

“Smooth” start to the new school year

Chino Valley Unified School District had one of its smoothest openings to the new school year, according to several people attending the Sept. 3 Board of Education meeting.

“He wanted to thank everyone for what he felt is the best start of the school year in a long time,” said Mary Hancock, speaking for her husband, Todd Hancock, president of the Associated Chino Teachers (ACT) union. “He also wanted to thank the director of special education for one of the best years for special education students.”

Hancock said her husband wanted to thank Superintendent Wayne M. Joseph for giving teachers additional preparation time for classes.

Superintendent Joseph concurred with the ACT president’s assessment, saying the first week of school was smooth everywhere he went that week.

Denise Arroyo, president of the Classified School Employees Association, which represents bus drivers, secretaries and other school support staff, also said the school year opening “went quite smoothly.” “There were some hiccups, phones and Internet not working on the first day,” she said, but overall praising staff for an easy beginning to the new school year.

Hidden Trails Elementary School Principal Yvette Farley, president of CHAMP, the group that represents management employees in the district, said the start of school was very smooth. The principal said she was “pleasantly surprised to have an intervention counselor show up on the first day of school to see how students were doing.” Identifying student behavior issues early is important, Farley said, so principals and teachers have time to discuss how they will deal with any problems.

“It has been a great start of school,” board trustee Sylvia Orozco told members of the school board audience. “I’m so happy to hear great things. As always, there were some bumps in the road, but have patience, they will be worked out.”

Board President Irene Hernandez-Blair said she did receive some emails about traffic problems and student dress code issues, but she said parents need to take responsibility for driving carefully and politely in school zones and making sure their children dress appropriately for school. “The board revised the dress code and principals are doing all that they can,” she said.

Board of Education member Pamela Feix complimented all school district staff members for the smooth school opening.

Just after the Aug. 24 opening of the school year, local educators and staff members reported a very quiet beginning. During that first day, students and parents were introduced to several new administrators and approximately 100 additional teachers.

Canyon Hills Junior High offered its new breakfast program, making it the latest of 24 schools in the Chino Valley Unified School District offering before-school nutrition.

Kindergarten through third grade students returned to smaller class sizes as the school district reduced its student to teacher ratio to 26 to 1.

Several school facilities underwent construction improvements this summer, including roofing, exterior paint, energy-saving LED lighting, asphalt, and installation of drought-resistant landscaping.

Link Crews, composed of junior and senior high students, welcomed freshmen and pledged to be their buddies throughout the new school year. Chino High's cheerleaders, waving pompoms and cheering, formed a welcome path for students as they entered the campus. The school's student leaders held up welcome signs along the street as students arrived.

Ayala High senior Shweta Shah, student representative to the school board, said a team of students at her school made "everyone feel welcome on campus."

"Wow, what a positive beginning of the school year," Chino Hills City Councilman Art Bennett exclaimed as he began his city report for the school board audience.