



EDUCATION

ABOUT EDUCATION IN MARICOPA, ARIZONA

Among Maricopa's many advantages is one that distinguishes the community from most American cities: its talented and well-educated local workforce.

Having such a highly educated population means that Maricopans want the same for their children. The City of Maricopa is proud to be home to Maricopa Unified School District, which serves more than 8,100 students in P-12 (Preschool through 12th grade), offering programming and extracurricular opportunities that encourage students to explore and discover their passions.

Of equal importance to Maricopa is Central Arizona College's Maricopa Campus, a modern community college campus offering certificate and associate degree options.

In addition, Maricopa is home to two leading research institutions: the University of Arizona College of Agricultural & Life Sciences Maricopa Agricultural Center and the USDA Arid Land Agricultural Research Center. Both of these institutions are conducting cutting-edge research in the agricultural sciences, water conservation and management, and food safety and production, and also offer educational programs for youth.

Providing residents with access to quality education at all levels is one of Maricopa's primary objectives. We want every Maricopa resident, no matter what age, to be a lifelong learner.

Educational Attainment



11.4%
Associate's
Degree



16.5%
Bachelor's
Degree



8.8%
Graduate
Degree



27.8%
Some
College

(Source: ESRI, Estimates July 2021)



POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN MARICOPA

Central Arizona College (CAC) opened its doors in 1969 to bring higher education to the diverse communities of Pinal County.

In 2006, CAC established a small education center in the City of Maricopa. Committed to continued development in Maricopa, CAC closed the small center and built a brand-new campus to accommodate educational needs and growth of the community. The CAC Maricopa Campus opened in January 2013. It features a full-service campus, a student center, library, state-of-the-art classrooms, labs and administrative offices.

CAC empowers its students and staff to succeed by providing a TRUE Learning community. The college offers a full array of academic degrees and certificates. Community members are provided multiple learning opportunities through career training, personal enrichment classes, online and university transfer courses, continuing education and lifelong learning classes. Numerous transfer agreements with select four-year institutions including the University of Arizona (UArizona), Arizona State University (ASU) and Northern Arizona University (NAU), allow students the opportunity to advance their education while remaining in Maricopa.

CAC offers nine areas of interest with degrees or pathways that ideally align to a university degree should students choose to pursue one. In each chosen area of interest, students may choose to earn a certificate, associate's degree, transfer to a university or directly enter the workforce.

CAC's Promise for the Future (Promise) is an educational initiative made possible through a partnership between the college, its Foundation and Pinal County middle and high schools. Promise was designed to encourage students who reside in the County to remain in high school and graduate from a County high school or charter school. Upon graduation, students who successfully meet the Promise requirements are eligible to earn a tuition-free education at CAC.

Promise requirements inspire students to reach their full potential by challenging them to graduate with a minimum of a 2.75 grade point average and participate in twenty hours of community service prior to graduation. The initiative provides funding for any tuition need that has not been met. Promise tuition funds are applied after all other financial aid has been applied to the individual student account (excluding student loans).

PURSuing 4-YEAR AND ADVANCED DEGREES IN MARICOPA

In Arizona, all community college students are able to access four-year and higher degrees through Northern Arizona University (NAU). The same holds true at the CAC Maricopa Campus. Additionally, Arizona State University (ASU) and the Thunderbird School of Global Management offer baccalaureate, masters, professional and Ph.D. degrees nearby at their Downtown Phoenix and Tempe campuses, less than 45 minutes from Maricopa. Also in the Greater Phoenix region are more than 27 institutions of higher education, offering traditional and online degrees from associate's to Ph.D. and post-doctoral degrees.

HIGHER ED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The University of Arizona Maricopa Agricultural Center (MAC) is a 2,100-acre research farm within the Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension. MAC's mission is to develop innovative solutions to challenges facing Arizona consumers and agricultural producers. Focus areas include food safety, irrigation and water quality, conservation, pest management, precision agriculture, crop phenotyping and breeding. MAC serves as a hub for industry collaboration and is home for agricultural initiatives across the State. Popular outreach programs include Ag-Ventures, Ag-Literacy for all age groups, Maricopa 4-H and Pinal County Masters Gardeners.



Research focuses on cotton, small grains, alfalfa and new specialty crops that could be used to provide fibers, oils and pharmaceuticals. For instance, the cotton integrated pest management and cross-commodity efforts (vegetables, cotton and melons) in insect management have saved cotton growers in Arizona more than \$5 million over the last 22 years. In addition, MAC researchers have facilitated or are facilitating improvements to insect management (IPM) systems in Australian, Mexican and Brazilian cotton.

