evidenced with the buddy class system. Most grade levels participate on a regular basis. Classes from 2 different grade levels pair up and work together on academic activities that benefit both older and younger students. Another example that "it takes a village" concerns a former student who came to us with immense social and academic challenges. The entire staff made a concerted effort and worked diligently to help him turn his life around. We knew he had made tremendous progress through the years, and hoped that when he moved on to middle school, the progress would continue. Recently, he ran across one of our staff members. It was apparent that he was happy, thriving, and on a positive path. He was doing great! After seven years of working through many challenges with this student, the staff burst into applause when his success was announced at a meeting. This is a true team effort.

From year to year, there are inevitable changes in staffing. When beginning teachers are hired, the district has a mentoring program that pairs new teachers with a teacher mentor. The pairs meet regularly and attend meetings for support. All new teachers to North Ranch are teamed with a similarly assigned teacher within the building. When there are changes of assignment within the building, these staff members are supported as well. For example, last spring, our reading specialist retired and a classroom teacher transferred to the position. Before the experienced specialist left, the new reading specialist was given several days of coverage in her classroom so the two professionals could prepare for the change. This proved to be time well spent, and the reading program transitioned smoothly for the newly assigned teacher and students. Additionally, several veteran teachers at our school serve as mentors for new staff within the district.

Professional growth cannot be measured in numbers and statistics. However, it is clear within the North Ranch culture that the success of students is influenced by staff commitment to continuous learning. Our students stand out in middle school as having been well prepared. Our open enrollment is 20% of the total student body, demonstrating our reputation within the educational community. In addition, the parents' willingness to help teachers and students alike reflects their commitment to our school. Ultimately the success of professional development is manifest in the success of the students. The staff has demonstrated through example and

experience, that professional growth is more than just meetings and classes. It is the piece that puts "professional" into our profession.

F. Leadership and Educational Vitality

Everyone is an integral part of the leadership dynamic. Let's start by understanding our school's principal, Dr. Sarah Hartley. Dr. Hartley continues to be the driving force of our team and sets the tone in both an energizing and compassionate way. She comes from a mindset of acceptance and diversity and has influenced all with her spirit of collaboration and dedication. Her ingenuity and resourcefulness has made her the technological "guru" of North Ranch and the district. The district also acknowledges Dr. Hartley's leadership skills as she is often asked to mentor future leaders within the district who are working toward their principal's certificate. Dr. Hartley is participating as mentor principal in the Arizona Educational Foundation's newest program, the Principal's Leadership Academy. Great leaders instill confidence and trust. They are the ones that can lead, teach, and inspire. Many administrators use the phrase, "We do what is in the best interest of the child" Dr. Hartley does not merely use the phrase; she lives it each and every day.

Although Dr. Hartley serves as the central leader, leadership is seen as a collaborative effort throughout the building. Ten teachers form the North Ranch Leadership/Technology Team. The NRES Leadership Team provides leadership where it really counts, in the classroom. After many hours of research, this team has brought Marzano philosophies, Failure Is Not An Option, L to J, and many of our technology programs and best practices to their colleagues. At North Ranch we study, learn, and share so we can continue to learn and grow together. Another example of leadership is in the creation of this document. Each team member was a leader of one section of the A+ application. With their team of teachers, classified staff, and parents, they used Google Shared Docs to write their section of the document. Together as a Leadership Team we refined the final application as you read it today.

North Ranch has evolved over the past few years into an educational leader in developing and implementing technology in the classroom and creating a 21st century model for other schools in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. Three years ago we secured a One-to-One technology grant to engage students and enhance curriculum through the use of personal Apple computers for each 4th-6th, Uniquely Gifted and special education students. In addition to the GenYES curriculum taught in computer lab, students are able to attend an after school GenYES Leadership Club. Learning comes in many forms at North Ranch, teacher to student, student to student, and with GenYES, student to teacher!

