



The Kyrene Parent Network Newsletter

January 20, 2007 Issue 4



Dear KPN members,

This month, rather than write a personal note, we are presenting several *opinions* on possible unification, which can be found on pages 6 & 7. *These will not reflect a stand by our organization, only opinions of individuals.* If our members would like to share their view on this subject, please send it in to Sandy Lowe, president@kyreneparent.org. We would ask you to try to limit your piece to 250 – 350 words. Unification will be the central topic of our **March 22** meeting, so if you would like to hear some thoughts on it, or share yours, we hope you will plan on being there.

For our **February 20** meeting, we will be doing a review of the Sex/Health Education changes that are occurring this year for Kyrene Students. Remember that these resources and lesson plans are currently available for the community to review at the Kyrene Distric Office. (Because this information is of a sensitive issue, we will ask parents to use discretion in bringing their children to this meeting.)

Hope to see you at the next KPN meeting!

Sincerely,
Sandy Lowe
President

2006-2007 KPN Officers & Contact Information

President:	Sandy Lowe	president@kyreneparent.org
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Web Manager:	Stacey Joseph	organization@kyreneparent.org

Kyrene Parent Network Meetings

- Tuesday, February 20 7-8:30 pm
Phx Fire Station 43 – Meeting Room
4110 E. Chandler Blvd.
- Thursday, March 22 10:30 - Noon
- Tuesday, April 17 7-8:30 pm
- Thursday, May 17 10:30 - Noon

Kyrene Parent Network January 18 Meeting Highlights

Kyrene Parent Network had the pleasure of welcoming two great speakers this month. Dr. Pamela Rupprecht from The Reading Clinic discussed some reasons why there are reading problems, and the process of learning to read along with the some of the steps needed to become a good reader. She encourages parents to seek help for their child if they are not responding to the reading program at their school; however there are some things parents can do at home to help the reading process along: make sure books are at the appropriate reading level to avoid frustration, have your child read aloud to a parent, and make sure they have the basic sounds down along with the rules of our language. Additional tips for helping a child improve their reading can be found on her website:

Our second guest, Paul Maryniak, is the S.E. Valley General Manager for the Arizona Republic. It was interesting to hear how newspapers are changing their focus because of the sophistication of technology and mass availability people have to get “news” in many different ways. He noted how instead of defining a newspaper in terms of the “news” it provides, “information” is now what the contents is being referred to. Mr. Maryniak was extremely responsive to our audience’s questions and their critique of the Az. Republic, and his sincerity in his responses was very impressive!

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KPN Membership Information

Are you interested in either becoming a member of Kyrene Parent Network or being put on our email list? **For membership**, just fill out the form found at the end of this newsletter and then either return it by email or bring it to one of our meetings. We have a \$5 annual fee to help cover printing costs, etc, but if you do join via email, you can certainly either bring it with you to a meeting or mail it in. **To be put on an email list for information**, contact databasemgr@kyreneparent.org.

KPN Website:

www.kyreneparent.org

Membership questions:

Brian at membership@kyrene.org

To e-mail your membership:

Eduarda at databasemgr@kyreneparent.org

To mail your membership:

KPN, 3614 E. Brookwood Court, Phx. AZ 85048

Around our Districts

Kyrene Parent Superintendent Re-cap For January 16, 2007 (at Esperanza)

Updates were provided on the following:

Calendar – Kyrene has adopted the same calendar as used currently for the upcoming school year, 2007/2008. Tempe Union High Schools have adopted the same calendar.

Redistricting: Kyrene has completed their forums; however Tempe Union is hosting two upcoming forums. They are open to the public.

1/25/06 Thursday, 6 pm – 7:30 pm, Tempe Elementary
Central Office (3205 S. Rural Road, Board Room)

Middle School Schedule: An update was given on Dr. Garcia's work this year-he has been interviewing students as well as teachers in regards Academic Lab and other factors of the schedule. Kyrene administrators have been working very hard to make sure concerns from the first year are being addressed.

Kindergarten: Based on parent response and availability, all-day kindergarten will be offered at all schools, no charge. Half day will be in the mornings at 5 schools only. (Brisas, Mirada, Waggoner, Sierra and Colina. For a schedule of Kindergarten orientations, see: <http://www.kyrene.org/OE/index.htm>)

Dr. Gina Taylor, along with Kyrene Crisis Coordinator Brooks Honaker, talked about **School Safety** and shared current practices and how the District is ensuring each school is prepared for emergencies. Each classroom in Kyrene now has an emergency backpack and every school is being examined to ensure they are as safe as possible.