The USDA Arid Land Agricultural Research Center (ALARC) is a 20-acre facility co-located with the MAC whose mission is to develop sustainable agricultural systems, protect natural resources and support rural communities in arid and semi-arid regions through interdisciplinary research. The research conducted has local, regional, national and global reach. MAC investigates topics that include crop and soil management, integrated pest management, insect and plant molecular biology, irrigation technology, remote and proximal sensing for crop production and improvement, water reuse, crop breeding and physiology and resilience to global climate change.



Recent research focus includes using proximal sensing based high-throughput phenotyping to accelerate the development of field crops and turf with improved tolerance to heat stress and drought, developing new industrial crops such as guayule and camelina, development and testing of new irrigation technologies for improved water use efficiency, reuse of reclaimed water for agriculture, gene discovery to identify new targets for pest control application and the development of integrated pest management systems for major pests of cotton and other arid land crops.

Much of the research at these two state-of-the-art facilities is conducted collaboratively between ALARC and MAC and with many other federal, state and industry scientists, and with agricultural producers.

ALARC employs 60 to 100 research and support staff, depending on the season, with all 22 scientists having doctorate degrees. ALARC leases twenty acres from MAC and researchers at the two centers frequently partner on projects. Both centers maintain partnerships with the private sector, which has led to the commercialization of innovative agricultural products and the launch a number of start-up companies.

Both ALARC and MAC partner with CAC and local high schools to offer student internships that provide the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in such fields of study as agricultural and natural resources, biotechnology, engineering and food safety and security. The goal of this program is to inspire students in rural communities to pursue bioscience careers through science emersion activities.

MARICOPA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

THE MUSD PROMISE

Maricopa Unified School District (MUSD) serves more than 8,100 students in Preschool – 12th grade and continues to grow each year. The District prides itself on being partners in a community destined for greatness. MUSD students and schools are nationally recognized, and the Governing Board is championing the crusade to provide access to and equity in education for every student. Without exception, the classrooms are filled with educators who care deeply about the well-being and development of every child and who work skillfully to prepare them for their futures.

MUSD STRATEGIC PLAN

Successful schools do not do it alone. In the fall of 2018, students, parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders gathered to articulate a vision that would chart the course for MUSD through 2025. Ongoing commitments to student achievement, collaborative culture, accountability and community pride serve as guideposts to becoming a premier district that meets and exceeds students' individual needs and the broad expectations of our community. Four goals have emerged from that planning process:

Goal 1: Every student graduates prepared to create, innovate, lead and succeed.

Goal 2: Every student has access to and equity in excellent educational services, resources and programs.

Goal 3: Organizational culture that prioritizes people over programs and invests in the support of students and staff.

Goal 4: Community pride through excellent customer service, sound business practices, open and effective communication and safe and attractive facilities.

POINTS OF PRIDE

MUSD is proud of the strides it is making. The United States Department of Education recently selected Pima Butte Elementary to receive a National Blue Ribbon School distinction for being an exemplary high performing school.

In addition, Maricopa High School has a proven record of accomplishment for achievements in scholarships, honors, awards and leadership. The class of 2021 was honored for exceptional growth in total scholarship dollars earned, total college admissions, total college applications and completed FAFSA applications.

MUSD broke ground on its second high school Friday, May 7, 2021. Located at the corner of Farrell and Murphy Roads, this comprehensive campus will open its doors to freshmen and sophomore students in July 2022. Its unique features will encompass small learning communities, Career and Technical Education and full academic course offerings.





SIGNATURE PROGRAMMING

MUSD offers a wide array of signature programming for families who are interested in advanced academic and specialty coursework.

MUSD is the Early Childhood leader in Maricopa. MUSD Community Preschool fosters a love for learning and classes are led by certified teachers who inspire curiosity, build problem-solving skills and self-esteem while delivering core academic instruction in a nurturing and play-based environment.

