



Tom Horne Reports to Educators

January 2009

A Message from the Superintendent

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Testing Dates

We received a number of questions about the dates for testing AIMS and TerraNova. Usually, people urge us to test later in the year so that there is more time to teach the materials that are being tested. The following is a description of the process we are developing for testing dates, and of our efforts to make the testing dates as late as possible, consistent with other goals that are discussed here.

The AIMS administration testing calendar is set for five years. Following each administration, year five is added to the calendar. This calendar is available on the Arizona Department of Education's website: www.azed.gov/standards/AIMS/Administering/Default.asp. The ADE's Assessment Section carefully considers the dates for testing while adhering to state statute which requires that all testing must be completed by May 1 each year. Many factors are taken into consideration when establishing the calendar.

The February date for AIMS HS Writing is scheduled to allow for adequate time for scoring. The April date for AIMS HS Mathematics is set as late as possible to allow for instruction while ensuring that testing results arrive at the districts and are available for graduation. The testing vendor must have adequate time to process, score, and compile the data for each student once testing is complete. Factoring in time for districts to pack and ship the tests, ADE holds the vendor to a strict timeline for data return.

AIMS 3 - 8 testing windows has been moved as late in April as possible starting with the 2010 Test Window. This change was made in August when the new five year calendar was updated and was in response to feedback that we heard from schools. Again, ADE requires that the testing vendor returns complete data for these students by June 1. This allows schools to analyze the data as they prepare for the following school year. If Easter falls within the window, an additional week is added to honor individual spring breaks.

In addition to the return of data and State statute, other variables further constrict the testing dates. Religious and universal holidays are avoided. ADE also attempts to schedule around major regional events throughout the State. Another consideration is the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) calendar. Many districts/schools have indicated that they schedule both their own district exams and AZELLA after AIMS each year. The Assessment Section will continue to review the test windows and the multiple factors impacting the administration and return of results for AIMS.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne
Superintendent of Public Instruction

2009 History Teacher of the Year Award

The 2009 Preserve America History Teacher of the Year nomination process is now available.

For 2009, any full-time elementary school teacher who teaches American history (including local and state history) as his or her primary subject, or one of the subjects they are responsible for in the classroom may be nominated. Also any full-time elementary school teacher who focuses on American history within the framework of their school program may be nominated.

Winners will be chosen based on several criteria.

At least three years of classroom experience in teaching American history in an elementary school.

A deep career commitment to teaching American history, which includes local and state history. Evidence of creativity and imagination in the classroom that address literacy and content beyond state standards.

Close attention to primary documents, artifacts, historic sites, and other primary materials of history, including oral history.

Evidence of thoughtful assessment of student achievement.

Nominations must be postmarked no later than **Monday, March 16, 2009**. [CLICK HERE](#) for additional information, including details on this year's nomination process.

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

2009 Academic Contest Funds

It's that time of year again for the Arizona Academic Contest Funds. If your school has a team or organization who participated and won a state-wide event and will compete at the national level you may be eligible for funding. Funds can be used to aid with the cost of travel, accommodations, and meals. Not only does it include the students, but chaperones as well. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about this opportunity. You may download the application from this site and return it to the address provided.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact Karla Bravo at ADEInbox@azed.gov. We look forward to receiving your applications by the **April 24, 2009 deadline**.

ADE Now Accepting 2009 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Nominations

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship is a federally funded program for high school seniors who show academic excellence and the promise of continued education.

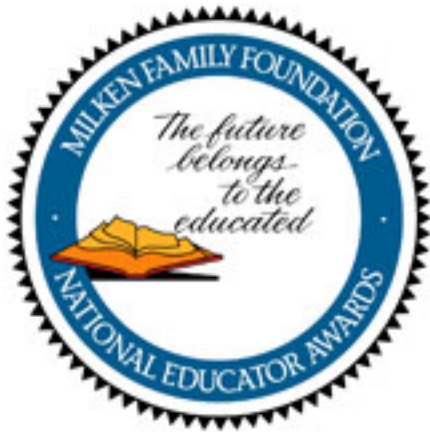
A specific number of applicants are accepted from each public and private nonprofit high school depending on size. At least two recipients are selected from each county in Arizona based on school size, academic performance, school and community involvement, official recommendation by the school, and intended continuing education load. Additional recipients are selected in the order they meet selection criteria, regardless of county residence.

