

Dear Gilbert Alumni,

Greetings from your alma mater! It has been another great year in the district. We have enjoyed many successes this year, from academics to fine arts to athletics. Our students have continued to perform at very high levels and our staff has introduced some new project based learning programs to add more value beyond just the walls of the buildings. If you keep up with our school, you may have seen the stories on any of our communication tools. Two examples that I was able to witness first hand were an assembly to honor our country's veterans on Veterans Day in November. The seventh grade team put this together and the response from the students and veterans was outstanding. The program the students put on, complete with music, creative art projects, essays, videos, skits and other tributes to veterans left a lasting impression on those who attended, whether they were a veteran or not. The students received many thank you notes from the veterans who said "they had never been more proud to be a veteran than they were that day". The other one was a Dye Dash which was the winning community service project from the sixth grade students and team. The children collaborated in groups to generate ideas for a service project they could do and then chose a "winner". The Dye Dash raised money for Gilbert Fire Department to show our appreciation for the men and women who volunteer their time to that fine organization. These kinds of projects are part of the vision I have for the district—creating classrooms that reach beyond the school and make an impact not only on learning but on the community. We are adding even more of these types of projects next year. I congratulate our staff on a solid start and know that hours and hours of preparation have been dedicated to making it a successful academic experience.

Other interesting news items include adding a 1:1 initiative at the 5th grade level and new Chromebooks for the middle school. Our chorus and band students had an outstanding spring season at solo and ensemble contests and large group contest. In athletics, our girls soccer team made it to state under the guidance of Danny Jones and Dee Dee Clark and our boys golf team finished third at the state meet under the guidance of coaches Holly Lester and Grant Walker.

If you'd like to get even more information than I can ever share with you in this periodic updates, please visit our newly revamped website. Another vision I, and many others, have for the district is to be transparent and to get as much information out to the public as possible. In order to do that we now have a new website, several Twitter accounts, Facebook and Instagram accounts—you can find these on the webpage if you'd like to add us. Alumni and staff member, Jen Schnormeier is in charge of our media presence and has done a wonderful job of getting the news out there. Keep in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