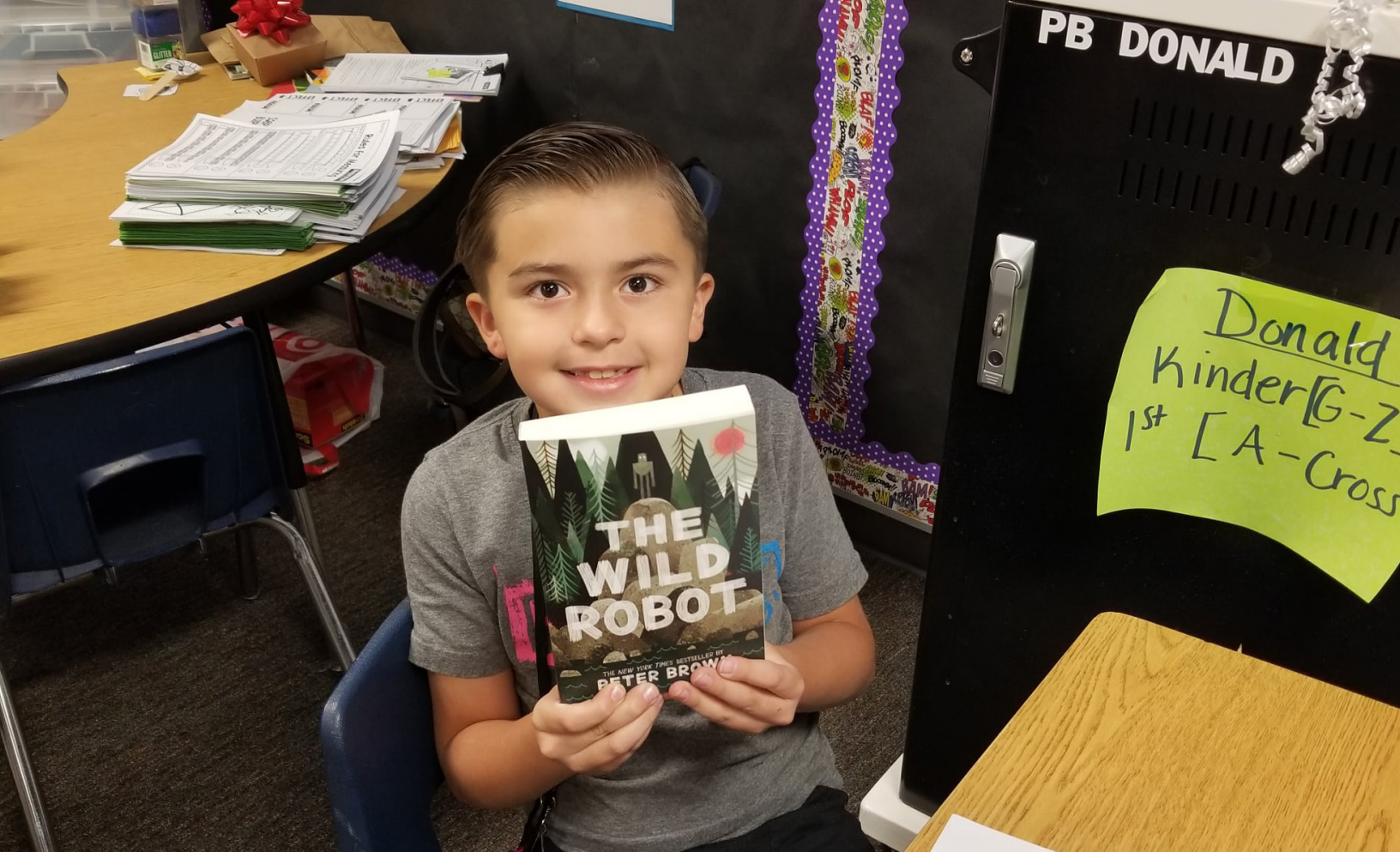
In July 2021, the new MUSD Dual Language Immersion Program places students on the path to fluency in a second language. Students receive instruction and explore content in English/Spanish to develop building blocks that will prepare them to be fluent speakers of a second language. The program will launch at Santa Rosa Elementary School. The District plans to expand the program each year to include subsequent grade levels.

MUSD Elementary Schools offer leadership development, character education, and STEAM activities; and MUSD remains proud of its Middle Schools' Blended Learning models that meld traditional instruction and self-paced project-based learning. Infused with rigor and relevance, Blended Learning challenges students to put their problem solving, forward-thinking and creative skills to the test by collaborating in projects that solve real-world issues.

"Every Student Graduates" is an important goal that emerged through the MUSD's strategic vision. By creating multiple paths to graduation, MUSD is better able to meet the diverse needs and interests of its student population. Maricopa High School offers the AP Capstone Diploma program which allows students to develop the skills that matter most for college success, such as research, collaboration and communication. Additional paths to graduation include Dual Enrollment and College Prep through CAC, an Online High School Expansion and a multitude of Career and Technical Education opportunities.

An additional signature program launched in July 2021 is Maricopa Virtual Academy. During the pandemic, nearly 4,000 MUSD students chose an at-home distance learning model. Many families realized this model works well for their households and now have the option to continue the learning-at-home experience through Maricopa Virtual Academy K-12 online school.