Leadership is seen throughout our entire staff as we work to promote compassion and understanding about the differences and similarities we share within the greater community. The implementation of PBIS allows us to recognize appropriate behavior and social skills. Administration, parents, teachers, and the community work together to set and achieve all goals. All staff members have a chance to lead and mentor. Our teachers take team spirit to new levels as they collaborate and research the best ways to reach children. We support each other and use a variety of resources to enhance all areas of the curriculum. Teachers present the most effective learning environment for students and enjoy warm and inviting relationships among each other. North Ranch teachers are known to participate in co-teaching with special area teachers or specialists including SEI, reading, and math specialists. These activities result in the pooling of resources and personal knowledge. Students benefit from having two professionals deliver instruction in this unique way and receive more immediate feedback and direction. The student-to-teacher ratio is also cut in half with this teaching partnership. Evidence of leadership is clearly displayed in the staff's tremendous team-building efforts.

Public schools are faced with many educational challenges and North Ranch is no different. How we differ is in our proactive response to projected challenges. By utilizing long-range planning, we are able to look at challenges as opportunities and can devise problem-solving strategies. The analysis of assessment data by our leadership teams results in awareness and understanding of what we do well and where we need focused attention for improvement. School Council is a major decision-making body comprised of all stakeholders within our community. The council oversees the tax credit programs and spending, establishes school business partnerships, and provides leadership in determining our School Action Plan. Input and decision-making for our district as well as community member ideas and issues are brought before this group.

What are some specific challenges that we are proactively addressing? Time. Our curriculum is ever increasing, but time is not. How on Earth does an educator fit it all in? We have realized that we need to rethink why we teach what we teach. Is it because we have always done it that way, or is it truly a valuable component of the curriculum? Old habits die hard, but even our veteran teachers realized that something had to give. We have refocused our lesson planning so that time is maximized and that unnecessary 'fluff' removed. Thanks to the creation of Power

Standards, reflective practices, refocused instruction, and intricate scheduling, our teaching time is put to the very best use possible. Another challenge, enrollment. Our public schools are losing numbers and we need to do something about it. We have updated our website to showcase our school. Thanks to the expertise of one of our parents, our website even has a dynamic virtual tour. We promoted our school to the community during our 20th Year Celebration. We created a brochure that was mailed to community members and distributed to local businesses. During their free time, teachers even placed brochures on car windshields in local shopping areas to market our school. All members of our school community 'talk up' our school success and wonderful atmosphere. Funding programs is another ongoing hurdle that we are constantly finding new ways to jump. Promoting the benefits of tax credit donations has been a big help. One of our teachers recently participated in a radio program with the neighboring parochial school to promote the benefits of the tax credit program. We are very fortunate that when we have a funding need, our families and local businesses step up and help to keep our programs running.

North Ranch teachers are often asked to mentor new teachers within the district. Student teachers, interns and even high school students that are participating in the Teacher Academy benefit from their expertise. Since 2005, more than 30 individuals have been mentored as they pursue their careers in education. We currently have three ASU interns participating in the GenYES/Technology curriculum and two interns in the regular education classrooms. The Paradise Valley Education Association (PVEA) elected leaders from North Ranch to facilitate the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). This team is comprised of leaders from each area of our school. The purpose of FAC is to be a decision-making body that will discuss school issues and bring back information to their team members.

North Ranch parents, through PTA representation, exhibit leadership in both school and district committees. Those committees are School Council, Health and Safety, Citizens' Curriculum Advisory Committee, and United Parent Council. Our very own Tami Taylor serves as a Vice Chair to the district's United Parent Council. Each committee maintains two PTA appointed parents to share viewpoints and be involved on the front lines of many educational decisions.

