

Tom Horne Reports Our Long-Range Objectives

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This is my first report to you as the newly elected President of the Governing Board of the Paradise Valley School District. This will be a long-range view of our objectives, methods of obtaining them, and results achieved to date.

I have been on the Governing Board for six years, with significant influence since I was first President of the Board in 1981. During the past four years, we have had major changes. This is a report to you, the members of the community whom we represent, on the answers to three questions:

- (1) What have been our objectives over those four years?
 - (2) What have been our methods of achieving those objectives?
 - (3) How much success have we achieved?
- (1) What has been our objective?**

Our overriding objective has been to increase the academic performance of the students in our schools as rapidly as possible.

(2) What methods have we used?

At the high school level, curriculum have been entirely transformed. We doubled the math and science requirements. We increased the English and Social Studies requirements by 50 percent. We also attacked TV-flabbiness by introducing a physical education requirement.

At the elementary school level we intensified the academic focus, introduced textbooks with high academic content, and required skill grouping by subject matter.

At both levels we passed a resolution encouraging meaningful homework, and tightened discipline, including introduction of assertive discipline programs.

We also worked hard at working cooperatively, rather than in confrontation, with the teachers, whose ultimate responsibility it is to raise academic standards.

(3) What have been the results?

The dramatic changes in our children's test scores tell the story. A comparison of the 1981 with the 1984 test scores show, for example: In first grade, the reading scores went from the seventy-first to the seventy-eighth percentile and the math scores from the seventieth to the eighty-first percentile in third grade the reading scores went from the sixty-third to the seventieth percentile and the math scores from the fifty-sixth to the seventieth percentile. The same pattern will be found throughout the grade levels.

Three of our elementary schools won awards last Year as among the ten best in the state, although we have less than two percent of the elementary schools in the state. One of our teachers was chosen Arizona Teacher of the Year, and one of our middle schools received a national award as one of the best secondary schools in the country.,

Our objective for the future will remain the same as long as that is the desire of you, the community that we represent.