St. Johns Unified School District #1

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Hours: 8:00am – 4:00pm M-F

Mr. Kyle Patterson
Superintendent

Mrs. Ginger Wiltbank
Business & Finance Director

Dear SJUSD Community,

It is hard to believe that the school year is over. School year 2024-2025 was filled with great moments and achievements among our students and staff, as well as improvements throughout the district. While noting all of these would not be possible, here are a few highlights from the school year.

- ⇒ High School students' average ACT and Pre-ACT scores this spring were higher than any of the previous four years (when the ACT became the state test in Arizona for high school students).
- ⇒ The average combined ELA and Math proficiency scores also increased for K-8 (3rd – 8th graders tested) students from school year 2023-2024.
- ⇒ In December, SJUSD was recognized by a national publication for how well teachers within the district prepare students in math. Our district was one of only 600 nationally, and one of the top 5 in Arizona, that was given the "exceptional district" label. The publication aimed at highlighting the districts with the highest student achievement scores in math by the 8th grade relative to the socio-economic status of their students.
- ⇒ As reported by the White Mountain Independent, SJUSD has the lowest (best) student chronic-absentee rates in the area. We are so grateful to our students and their parents who make attending school a priority.
- ⇒ Our maintenance team installed new scoreboards at the SJMS softball field, SJMS basketball gym, SJHS football field, and the SJHS baseball field.
- ⇒ SJHS held a College and Career Fair in October that included colleges from around the state, along with several regional businesses/agencies.
- ⇒ Our maintenance and ground teams did countless projects that included installing new bathroom partitions throughout the district, preparing the SJHS gym and bleachers for the gym floor replacement project, planting several trees around the district, while also maintaining some of the best-kept fields and facilities at any school anywhere in the area.

⇒ We enjoyed honoring the classes of 1975 and 2000 at this year's Homecoming festivities during the week of October 14-18.

⇒ We worked with the SJPD, ACSO, DPS, the Apache County Emergency Management and Preparedness team, and the Arizona Department of Education to prepare for a functional skills exercise in Summer 2025 to continue to improve our response to emergencies on campus.

⇒ At the November FFA Regional Competition, our FFA Livestock, Entomology, and Milk Quality teams took 1st place. At the state competition in March, Floriculture, Meat Evaluation, Entomology, and Livestock were all in the top ten in the state, with Traegan Wallace being the best Entomology student in Arizona for the second year in a row.

⇒ Ten of our FFA students earned Industry Certifications in plant science, meat evaluation, veterinary science, floral engineering, food safety, and animal sciences.

⇒ We applied for and received grant funds to replace the gym floor in the Verl Heap Gymnasium. We also had murals painted as well as replaced all lighting with LED lights.

⇒ The SJHS Student Council organized and carried out 4 assemblies, 12 spirit days, a parade, a Peach Fuzz tournament, a Powder Puff tournament, a faculty Christmas lunch, 5 dances, and the Mr. SJ Pageant. They also created over 140 daily morning announcements for YouTube, provided concessions at 30 sporting events, raised over $24,000, and helped contribute to over 493 class service hours.

⇒ The SJUSD Annual Veterans Day Assembly was great and provided an opportunity for our students, staff, and community to remember all those who have served.

⇒ The high school culinary class put on several culinary pop-up restaurant events that were a huge success. They sold over $2000 of food products, serving over 350 meals to members of the community, including at least 40 first-responder meals.

⇒ Lydia Jessop and London Montoya placed first and second in Fashion Sketch at the FCCLA state competition in March, while all of our culinary competitors got medals for their individual competitions.

⇒ The SJHS track was resurfaced and looks great!

⇒ We enjoyed so many wonderful music concerts at each of our schools. Our music teachers and directors do a great job of instilling a love of music in our students.

⇒ Our high school girls' and boys' basketball teams as well as our volleyball team won the 2A North Region Championship.

⇒ The SJHS administration and staff took on the monumental task of completing the re-accreditation process. There were several key insights that came from this process that will help us continue to improve.

⇒ Parent satisfaction surveys of our special education department was at its highest level in 6 years.

⇒ The SJMS Wrestling team won the Region Championship.

⇒ SJHS added Advanced Art, Ceramics, and a Construction Tech class to its electives offering for this year.

⇒ Community members enjoyed Reading Under the Stars and Math and Science Night at Coronado Elementary.

⇒ The 8th grade girls' basketball team won the Region Championship

⇒ The SJHS chapter of National Honor Society was recognized by Vitalant Blood Drives as High School Blood Drive Division Champions.

⇒ Our special education department has created and will be offering a 1/2 day preschool program in the fall.

⇒ Malachi Jessop won the SJMS Spelling Bee, with Paislee Hancock taking 2nd place, and Lylah Spaulding taking third. Paislee also ended up taking 2nd at the Apache County Spelling Bee.

⇒ SJUSD was approved by the Arizona Department of Education to provide a principal preparation program.

⇒ The high school's spring musical, Oklahoma, was a hit! It was so much fun to see the results of all of the work that students put into the production.

⇒ Reese Crosby won the state championship for his wrestling weight class.

⇒ On April 24th, the high school held their workforce expo, in conjunction with Grow Arizona. It was a huge success as students were able to learn about and visit with employers from around the region.

⇒ The parking lots at SJHS and SJMS were resurfaced.

⇒ Mr. St. Johns Pageant was excellent this year, with over 20 boys participating.

⇒ Members of Legacy Leadership provided 3,184 service hours! These service opportunities included holding food and shoe drives, volunteering at the Senior Center, writing letters to soldiers away from their families during the holidays, helping patch potholes in the roads around the community, teaching drug-prevention lessons to younger students, along with so many other projects.

⇒ We are sad to see Janet Bushman, Suzanne Hancock, Vicki Goin, Kathy Myers, and Susan Smith leave the district due to retirement. These five have been incredible employees and done so much for the district over the years.

⇒ We are also sad to see others who are moving on to other opportunities. We are grateful for the many hours so many people put in to make our schools what they are.

⇒ There were so many fun projects and learning events throughout the school year, from building replicas of ancient societies, to building volcanoes, to displaying research on food items, to a

junior-high “Genius” hour, and so many others. Our teachers and staff make life so fun and rewarding for students.

Again, it is not possible to highlight all of the achievements, events, and happenings that could be mentioned. Please forgive me for those that have been omitted. This was a wonderful school year made possible by so many great students, staff, parents, and community members. A huge thank you goes out to the community for the many ways that so many of you provide support and encouragement to our schools. It does not go unnoticed. Thank you!

Best regards,

Kyle Patterson
Superintendent
SJUSD