Student Council is a student government program that allows input and leadership training for 3rd-6th grade students. Student Council members organize and run our recycling program, decide on charities to support, create spirit day themes, manage a budget through fundraisers, and act as a liaison to the Council with their individual classrooms. They deliver new information so the student body is informed about what the Council has accomplished. Classroom representatives deliver input from the student body back to the Council for discussion. This way, all students have a voice and feel empowered and valued. Everyone is given the opportunity to take the helm of our community ship. The fact that everyone - administrators, teachers, parents, and students gladly step up to do so is another reason North Ranch sails smoothly. Contributing to our community is the ultimate example of leadership.

G. School, Family, and Community Partnerships

"The Past Giving to the Future" was our motto for our Spring 2008 twentieth year celebration where we had over 500 guests in attendance. The wonderful celebration was shared with past and current administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students. Alumni and current band, strings, and dance students performed throughout the evening. Our current art and computer teachers displayed student art work that had been created throughout the year, showcasing the fine talent of our students. Our GenYes student leaders put together Keynote presentations showing photos and memories from the past 20 years.

The newest addition to the teaching staff teaches Kindergarten in the very room in which she attended Kindergarten. Kelsey Swartz attended the Ranch from Kindergarten through 6th grade. She states, "I began my journey through education attending North Ranch. I enjoyed the warmth and "home-like" feel and made many friends along the way. As a young girl, I dreamed of becoming a teacher and making a difference in childrens' lives. My dream came true after getting my first teaching job back where it all started, North Ranch. My life has been brought full circle, and I am very grateful for the chance I was given to come back home." Several other staff members are former North Ranch students. Nathan Hirth, PE, Valerie Castellano, Kindergarten, and Jill Mausbach, 2nd grade have all returned to give back to the North Ranch community as teachers. We also have several teachers who have taught the entire time our doors have been open. Horizon High School Teacher Academy collaborates with North Ranch to provide an opportunity for high school students, many of them past North Ranch students, to work in a classroom with experienced teachers. This investment in our community continues to shape future generations.

Proof that our educational mission is being well served is evident through the involvement of community financial sponsors. Local community vendors are invested in our school and participate by providing avenues for funding educational programs. Vendors include local Chick-Fil-A, Washington Mutual /Chase Bank, Papa John's Pizza, Barnes and Noble, Cold Stone Creamery, Rubio's Mexican Restaurant, Jamba Juice, California Pizza Kitchen, and Baskin Robbins, all within a 5 mile radius of our school. Chick-Fil-A not only supports North Ranch financially with programs (including Box Tops program sponsorship) but also fills the community-at-large position on our school's site council. Washington Mutual/Chase provides our students with school banking and incentives helping with the difficult education of financial responsibility. The revenue generated from these businesses provides for a variety of expenses including but not limited to: extracurricular activities, staff development projects, student supplies and field trips, maintenance of student curriculum, and beautification of school grounds.

North Ranch provides a wonderful service to the community by offering a developmentally appropriate preschool program called Li'l Wranglers via PVUSD Community Education. Maintaining a constant waiting list of students, Li'l Wranglers distinguishes itself by providing a rare full day academic opportunity to aid a smooth transition into elementary school. Last year's class of Li'l Wranglers participated in the North Ranch Science Fair, earning 2nd place for their project "Arctic Experiments". This motivated class has even performed a singing act in the school's Talent Show. The excitement starts with our very youngest and extends to the oldest of our students.

North Ranch maintains a partnership with the Desert Foothills Musicfest. This daily classical music listening program provides lesson plans, CD collections, and CD players along with teacher training. Our Kindergarten classes benefit each year from weekly concerts given by a parent, Mr. Warren. This Kindergarten music program brings joy and a love for music to our curriculum.

In the Summer of 2007, our teacher's lounge received a well deserved and needed remodel. Our PTA wanted to show the staff their deep appreciation, so they transformed the tired bland teachers' lounge into a warm and inviting cafe style retreat where staff gather for parties, breaks, and meals. It was truly a collaborative effort on the part of parent volunteers who worked tirelessly through the summer to get the project done in time for school to begin in August. The quote painted on the wall says it all, "Your day... Make a difference in the eyes of a child."