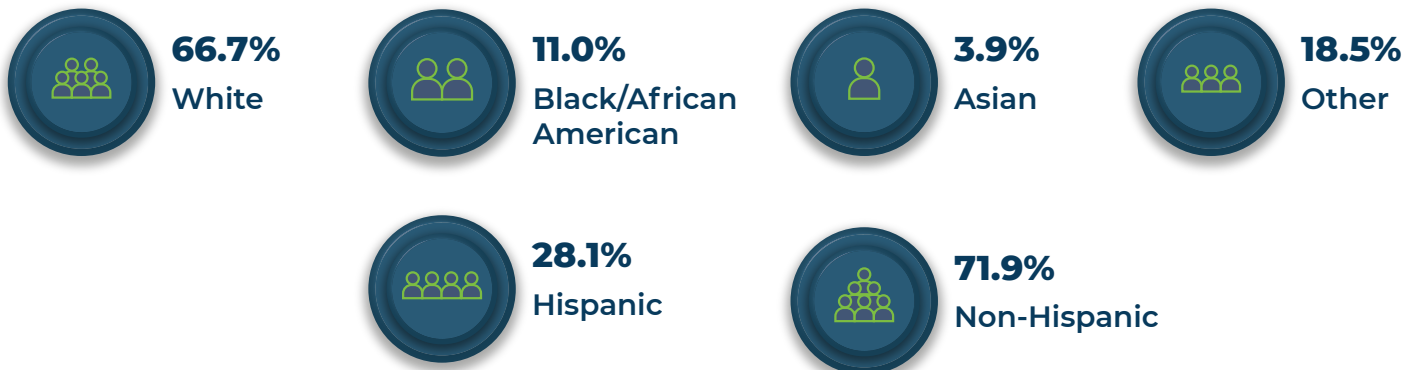
As the District grows, it is clear that MUSD captures the connected values of a small town with the dynamic academic, social and extracurricular experiences of a destination city.



A PARTNER IN THE COMMUNITY

MUSD understands the importance of being a partner in the community. Throughout the school year, MUSD invites faith-based, business and community leaders to collaborate and create meaningful partnerships with other leaders in the community. Current partners include the City of Maricopa, Ak-Chin Circle, Chasse Building Team, El Dorado Holdings, InMaricopa, Church of Celebration and both the Maricopa Police and Fire Departments, just to name a few.

City of Maricopa Population by Race/Ethnicity



(Source: ESRI, Estimates July 2021)

U.S. Census race/ethnicity categories provide many options in terms of choosing one or more racial/ethnic groups; hence, such data adds up to more than 100%.

CHARTER AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS (K-12)

A growing community like Maricopa offers parents a variety of choices for K-12 education. In addition to MUSD, Maricopa also has five charter schools that offer varying levels of academic rigor.

A+ Charter Schools serves students, grades 7-12, in a small learning community offering personalized learning plans for every student. A+ Charter School strives to give students an education that not only prepares them academically, but also prepares them for life.

Its mission is to help students reach their greatest potential and become successful, contributing members of society.

Heritage Academy is one of Arizona's oldest charter schools. Heritage offers a classical education for the leaders who will shape the 21st century. Heritage Academy is dedicated to youth, their growth and development. Heritage believes in building sound character which will result in strong families, strong communities and a strong nation.

Legacy Traditional Schools believes there is no limit to what a student can achieve with great education and strong character. The non-profit network of tuition-free, A-rated public schools was founded on this principle, and it underlies the mission to build lifelong learners and good citizens. The Schools feature a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum that emphasizes all areas of academic study, including the arts, physical education and extensive athletics and extracurricular activities.

Leading Edge Academy is a K-12 grade college preparatory school that believes in teaching the whole child, through academic excellence and a values-based character program to challenge students to improve their character and enhance their relationships. Through direct instruction and real-world simulation projects, its team of highly qualified teachers provide encouragement, respect, patience and understanding in partnership with the parent and child to succeed in learning.

Sequoia Pathway Academy is a tuition-free, highly performing public charter school serving students in K-12 grade. Classrooms are set-up in a manner to promote cross-curricular activities and teachers work within teams to provide students with exposure to subjects such as physical education, music and art.

WHY K-12 EDUCATION MATTERS TO MEDA

Maricopa has a strong college-going culture and one of the most highly-educated resident populations in the State of Arizona. People who live in the City of Maricopa have a higher educational attainment level well above the state and national average. We know that education is not only important to our residents, it's important for their children and grandchildren. It's also extremely important to Maricopa.

Highly educated parents seek the best possible education for their children. Having a public school system that delivers the highest quality education should be an enduring and top priority for all communities. To be competitive in retaining and recruiting a highly educated resident workforce that is critical to economic and employment growth in Maricopa, it is essential that the entire community support the MUSD in improving the quality of the education it delivers to its students. MEDA has been unwavering in its commitment to support these endeavors in Maricopa.