Don't Forget: Kyrene Health Curriculum Materials on 60-day Public Review

Materials are available in the curriculum room at the Ben Furlong Education Center **beginning Wednesday, December 13, 2006 through Tuesday, March 27, 2007, from 7:30 am to 5:00 p.m.**

In addition, there will be **three Saturday viewings: January 20, 8am-12noon; February 3, 10am-2pm; and, February 24, 12noon-4pm; and three evening information sessions from 6pm-8pm: January 29, February 26 and March 6.**

For more information, please call Kyrene District Office at 480-783-4127

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Kyrene Governing Board Meeting Updates

Reported by Mckell Keeney & Sandy Lowe

January 9, Meeting Highlights

- Election of 2007 Officers: Sue Knudson was elected President, with Rae Waters as Vice President.
- There was a second reading and adoption of the Social Studies curriculum. The curriculum will be implemented in the 2007-2008 school year for grades K-8.
- Asst. Superintendent, Terry Tatterfield talked about the resolution to call for a Special Override Election, May 15, 2007, to renew Maintenance & Operation (M&O) and K-3 overrides. Mrs. Waters clarified that this would be a renewal, not a new tax. For M&O override, it would be a continuation of the 1983 override that's been approved five times. For K-3 override, it would be a continuation of the 2003 override.
- Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Schauer welcomed Patrick McGill, and congratulated Rae Waters on her re-election. Then he read a message from Ross Robb. Mr. Ross was out of town, and unable to attend. Mr. Ross urged the new 2007 board to work as one team, and said Kyrene will continue to be an excelling district.

January 23, Meeting Highlights

- A presentation was given regarding the plan to transition all Kyrene Custodial services to contract services provided by SSC. Based upon a pilot study, there was found to be a financial benefit, school-site operations benefit due to the principal being able to focus on instruction rather than custodial concerns, and a custodial services benefit. The recommendation for next steps are to have this transition complete by June 30, 2008, establish a hiring freeze for custodian positions and to encourage current custodial staff to seek other employment opportunities. At the next board meeting, 2/13, the Governing Board will hear public comment and then vote on the recommendation.
- Outside auditors presented their report ending June 30, 2006 and gave a favorable report for Kyrene.
- There was board discussion regarding the Communications strategies document which provides general guidance for board members in regards to communicating with district administration as well as the community

More Detailed Information

Agenda and Minutes of each meeting are available on the District's Web site:

***NEW!* Arts Council**

The Arts Council for the Tempe Union area is taking shape! One of the functions of the Arts Council is providing support for performing arts and visual arts students – such as college scholarships, and Master Classes and clinics.

Plans are underway for an exciting *Arts Expo & Festival in April or May*, where student groups will be performing, art will be exhibited and businesses related to the arts will have booths. Another event in the future will be a **faculty art show**.

Please come out to support a short presentation about the Arts Council:

Wednesday, February 7, at 7:00 pm
Tempe Union High School District.
500 W. Guadalupe Road, Tempe.

Would you like to be an "Arts Friend" parent rep on the council, or help with festival plans? Contact Mckell 480-223-7217 mk@ntpage.com

Attention Teachers of Physics, Chemistry, Physical Science and Math

For summer 2007, ASU offers a program of courses for your professional development. These courses can count towards the interdisciplinary Master of Natural Science degree and graduate degrees in education. Tuition reimbursement funds are being sought : apply to jane.Jackson@asu.edu. Modeling Instruction is recognized as an exemplary K-12 science program by the U.S. Depart. Of Educ.

For more information, visit

<http://modeling.asu.edu/>

Follow the link to ASU Graduate Program for Teachers of the Physical Sciences.