The North Ranch PTA consistently identifies and meets the needs of our community. An abundance of opportunities to invest in the North Ranch family are offered. Our strong volunteer base is nurtured, encouraged, and appreciated by the principal, teachers, and staff. Parents who volunteer are better informed, aware, and invested in helping their child become more successful in school. We believe that a parent being present and visible to their child at school has a lasting impact which is why we support an open door policy. Many activities and field trips depend on our volunteers. We have an enormous turnout of parents, grandparents, and community members for events. North Ranch is a happening place!

PTA consistently identifies and supports the financial needs of our school. On a typical year, PTA raises approximately \$85,000 in revenue to support field trips, provide beautification to the school's exterior landscape, purchase books, educational videos, musical instruments, art and computer supplies, and PE supplies. They also supply classroom set-up funds for each teacher. PTA Kids First is a program for the benefit of students where financial struggles are present within their families. Confidentially identified families are helped with the cost of activities or supplies. To enhance the curriculum, PTA helped fund the Accelerated Reader (AR) program, along with a large donation of AR books. Also, this past year PTA funded a major portion required to continue the school offering of KidBiz/TeenBiz and Study Island. This past spring, PTA was the recipient of the McDonald's/Arizona PTA's "Readers are Leaders" grant. This grant was awarded based on PTA's Birthday Books program. During the annual Read More on the Floor event, our school becomes a showcase of parents and local and district celebrities reading in every classroom while students lounge in their pajamas.

PTA is dedicated to providing enriching entertainment with events and programs such as: annual Country Fair and Silent Auction, Open House, Me & My Guy Dance, Mother/Son Event, Scholastic Book Fairs, Spirit Nights (at Chick-Fil-A, Barnes & Noble, Cold Stone Creamery, Rubio's, Papa John's Pizza, California Pizza Kitchen and more), Grandparent's Day, and International Walk to School Day. These special events enhance and strengthen relationships between parents, students, teachers, staff, and the entire community. School spirit is promoted continuously. Friday is "spirit day" and all are encouraged to wear our North Ranch shirts. Our Legacy Wall is an ongoing recognition opportunity. On a wall in the front of the school, individuals and families are invited to dedicate a tile in honor of someone. The sale of these permanent tiles raises funds to continue North Ranch beautification programs.

Students can express themselves in every artistic venue through PTA's annual Reflections Program, supported by Arizona State and National PTA. Students make entries in literature, music, visual arts, dance, and photography. PTA also sponsors our ever popular "Talent Show" which fills the local high school auditorium to capacity.

During AIMS and Terra Nova testing, room moms organize breakfast in the classrooms for students, as well as provide healthy offerings during our annual Field Day. This year, PTA has applied for the National PTA's Healthy Lifestyles Grant. This application focused on our PTA's BEST presentation to the community of feeder schools. The presentation covers four areas of student/family health: food allergies, nutrition and body image, physical exercise, and updates from school nurse's office. Speakers include parents or physicians of North Ranch students, along with our school nurse. This year, a group hiked Piastawa Peak and Pinnacle Peak to encourage healthy lifestyles in our entire community.

This fall, at our annual Country Fair, our school nurse and PTA arranged a flu vaccine clinic. This effort was offered to our entire community during the Country Fair that had an attendance of over 700 people. All proceeds were used to provide Thanksgiving Day meals to families in need. During the winter holiday season our school nurse, supported by PTA, provides a Holiday Charity program called The Giving Tree. By providing food, clothing, and holiday gifts, this program focuses on making a tough holiday season a little easier for those in need. The nurse also offers an advance look at the district Human Growth and Development Course. This is a parent evening with a thorough explanation of curriculum and allows parents an opportunity to see all the material being taught to their child on this sensitive matter. This collaboration allows the parent to start discussion at home in preparation of curriculum presentation. Blood drives are arranged twice per year. Teachers, staff, and parents donate this lifesaving gift to respond to the needs of our community. Many staff members organize and participate in annual Breast Cancer and Alzheimer's Walks to raise money and show support for both those cases.

