

To Parents of Canyon Rim Academy Students

Re: 2009–10 Annual Report from the Board of Trustees

As we reach the end of our third full year, we want to take a moment to thank you for your support of our school, summarize for you some highlights of this past year, and provide some details about the exciting year that lies ahead.

Teacher Excellence. Our teaching faculty is the lifeblood of our school and we appreciate the incredible efforts they make to excel in the classroom. Canyon Rim Academy is one of only five Utah schools selected to participate in a state-financed pilot program aimed at compensating excellence in teaching. Our performance-based plan for next year focuses on student achievement and instruction in math and parent satisfaction, among other goals, and adds a focus on different content areas each year (e.g., writing, science, social studies, reading, etc.). The plan is the product of thoughtful and diligent work by our faculty and administration. Look for the full plan on the website soon.

Core Knowledge Implementation. Canyon Rim Academy continues to implement the Core Knowledge Sequence in order to create coherent, cumulative, and content-rich learning experiences for students. We have invested in new curriculum mapping software and faculty training in unit design to strengthen our ability to implement Core Knowledge fully in the classroom.

New Math Curriculum. After careful consideration and extensive research over the past year, we have adopted a new math curriculum, EnVision Math (2011) coupled with key Singapore strategies. With the assistance of federal grant money and state trust lands funding, we have purchased curriculum materials and will also be able to invest in significant professional development, directed by national Singapore math trainers, to ensure that our teachers have all the tools they need to be successful in teaching math at Canyon Rim Academy. We are seeking to hire a math specialist to coach classroom teachers in math instruction and help to supplement instruction based on assessment data. We expect these efforts to help us meet our goal of advancing every student in math and helping them develop lasting enjoyment of math.

Reading Intervention and Assessment. All students have been assessed using the Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment, which has enabled us to gather a wealth of information to assist us in reading intervention. Students who were behind grade level have received research-based intervention and tutoring from our teachers' assistants, who have been well-trained by our professional reading specialist. Our reading intervention efforts have led to tremendous gains in literacy in all grades.

Enriching Specialty Classes. Canyon Rim Academy is richly benefited by amazing specialty teachers. Our remarkable and dedicated art and music teachers have well-correlated their instruction with the Core Knowledge curriculum. Our excellent P.E. and computer lab instruction has provided unique opportunities for learning.

Dynamic School Library. Ms. Liz has inspired students to read voraciously. Her Book Buzz events have been the talk of the school and she has created an inviting and organized library for all to enjoy.

End of Year Testing (CRTs). CRT testing went extremely well. We had very few absences and tardies, enabling us to test all students in a systematic and meaningful way. While we only have raw scores at the present time, preliminary results look promising.

Canyon Prep Academy. For those of you who do not know, we launched a kindergarten enrichment program this year, headed by Hillari Kwon, and will add a preschool next year. With Core Knowledge based instruction, this provides future students of Canyon Rim Academy and elsewhere an excellent introduction to content-based learning. Please spread the word to your friends about this opportunity.

Sound Fiscal Policy. Notwithstanding a difficult fiscal year in which we endured a significant legislative budget cut, Canyon Rim Academy is on sound financial footing. With continued efforts to streamline operations, we still operate on a surplus and are well situated to absorb the budget cut that has been imposed on us for this coming year. We hope that economic conditions improve so that funding increases can occur in the near future. Thanks to Mr. Garrett for running a tight ship.

PTA/Volunteers/Events. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to PTA President Kim Goddard and the amazing parent volunteers who help make Canyon Rim Academy a great place to learn. PTA volunteers have helped with everything from carpool, class parties, field trips, and field day, to the school carnival fundraiser, plays, and art festival booths. We thank everyone who has helped in one way or another for your dedicated service. The school events this year have been amazing, with plenty of opportunities for students to showcase their talents.

School Lunch. Thank you to our talented school lunch ladies, Glennis and Amie, who run one of the highest-participation school lunch programs in Utah. The meals are always wholesome and delicious. Some of you have voiced feedback in our recent survey that we need to increase portion sizes for the upper grades. This is great input that we will take into account next year. Please let us know next year if you have any nutritional concerns.

Teacher Changes Next Year. As mentioned above, we will bring in a math specialist next year. We are also sad to say that we will be losing three incredible classroom teachers, Mr. Rob (6th), Ms. Ashton (5th), and Mrs. Emerson (4th). We wish them the best of luck in their new adventures. Some of our teachers will move to different grades next year, including Ms. Gonzalez to 4th, Ms. Grandstaff to 5th, and Ms. Schembari to 3rd. Our teacher recruitment efforts have led to three well-qualified and experienced teachers to fill our remaining positions in 2nd, 3rd, and 6th grades.

Spanish. Many of you have queried whether we intend to bring back a Spanish teacher next year. The answer for the time being is no. While we love the benefits of providing foreign-language training, the primary drawback has been the time taken away from teachers to focus on our central areas of literacy, math, and Core Knowledge. After three years of trial (and, admittedly, occasional error), we are persuaded that our current offering of specialty curriculum provides the right mix of out-of-class enrichment and in-class instructional time. We will continue to keep an open mind about opportunities to add language training down the road where feasible.

Survey. The participation and feedback from the recent parent survey has been remarkable. We are continuing to assimilate all of the data, but have already found a number of areas for improvement.

Top-Notch Administration. Hats off to Miss Merry and Mrs. Evans for their incredible leadership. Our principal, Miss Merry, has a skill for making everyone around her want to be better, and she tirelessly spreads joy to every child and adult who come into contact with her. She is leading all of our teachers to become master teachers. Mrs. Evans has brought sound leadership and support in her role as assistant principal, and her experience with student assessment and special education has been invaluable.

In sum, we are thrilled with the progress we are making and we see great opportunities in our future. That is not to say that we are without our challenges and areas in which we can improve. We thank you as parents for your support of Canyon Rim Academy. We encourage you to continue to stay involved. Find an occasion to volunteer. Keep in close touch with your children's teachers. Give us feedback if you have the opportunity, and let us know how our school can better serve your children.

We hope this report has been helpful to you and we look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Very truly yours,

The Canyon Rim Academy Board of Trustees

David Gisseman
David Havell
Shana Heyn
Cheri Jackson
Erik Olson
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