

Spotlight on Excellence

Each month, ADE will feature an “A” district or charter holder in an effort to highlight some of the best practices they to achieve their success.

Catalina Foothills School District

How many schools do you operate?

There are eight schools in the Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD): one early learning center, four elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school.

How many students do you serve?

We educate 5,100 students in the PreK-12 grades. Non-resident students who attend CFSD under Arizona's open enrollment policy make up 37% of our total enrollment.

What makes your district’s education experience unique?

Seven 21st century skills are embedded in all CFSD curriculums. The skills are critical and creative thinking, systems thinking, self-direction, teamwork, communication, leadership, and cultural competence. Our community believes that our students need these skills in their lives beyond high school so we are very deliberate about developing them across all of the disciplines that our students study from kindergarten through 12th grade.

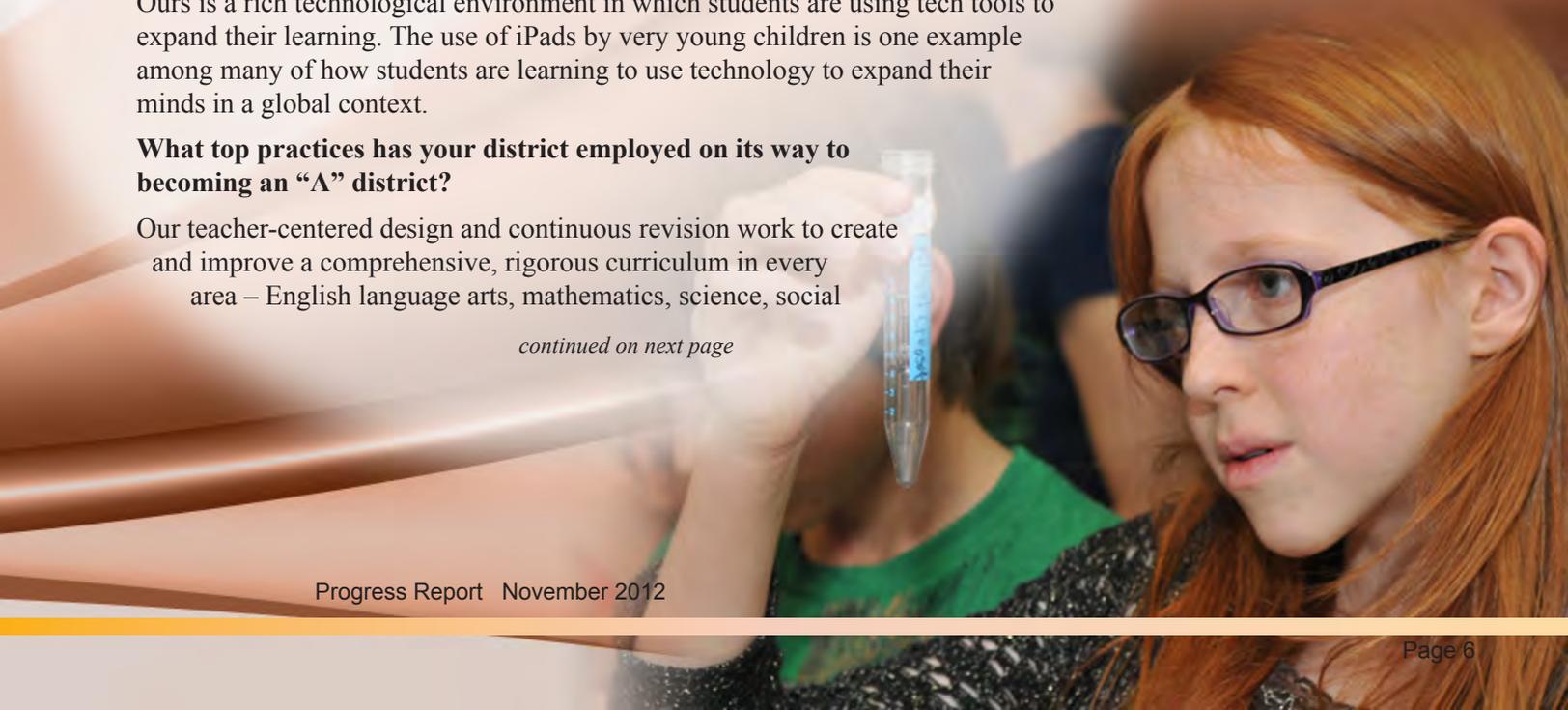
All students in our district are required to learn Spanish beginning in kindergarten. An elementary school Spanish immersion program is one option that can satisfy this requirement and is a very popular choice among many of our families. Mandarin is the other world language offering. We are expanding our Chinese language program and are now in the planning stage to include a Mandarin immersion option next year beginning in the early grades.

Ours is a rich technological environment in which students are using tech tools to expand their learning. The use of iPads by very young children is one example among many of how students are learning to use technology to expand their minds in a global context.

What top practices has your district employed on its way to becoming an “A” district?

Our teacher-centered design and continuous revision work to create and improve a comprehensive, rigorous curriculum in every area – English language arts, mathematics, science, social

continued on next page





continued from page 6

studies, world languages, visual and performing arts – makes our school district a standout among others across Arizona. We have a strong career and technical education program as part of these curriculum areas (e.g., a 4-year engineering program, graphic design, environmental science, forensics, media, theatre production and performance). We expect all of our students to graduate and continue their education in a post-secondary environment of some type.

We are clear about what constitutes effective teaching. Our faculty study skillful teaching during their entire tenure in our school system and receive ongoing support to develop their skills. Competent leadership from the principal is another key to our great schools.

We are focused on results. All teachers are members of data teams that meet biweekly to dive into student achievement data for analysis. These are professional learning groups of teachers who have the same students. They talk about how kids are doing and what needs to happen next to help their students progress in their learning.

CFSD is a learning system that aligns everything to our primary purpose of educating students well for what comes next after their K-12 preparation.

For more information on Catalina Foothills School District, please visit their website at <http://www.cfsd16.org/>.