Our PTA sponsored garage sale allows families to donate their unused items with all the proceeds benefiting the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The parent organizing this event has a 3rd grade leukemia survivor. She relates that she gains much strength from her personal school community giving and celebrating her son's life. Last year a 6th grade student was diagnosed with leukemia. The news flew through the 6th grade. Fear and questions filled the minds of our students. A classmate was in trouble and they responded but not in the way one would expect. "She needs our strength not our tears"- became the mantra by which they lived. A letter campaign was initiated, emails were sent, and phone calls made because they could not visit due to medical constraints. The bottom line was simple; their classmate would not feel alone! Summer arrived and one would have expected their vigor to waiver. It did not. Hospital nurses commented on the consistency of the support. We strive to instill a compassionate spirit in our students. Often we are the ones amazed by the compassion and strength they demonstrate.

Student Council has been very active in creating an environment of compassion. Their focus, while teaching leadership to students and peers, is a service oriented entity. They plan many charitable events and programs to involve the entire school to help the most needy of our community. They provide an opportunity for our students to participate in outreach projects such as food drives, battery collection, a pajama drive, a sock drive, as well as our students making get well and holiday cards or placemats for the local children's hospital. Last year Student Council members attended a silent auction for the Children's Cancer Network and helped with generous donations. They participate in Grams sales which not only raise money for worthwhile charities but also give students an opportunity to send a positive message to friends and family members. Contributing to our community is the ultimate example of our students sharing their compassionate heart and is a life lesson to make their world a better place for others and ultimately, themselves.

Our school website offers a host of information to keep everyone in the community abreast of educational events, opportunities, and links. The PVUSD phone system is utilized to alert parents of important events and happenings. Many teachers maintain their own website and take extra efforts to create a classroom "family". Communication is ongoing, constant, and accessible. PTA communication to our community has evolved to our current email parent communication board. The parent email listing is comprised of over 300 North Ranch families. Every Tuesday, parents are updated with current events, volunteer needs, and programs happening at the school. The monthly newsletter, provides parents with information on a variety of school topics. Teachers, students, and PTA members contribute articles to showcase events and classroom activities. This year, an overwhelming number of students have volunteered to write the student "spotlight" feature. Our first "spotlight" student discussed life threatening peanut allergies. Her mother related how cathartic this exercise was for both of them.

The final evidence of community collaboration lies in our school being a resource to the community. We accommodate requests for building use whenever feasible. Our fields continue to be used for seasonal athletic practices and games by community and neighboring private schools. The following organizations currently use our

building: Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts, Girls Scouts/Brownies, Chess Emporium, Hip Hop/Pom & Cheer, All Star Athletes, Karate, Gymnastics, Tennis, Junior Robotics, Young Rembrandts, Elements Piano Keyboard Course, and Pope John Elementary School. North Ranch is truly a community school.

H. Indicators of Success

As you review our assessment data, it is evident our students consistently score above the state average on AIMS and Terra Nova. We are among the highest scoring elementary schools in our district. For the past three years we have been an Arizona Excelling School. The North Ranch Leadership Team, along with classroom teachers, consistently analyze and evaluate assessment data to better understand how we can improve student achievement. We examine information to identify students exceeding, meeting, and those who are not meeting the state standards. Once we have the information, we can develop a plan of action and differentiate the curriculum for each student. Recently, the teachers spent a half-day in-service learning how to incorporate pDAT into their student analysis. This system allows teachers to quickly locate test results for a student for all the years the child has been within our system.

