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Details on C6



Area schools mixed in test results

6 receive A's, 21 B's, 25 C's and 3 D's

BY SARAH WOMER @YSSARAHWOMER

Statewide A-F letter grades for all districts and schools were announced Thursday by the Arizona Department of Education and while most Yuma schools remained at the same letter grade or moved to an increased letter grade, some saw a decrease.

Superintendents in Yuma agreed that because last year was the pilot year for the A-F letter grading system, the community should expect to see major improvements in coming years now that they are gaining a better understanding of how grades are calculated.

According to ADE, letter grades are based on the weighting of student performance on the AIMS tests and student academic growth from year to year, along with additional points awarded for high English Language Learner reclassifications, and significant reductions in drop-

out rates. Schools awarded 140 to 200 points receive an A, schools given 120 to 139 points a B, schools with 100 to 119 points a C and schools ranging from 0 to 99 points a D.

Six schools in Yuma received an A this year, 21 received a B, 25 received a C, and three received a D. Last year, five schools received an A and six schools received a D.

Statewide, 23 percent of schools received an A and 34 percent got a B this year.

"... Of the 1,473 schools who received letter grades in both 2011 and 2012, there was an overall increase in both A's and B's from 2011 to 2012, and a decrease in C's and D's," stated ADE officials. "Twenty-five percent of our schools increased their letter grades, and 62 percent maintained them."

In Yuma, H.L. Suverkrup Elementary School and Mesquite Elementary School received an A score as well as Desert View Academy, Alice Byrne Elementary, Dateland Elemen-

A-F LETTER GRADES BY DISTRICT

District	Charter	Grade
Antelope Union High School District	N	C
Az-Tec High School	Y	B
Carpe Diem Collegiate High School	Y	B
Crane Elementary District	N	B
Gadsden Elementary District	N	C
Harvest Preparatory Academy	Y	B
Hyder Elementary District	N	A
Desert View Academy	Y	A
Mohawk Valley Elementary District	N	C
Somerton Elementary District	N	B
Wellton Elementary District	N	C
Yuma Elementary District	N	C
Yuma Union High School District	N	C
AmeriSchools Academy - Yuma	Y	C

— Source: Arizona Department of Education

tary and Ed Pastor Elementary schools.

Crane Elementary District director of curriculum Janet Shields said that they are very excited this year to have two A schools and added that Crane Middle School was one point away from being an A campus.

Campuses receiving D scores were Fourth Avenue Junior High School, Yuma High School and San Luis Middle School.

In regards to Fourth Ave-

nue's D grade, Duane Shepard, Yuma Elementary School District 1 associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction, said that although the letter remained the same, they did see an improvement within their grade.

"They went from an 81 to 93 points in one year and that's substantial," he said, noting that they need to increase six points to be at a C for next year. "That's great

SEE SCORES/A5

Need for improvement seen in AIMS scores

BY SARAH WOMER @YSSARAHWOMER

The Arizona Department of Education released the AIMS (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards) scores for the 2011-2012 school year, and the state saw slight increases in scores in all subject areas.

Yuma educators were pleased with their steadily increasing results but noted the need for improvement.

Students in third through eighth grade and in 10th grade are required to take AIMS tests to demonstrate mastery in math and reading. Students at certain grade levels are also required to be tested on both writing and science, although districts are not held accountable for those scores by the state.

Arizona saw an increase in reading from 77 percent passing in 2012, a 4 percent increase from 2010. Science scores increased statewide from 54 percent passing

MORE INSIDE, A5

- A-F letter grades for schools in area
- AIMS scores by subject

in 2012 to 60 percent passing in 2012. Both math and writing scores saw a slight increase with math scores at 60 percent passing in 2012 compared with 59 percent in 2011 and writing scores moving up from 56 percent passing in 2011 to 57 percent in 2012.

Janet Shields, Crane Elementary District director of curriculum, said the district is still working to make improvements, especially in math. "That seems to be an area that we're not progressing as fast as we had hope to progress."

Shields said they plan to continue with their strategy of immediate prescrip-

SEE AIMS/A5

Synthetic drugs keep officers challenged

'Bath salts,' Spice, 'glass cleaner' popular among teens, young adults

Editor's Note: This story is one in a series — Behind the Badge: Yuma Police Department — that looks behind the scenes at issues facing the YPD.

BY HILLARY DAVIS @YSHILLARYDAVIS

Sgt. Marty Raebel is a realist. Drugs will always be around, even with police officers like himself specifically assigned to go after them.

Some of what's out there, like heroin, has been used for generations. But newer designer, synthetic drugs — like Spice and other products that mimic marijuana, or "bath salts" and the similar "glass cleaner," which are stimulants — keep police officers, especially drug interdiction specialists like Raebel, on a steeper learning curve.

Raebel heads up the Narcotics Street Crimes Unit for the Yuma Police Department. Along with four detectives and an analyst, the crew keeps tabs on day-to-day drug activity within the city.

It's hard to put a number on how many criminal cases have a drug connection, Raebel said. Statistics don't really tell the story because they're not collected on drugs as an aggravating factor — for example, in an assault carried out by somebody high on meth, or in a burglary committed

by somebody who wanted to fence the loot for crack. And ultimately, a burglary is prosecuted the same whether the perpetrator was fueled or motivated by drugs or not, he said.

That said, Raebel estimated that 75 to 80 percent of burglaries and thefts alone fall back to the "drug nexus": users stealing to support their habit.

Meth, marijuana and heroin (typically of the black tar variety) are Yuma's most common drugs, and cocaine seizures have been going up over the past few years as distributors have shifted that product to the Yuma corridor, he said.

But if there's a benefit to those drugs, it's that they're familiar. Their effects are well known. Even meth, a toxic brew that can include cold medicine, lye and brake fluid, is consistent in a way that newer synthetic drugs are not.

Users of the new drugs can fall into psychosis or summon super-human strength. The lasting effects of these drugs on the human body aren't yet known, either.

A police officer knows what he's going to get with a suspect high on meth or cocaine, but synthetic drugs affect people in ways that haven't become normalized yet, even in the same user. "Say he gets a different package and three days



SYNTHETIC VERSIONS OF A DANGEROUS SUBSTANCE known as mephedrone are being marketed as "bath salts" (above) and sold legally in Yuma County. Reportedly manufactured in China, these products contain chemicals similar to those found in amphetamines and cocaine. Products like this small jar of Martian Haze (left), sold and marketed as incense, are being experimented with by teens and young adults for the cheap high that one gets when it's smoked.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG FRY/YUMA SUN

later he does the same amount and boom, he's lost to the world," Raebel said. "He's wanting to fight everybody, he's seeing purple elephants, he's diving through a plate glass win-

dow, he's grabbing a knife in the kitchen swatting at whoever, whatever..."

The synthetics pop up on the social landscape like gophers and then maneuver like snakes. At first, they're

legal and easily found at head shops. Then laws go on the books to make them illegal.

Manufacturers of the active chemical ingredients tweak the compounds just

enough to be legal again. Few labs test for the compounds either. All this puts police behind the curve in understanding and enforce-

SEE SYNTHETIC/A5