High school counselors submit applications of all eligible students to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Schools with a total student enrollment of less than 499 may nominate one applicant. Schools with a total student enrollment of 500 - 1,499 may nominate two applicants, and schools with a total student enrollment of over 1,500 may nominate three applicants. Students may not apply directly for this scholarship.

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. **Monday, March 23, 2009**, and will not be accepted if submitted without the principal and/or school counselor's signature.

For more information and nomination forms, visit: www.ade.az.gov/byrd/Default.asp.

Celebrating Education



Congratulations 2008 National Milken Educators

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards program provides public recognition and financial rewards to elementary and secondary schoolteachers, principals and other education professionals who are furthering excellence in education. By honoring outstanding educators, the program strives to attract, develop, motivate and retain talented people to the challenge and adventure of teaching.

This year one Arizona educator was presented this very prestigious award. Along with receiving a \$25,000 prize, she will join outstanding educators from across the country at the Milken National Education Conference. This inspirational gathering, whose guests include state and federal government officials as well as influential community, business and education leaders, generates widespread recognition for America's finest educators.

And the winner is...Mrs. Jennifer Svans of Kerr Elementary!

Second-grade teacher Jennifer Svans has helped a diverse array of students improve their learning at Kerr Elementary School in Mesa, Arizona. Described by colleagues as a creative risk-taker, Svans combines a thorough analysis of assessment data with differentiated instruction, best practices and a deep knowledge of standards to connect with students whose challenges include poverty, English as a second language and autism. Her active, hands-on lessons help students make connections that last a lifetime, and her excellent classroom management skills enable learning to take place in individual, small-group and whole-group settings. She modifies the pace of her teaching in response to how students are responding to each lesson, and she and her teaching team use current methodologies such as curriculum mapping to enhance instruction. Svans and her team have developed a process for setting individual students' learning goals by examining past years' assessment data to determine where they are academically and where they can be by the end of the year. Her students have exceeded school and district averages in reading on state-mandated assessments and have demonstrated substantial growth on DIBELS assessments. She is a member of the school leadership team, participates on the School Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC) and has served on various committees, including yearbook, staff support, PTO and the talent show. Svans serves as the school's assessment coordinator and has mentored several fellow teachers.



L-R: Tom Horne, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne; Jennifer Svans, 2009 Milken Educator; and Dr. Jane Foley, Senior Vice President, Milken Educator Awards



Congratulations 2009 Promising Practices in Character Education Award

ADE Character Education and Development and the Arizona Character Education Foundation (ACEF) would like to congratulate the following schools on receiving a 2009 Promising Practices in Character Education Award!

Winners

Eisenhower Elementary - Mesa Unified School District
 Ironwood Elementary - Washington Elementary School District
 Terramar School - Deer Valley Unified School District

Runners-up

Pima Butte - Maricopa Unified School District
 Desert Mountain - Deer Valley Unified School District

The purpose of the award is to recognize schools in Arizona that have developed and implemented a unique practice that promotes character development in students. In addition, schools throughout the state will have an opportunity to learn about and replicate these practices by viewing them on the web.

Each awarded school/district will receive \$100 from ACEF and a certificate of recognition. Runners-up will receive \$25 and a certificate. Descriptions of all submitted practices will be posted on the web at : www.ade.az.gov/charactered.

A Band Parent's Perspective on the Mountain Ridge, Pride of the West Band, Inaugural Parade Trip

Upon the very first parent meeting where we met Band Director George Hattendorf, we were drawn into the environment of energy and excellence he has fostered in this band and parent boosters. That night he shared his vision of taking this band to march in the President's Inaugural Parade. His passion for music and this band was very contagious and despite many unknown variables, we all handily bought in to the idea of pursuing this opportunity.

With the remarkable performances the Pride of the West Band gave this year during the competitions, and Mr. Hattendorf's impressive history, the application for the selection committee was commented to be the best they had seen. As a result we were selected as one of 100 out of 1,400 applicants. It was shortly after Thanksgiving we learned that the Pride of the West Marching Band was selected to march. This kicked off a full press of fund raising that yielded the full amount, (around \$360,000), needed to make this trip a reality in a mere six weeks. Not only that, Charlie Green, President, and Ruth Phillips, Vice President of the BandAides worked tirelessly with Mr. Hattendorf and the parents to coordinate the fundraising, logistics, and media coverage in the same short time span. The feat of transporting 180 kids and 37 adults with all flights to Washington D.C. already full was daunting. It all came together in an impressive coordinated effort by all involved. The community embraced the idea and we witnessed an incredible outpouring of support.