As we evaluate our 2008 reading AIMS results, our lowest scores are in 3rd and 4th grade in the area of comprehension of informational texts, while the 5th and 6th graders lowest scores are in comprehension of literary text. In the area of math, our 3rd and 4th graders need more assistance with data and probability, while geometry and measurement are the lowest scores in 5th and 6th grade. In writing our 3rd graders need to improve their conventions, 4th graders need to work on voice, and 5th and 6th grade can improve their word choice. Knowing this has allowed us to tailor our instruction appropriately to target these areas needing improvement. The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), an annual state report, measures the number of students making at least one year's growth. A look at the North Ranch AYP results for the past 5 years shows that on average 85% of our math students, 85% of our reading students, and 86% of our writing students in grades 4-6 are celebrating success. Using MAP criteria, these scores place us at a high level of performance when compared to other schools in our district and the state of Arizona. When the data is disaggregated, we find no huge disparities between male and female or between the various races. Our boys score slightly lower, however, digging deeper we have more male students in our special education programs. Our population of ELL and low SES students are extremely small with many of them meeting the standards. The major disparities are between regular and special education populations. We continue to develop Individual Education Plans for all special education students and diligently work to have each student meet their individual goals and grade level standards. Another positive fact we discovered while disaggregating the data was the more years they are at the Ranch the better they do.

In our continuing efforts to seek innovative means to engage and meet student need we are implementing the L to J teaching and assessment model. L to J provides time-saving effective tools for teachers and students to get and track data. This data is then used to guide the instruction for individual students and the entire class. All Time Bests are celebrated with gusto and enthusiasm as students work both individually and as a team to master the content. We will continue to do whatever is necessary to support and meet both academic and non-academic needs. Because research is clear, proficient writers demonstrate increased skills in other academic areas, we will continue to focus instruction in this area. Students' writing is evaluated 3 times a year. At the beginning of the year teachers, using the Write from the Beginning rubrics, spend time scoring student papers together to ensure inter-rater reliability within grade level teams. The writing assessment assists teachers in the development of next step instruction maintaining a focus on student need and allowing us to evaluate our own teaching practices for student understanding. It also gives us a wonderful visual to share with students and parents showing the impressive growth we see when comparing the beginning, middle, and year end benchmarks. Success is the only option for our students.

Next step instruction can only be effective when data is drawn from ongoing continuous assessment. We utilize a variety of assessments to measure student performance. When students are appropriately diagnosed in their reading abilities, they are able to obtain optimal reading success. To help screen and track literacy success, all students in K-3rd are given the DIBELS reading test which assesses their reading skills and fluency. The assessments are administered 3 times each year allowing staff, to gather data on student progress. Project Read (Developmental Reading Assessment and DIBELS), provides a comprehensive picture of all primary students' reading levels. Additionally a DRA is given periodically to any 4th-6th grade student who did not meet the state standard on the Reading AIMS. This information is used in designing programs to meet individual student instructional needs. The STAR assessment tests basic reading comprehension in conjunction with Accelerated Reader. KidBIZ/TeenBIZ, is a web based online assessment tool that offers a research based scientific method that matches students to informational text. It is a five step processes that improves vocabulary, comprehension,

and reading fluency as well as writing skills. Students are matched to their reading level, which allows the material to be differentiated for each student. Each of these reading assessments provide valuable data to drive our instruction. Standards Aligned Measures (SAM) is a district online math standardized test, used in grades 3rd-6th, to provide each teacher with immediate feedback regarding individual and class math performance. This empowers teachers to reteach or move on, based on the data received. The teachers use this assessment to monitor progress towards AIMS, as district data shows a high correlation between the two assessments. Study Island is a web based online assessment tool, which provides the students real time opportunities to master topics built from the Arizona Content Standards tested on the AIMS in grades 3-10. Each topic has a straightforward lesson and assessment questions. The data generated from this tool is used to address individual, small group, and whole class instructional needs. The Terra Nova is administered to 2nd graders each spring. The assessment provides key information to 3rd grade teachers in the areas of reading and math. School environment is a critical component of the learning process. PBIS allows us to monitor and assess our school environment and discipline. Key components include the use of a common language (4' B's, i.e., Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, and Be Caring Towards Others) and cultural norms as established in our vision statement, as well as an assessment of the degree to which we are modeling the common experience for our students. In addition, we are able to determine our success in rewarding student positive behaviors through the use of compliment cards and behavior coins. PBIS data also allows us to monitor and work toward the elimination of bullying, harassment, and other discipline concerns..