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Tempe Union High School District Governing Board Meeting Updates

Reported by Mckell Keeney

January 10, Meeting Highlights

- Election of 2007 Officers: Zita Johnson was elected President, Mary Lou Taylor was elected Vice President, Don Keuth was not in attendance
- Zita Johnson gave a report on the ASBA (Arizona School Boards Association) conference.
- Dr. Mark Duplissis, asst. principal at Corona del Sol High School, is being honored at the 9th Annual Tempe Human Relations Commission Martin Luther King Diversity Awards Brunch on Monday, January 15, 10:30 am at The Buttes Resort in Tempe.
- Desert Vista High School Carnegie Hall Trip
- The district is looking at its travel policy for students. Zita Johnson said she heard from many parents, who all support the value of educational travel for students, but also expressed concern about the number of trips a year. She said there are also equity issues.
- Re-districting forums: There will be 2 community meetings regarding possible unification. The first will be on **January 25**, 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Tempe Elementary School District Offices. Marty Schultz, chair of the redistricting commission, will be in attendance.
- **March 1**, 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Mountain Pointe High School in Ahwatukee.
- Presentation from visiting New Zealand teachers. They talked about how much they enjoyed America and visiting Corona, McClintock, Tempe High and the other schools. One teacher said he was jealous of all the amenities our students have.
- The Mt. Pointe principal received word today that Mountain Pointe has four Flynn finalists.
- Tempe Union board voted for a call for bid proposals from search consultant firms to hire a new superintendent (as Dr. Miles is not asking for her contract to be renewed this July).

More Information

Agenda and Minutes of each meeting are available on the District's Web site:

http://www.tuhsd.ker.az.us/school_board/agendas.htm

Helpful Websites

Unification:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/sdrc> AZ Depart. of Education website on Redistricting Committee

Kyrene School District:

Kyrene Health Committee & Work on Health Education Resources:

<http://www.kyrene.org/curriculum/health/index.htm> For meeting minutes, click on Health Committee.

Middle School Model:

<http://www.kyrene.org/k8psc/Middle%20School%20Evaluation.htm> Link to consultant from ASU, Dr. Garcia's Presentation regarding 1st year evaluation of Model

Kyrene Governing Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes:

<http://www.kyrene.org/gb/mintues-agendas/2006.htm>

Tempe Union High School District:

Tempe Union High School Board Meeting Agendas/Minutes:

http://www.tuhsd.k12.us/school_board/agendas.htm

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Upcoming Meetings for Kyrene & Tempe Union Districts

Kyrene School District Governing Board Meetings: 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month, 7 pm, District Office
February 13 February 27

Kyrene Health Curriculum Committee Meetings: Meetings resume on Monday, 2/5 at 4:30, District Office

Tempe Union High School District Governing Board Meetings: Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m., Benedict Education Center, 500 W. Guadalupe
February 7 February 21

Unification meeting sponsored by Tempe Union High School District:

Thursday, March 1, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Mountain Point High School, 4201 E. Knox, P.E. Lecture Hall

Parent Education Opportunities Sponsored by Tempe Union High School District

The mission of **NPLB** (No Parent Left Behind) **University** is to provide parents, grandparents, and/or guardians with the opportunity to network, share experiences, lend support, and learn useful parenting strategies in a non-judgmental environment. Here are the February dates for the workshops:

Topic: **“Communicating Sexual Integrity:
 to Your Teen in a Sex Saturated World”**

Date/Time: Wednesday, **February 7**
 Refreshments at 6:05 p.m.
 Workshop at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Mountain Pointe High School - P.E.
 Lecture Hall

Topic: **“How to Make a Four Year Plan”**

Date/Time: Tuesday, **February 13,**
 Refreshments and workshop at 5:30
 p.m.

Location: Marcos de Niza High School - Room
 255

Topic: **“College and High School
 Planning”**

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 13, 2007
 Refreshments and workshop at
 6:30 p.m.

Location: Tempe High School Library-West
 Room

Topic: **“The Financial Maze of Higher
 Education”**

Date/Time: Tuesday, **February 20, 2007**
 Refreshments at 6:00 p.m.
 Workshop at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Marcos de Niza High School - Room
 255

Topic: **“The Financial Maze of Higher
 Education”**

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 20
 Refreshments at 6:00
 p.m./Workshop at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Marcos de Niza High School-Room
 255

Topic: **“Love the Body You’re In: Eating
 disorders and body image”**

Date/Time: Tuesday, **February 28, 2007**
 Refreshments at 6:00 p.m. Workshop
 at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Marcos de Niza High School-Room
 255

**For more information, please see the TUHSD website:
http://www.tuhd.k12.az.us/parent/no_parent_left_behind.html**

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An Author Visit at the Changing Hands Bookstore

Who: **Author, Rafe Esquith**

“Teach Like Your Hair’s on Fire: The Methods and Madness Inside Room 56

When: **Thursday, February 1, 7 p.m.**

Where: **Changing Hands Bookstore, SW corner of Guadalupe and McClintock**

Rafe Esquith is the only school teacher to receive the President’s National Medal of the Arts. The book is said to be an inspiring road map for parents, teachers and anyone who cares about the future success of our nation’s children.