All our efforts crescendoed up to a peak of excitement upon our arrival as we experienced the electricity that surrounded this historic event. We visited many historic places and the actual parade route before inauguration day. It was freezing cold and the crowds were large, but we felt like we were making one million new friends as we continually encountered friendly visitors from around the U.S. and the world that were there to be a part of President Barack Obama's inauguration and the festivities associated with it.

Through this experience, students and parents alike experienced the essence of education. As parents, we got to observe how Mr. Hattendorf was always clear to the students about how discipline and passion can move them to reach accomplishments they did not imagine were possible. He is a role model for us all in that he is always humble and lets the results speak for themselves. The most important element of education I believe he has embodied in his style is inspiration. From the music that he chooses to the outrageous goals set before us, he has shown us that we need to dream and then act to make them reality. The fact that barriers look insurmountable, or that the process is never smooth, does not argue against embarking upon adventures that we know are worthy of the commitment. Indeed, it is how we learn the most, foster the closest relationships, and are best prepared to cast more visions and turn them into reality.



I think I speak for all students and parents of the Mountain Ridge Band program when I say thank you Mr. Hattendorf, for the education, and the one of the most memorable times of our lives...

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration
February 12, 2009

To support the celebration of the Lincoln Bicentennial in Arizona schools, the Arizona Department of Education has developed a Resource Page for teachers.

[Click Here](#) to access this wonderful resource!

2009 Educator Talent Pool

The State of Arizona maintains a talent pool that consists of a cadre of distinguished teachers and principals. These educators may be considered for membership on advisory boards and task forces, as well as candidates for recognition programs. Your recommendations will identify educators who will be of great value to your community and state and who may also ultimately receive prestigious recognition.

We are fortunate to have a rich base of veteran educators represented in our current talent pool, and they are a valuable resource in our state efforts. What is lacking at this time is representation from **secondary educators (grades 6-12)**, relatively new to the profession who demonstrate unusual instructional ability and strong potential for professional leadership and inspiring presence that impacts students, colleagues, and community.

Do you know a relatively new secondary (6-12) educator that is illustrative not only of our state's, but the nation's best? Whose lessons provide models for others? Who has distinguished him/herself above and beyond established top-quality professionals in many of our schools? A minimum of five years in education is a must. Candidates are building level personnel. They are typically classroom teachers as opposed to specialists and are recognized by peers and supervisors as unique in their growth. Occasionally a principal or specialist is considered. Previous recognition is not required. In fact, of special interest are educators who are outstanding but have not received other recognition.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday April 17, 2009**. [CLICK HERE](#) for additional information, including this year's recommendation process.

Got a story idea, picture,
or celebration?
We'd love to hear from you!
Email us at: ADENews@ade.az.gov



Do you need resources to support your instruction?

What could you do with extra supplies and resources to support your instruction? Would a few math manipulatives, a brand new set of Bunsen burners, a pair of violins, a bookshelf, or other extra supplies make a difference for your students? If so, check out www.DonorsChoose.org, a nonprofit organization that connects public school teachers in need of resources with individuals who want to support their classrooms.

At DonorsChoose.org, public school teachers can register for a free teacher account, then request the exact materials their students need to learn. If (dare we say when) their project is funded, they receive the exact supplies they requested, delivered directly to their classroom. A funded teacher's only responsibility is to complete the thank you package we send them and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope we provide. Once they do, DonorsChoose.org gives the teacher 3 additional DonorsChoose.org points, which allows them to request even more resources for their students.

For more information about DonorsChoose.org, or to start requesting resources for your classroom, visit www.DonorsChoose.org today!

Green Education Foundation Announces National Green Week: February 2-8, 2009

Sign up Now for National Green Week, 2009!

Calling on all principals! Please sign up your school to participate in National Green Week, 2009. Participation is free and will provide your school with environmental curriculum for green assignments, activities and projects that can be seamlessly integrated into science, math, language arts, social studies, and creative arts curricula. The goal is to educate students on the importance of sustainability and the role they can play in environmental awareness. During this week alone, we are targeting more than 1 million students at over 2,000 schools to eliminate more than 1,000 tons of waste from entering schools and landfills! To learn more about how your school can participate go to www.nationalgreenweek.com.