We pride ourselves on our effective parent-teacher communication. With the convenience of technology we are able to connect quickly and efficiently with parents. Teachers and families utilize the computer for email exchanges, obtaining school website information, online newsletters, and classroom activity updates. Personal relationships are established through parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, conferences scheduled during teacher prep periods, and those quick moments stolen in the halls before and after school. Families are encouraged to participate in their children's education by observing, volunteering in the classroom, and attending field trips. Communicating with parents helps us know what they think we are doing well and how we can improve to meet the needs of their child. Our parents and teachers feel that working as a dynamic team is the best way to maximize the educational objective of developing lifetime learners.

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Daily Student Attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Daily Teacher Attendance	95.6%	96.1%	96.8%	94.6%	91.8%
Teacher Turnover Rate	10%	19%	22%	31%*	16%
Promotion Rate	100%	98%	96%	100%	100%

*Due to teacher retirements, career advancements, and career changes, there has been an increase in teacher turnover rate.

North Ranch students and personnel excel in so many ways choosing ten accomplishments to highlight was extremely difficult. We feel these accomplishments demonstrate not only our academic excellence but also our community spirit and commitment to the initiatives we have chosen to undertake. The following awards show that schoolwide, in small groups, and individually, we really shine!

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Arizona - recognized as an Exemplary School in developing and implementing schoolwide program in 2008
- 4th grade student recognized as one of the nations best gymnast in the 9 -11 year old category through the TOPs program at the Karolyi's National Training Center. This is the camp where many future Olympic gymnasts train. December 2008.
- Math Olympiad Problem Solving US Math Contest- Top Performing School for 5th and 6th grade students, 2007, 2008
- 1st Place Winner for Subway - Nascar Essay Contest 2008
- ASU/iCademy Video & Photography Program for Arizona Living History Interview contest for 4th grade students, 2008
- Fifth grade student won PVUSD District Art Best Award 2007 – Displayed in District Board Room
- Two GenYES students' projects received a National Exemplary status in 2007
- Arizona State Chess Championship-Individual and Team Awards 2004. 2007
- Arizona Educational Foundations recognition as an A⁺ School, 2005
- Ms. Debra Kirkpatrick received the Silver Apple Award in 2004

Conclusion

Doing new things... Taking risks to enhance self awareness... Growing in a safe environment... The rush of anticipation, knowing that your world is expanding before your very eyes... These ideals are not just descriptive of our students, they describe the North Ranch staff as well. "Give it a try", "Act as if you can!" North Ranch staff works in an environment where experimenting with new teaching strategies is not only encouraged, it's expected. We read. We research. We plan. We collaborate. We implement. We refine. We teach, learn, and grow together. With extensive interaction among teachers, cohesion, passion, and commitment, we are an excelling school in so many ways. Students are not merely pawns in the game. They are part of the process. They are continuously asked to share what works for them, what doesn't, and what they feel is the most valuable part of their academic day. We have learned what our students need. They need multiple teaching methods. They need to dig in and get their hands dirty. They need their teachers to be enthusiastic experts when presenting lessons and new concepts. They need a community that believes in them. That's who we are and that's what we do. We focus on verbs, not nouns. We are a family of doers. We are a school on the cutting edge with a reputation for being willing to change and try new things. As we stated in the beginning of this document, we are a community of caring, compassionate, hard-working students, teachers, parents, and staff members, who personify our vision statement, "We excel in every way and get better every day." Although we applied for and received the A+ award in 2005, we believe we have continued to grow and learn. We believe we are even better today than we were yesterday. We build academic excellence while we foster a caring, involved learning environment. We are a team, we are the North Ranch Wranglers.