Opinions on Possible Unification

I support the unification of the Kyrene Elementary, Tempe Elementary, and Tempe Union Schools Districts into one unified district for a great many reasons. But first and foremost in my view is that a single district that has responsibility for educating our children from Kindergarten through High School makes a great deal of sense. I also believe that through this unification, a reduction in administrative expenses and overhead will allow those dollars to be re-directed to the classrooms.

When the issue of unification first arose, I paid close attention as it made a great deal of sense to me based upon where I came from. In Nevada, the school districts are at a county level – 17 counties and 17 school districts. When I moved to Chandler I was quite baffled by the number of school districts and the perceived differences among them. What I saw was waste – at the administration level with duplicate infrastructure – but more importantly I saw disconnects between schools and districts, what was offered and what was required. I consider it folly that a public school district advertises to enroll students that live outside their district – just to get additional revenue into the classroom from the state.

In August of 2006 I attended my first meeting of the Arizona School District Redistricting Commission (SDRC) and saw that there were two options being considered for the Tempe and Kyrene Elementary and Tempe Union school districts (Tri-Districts for ease). One called for the creation of a single unified district that mirrored the boundaries of the Tempe Union District and the other created two unified districts covering the same area but split north-south along Guadalupe Road.

I since have attended seven additional meetings/forums on unification. So why do I favor the single unified district?

- It is a simpler solution – no changes to current zoning are required for the schools in any of the current districts;
- From a financial basis, there are potentially more savings as well as cost avoidances of this solution over the two-district solution; and
- I see an opportunity to expand the overall education program by taking the best components of each district and incorporating them into the unified district.

There are certainly obstacles to overcome – and a great deal of time to address and understand them. But this is a solution that makes sense to me. How about you?

Greg Patton

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Opinions (continued)

The overall driver behind any move to try and unify school districts is to reduce overhead while providing for a more homogeneous environment within which our children can be taught. Right now we have all kinds of differing preparation levels for the kids entering high school because Kyrene and Tempe El. do things SO differently in many cases. The education level of staff typically differs considerably because of the more aggressive career ladder pursuit active in Kyrene. All kinds of issues spring to mind.

However, let's be candid about how much work would be involved in unification. Both of the elementary districts would have to align their curricula, pay structures, self-insurance, benefits, retirement plans, motor pool activities, facilities management, district office mechanics and personnel, outreach, after school care, etc. etc. The list goes on and on. It is not a trivial matter to do this. The two districts also have very different strategic plans, and separate bond issues with very different financial goals. So aligning the two into a common strategy would take many years work before it could ever be brought to a successful outcome.

The high school issues we have seen for years – misalignment between the elementary curricula and the high school curricula, complete disconnects between the preparation level the high schools expect/assume and what is delivered by the middle schools, the lack of adequate preparation now being sent forward because of the Kyrene fall-back to the 5-period model, undercutting fine arts so the flux of new students is evaporating preventing support or continuance of the high school programs, it goes on and on. These aspects of the problem would be IMPROVED by a common district, but how much autonomy are the elementary teachers and administrators willing to give up? The issue comes down to whether the changes are implemented in a top-down or bottom-up fashion – do the end goals of the high school curricula dictate what the elementaries should be covering and on what timescales, or do the elementaries lay out their foundations and the high school adapt to segue with them properly.

Lots and lots of work – this is no small effort, no simple matter of changing the letterhead and the name painted on the school buses. When parents and students realize this, and ONLY then, can a reasonable discourse on the matter proceed. And leaving this decision to politicians who are probably the most academically challenged group in the mix is a fool's errand. This decision needs to be made by an apolitical focus group set up to weigh the pros and cons of all the stakeholders, and this committee cannot be run by the existing school boards – they have too much of a vested, and therefore conflict of, interest.

Paul Scowen

I believe as Greg does, that there may be some major advantages to having a unified K-12 District especially in the areas of curriculum and specific cost savings: however these advantages are not guaranteed and may be negated by other problems encountered, given the complexity of this merger. Until I see an impartial, detailed analysis, and am thus able to identify and confirm pros and cons, I will take the conservative approach and vote against unification. I don't want this to pass only to find a new school board in a position of saying "oops, I guess this wasn't such a good idea." The bottom line is that this affects too many kids to take someone's word that based on research, this is a good thing. The question is: Who is going to provide this objective analysis to the citizens?

Sandy Lowe

I find it difficult to truly evaluate the benefits of unification without more details. However, should unification take place, I would expect the new "larger" board to give up old district alliances and focus on the newly formed district.

Eduarda Schroder

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Around our State

A "Leg" Up Legislative Update, 1/2007 Reported by Jen Doering

The Legislature's now in session and educational issues are front and center.

Topics discussed at last week's meetings:

- More IB (International Baccalaureate) programs in the state (perhaps even at a Tempe High School)
- On-line Learning Plans for students in 7-12
- Increase student's exposure to Science, Social Studies & Arts, perhaps by instituting end-of-year exams
- Is Arizona truly last in nation? Let's improve teacher pay, teacher training; Terra Nova scores show we're about middle of the pack (Horne had edit. in AZ Rep.)
- ELL (English Language Learners): let's look at what's being done. "Newcomer Schools" have been used in some areas with success.
- Food Allergy Guidelines: think epinephrine. Parents would like standardized rules in place.

House and Senate meetings are Wednesday mornings. For upcoming agendas:

<http://www.azleg.gov/agendas/0131017285.pdf> (senate committee) or

<http://www.azleg.gov/agendas/0131014785.pdf> (house committee).

"Me and Mr. Horne at the Capitol"

By Eduarda Schroder

In my quest to be exposed to the world where my children spend most of their week days, I have volunteered in classrooms, and for the PTO. I started to learn about measurement tests, Gifted Programs, and curriculum strands. I attended school board meetings and the PTA convention. I joined parent groups and attended workshops.

Education is a system that will shape the lives of my daughters and I want to understand it.

My latest endeavor is getting to know the Education Committees of our legislature. I set out to show up at the Capitol on the day there was to be a joint session where Tom Horne would present his "State of Education 2007" speech.

The room buzzed with excitement and I was thrilled to be there. I sat in the back with my pen in hand and a copy of his speech which I planned to later share with my like minded parent friends. I admit I liked being in close proximity to this man who seems to be highly respected by the lawmakers present, for his commitment to high standards. I took notes and scribbled ideas for further research.

I like to think of my quests as puzzles, and this is one more important piece. I want to see first hand how an idea becomes a law, how discussions empower people, and how I, as a citizen and a parent, can make a difference.

Look for me at the Capitol.

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Major Points from Tom Horn's "State of Education 2007 speech To the State Education Committees

For his speech in its entirety, please see ADE's website:

<http://www.ade.state.az.us/administration/superintendent/articles/2007StateofEducation.pdf>

Proposed 3 initiatives: Better Schools, Better Teachers, and Better Curriculum

Stated steps need to be taken *to ensure students are prepared for the 21st century demands for college, or for the work force.* Either one will require much higher intellectual attainments.

Students should have individual plans geared to their aptitudes and expectations, should be prepared for the digital skills required in a computerized economy and be prepared for the international nature of the economy

First goal, better schools: *Every student should have a personalized learning plan from the 7th grade on.* This will accelerate the goal of having each student motivated to succeed by engaging them in the process of planning their future.

Second goal, better teachers: *Expand a pilot program of digital support in which teachers can better.* Prepare students for the digital economy, where every student has their own laptop.

Third goal, better curriculum: *For pilot schools of international studies, K-12.* Students would begin learning a foreign language in kindergarten and a 2nd new language in 9th, combined with international studies and exchange programs

Kyrene Parent Network

New Membership

For school year 2006-2007

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address (include city/zip): _____

Schools children attend: _____ N/A: _____

Optional: Work in: Tempe Union H.S. District Kyrene School District

Amount Enclosed: _____ \$5 annual OR _____ \$50 Lifetime (Fees help cover printing, renting of Facilities, etc)

Cash or Check If check, #: _____

Please make **checks payable to Kyrene Parent Network.** Forms along with payment can either be brought to the next meeting or mailed to: KPN, 3614 E. Brookwood Court, Phx. AZ 85048

For Information: Website: www.KyreneParent.org Contact: brian@kyreneparent.org

Bylaws, Section 4.1 Membership. Membership in the Corporation shall consist of any adult 18 years of age or older who resides or works or has students enrolled in the Kyrene School District and/or Tempe Union High School District.

All information will be confidential. Thank you!

Revised 10/17/06