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For Immediate Release

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It's an A+ Three-peat for Cherokee Elementary

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (March 3, 2022) – Cherokee Elementary School has successfully renewed its A+ School of Excellence™ status with the Arizona Educational Foundation (AEF). Originally named an A+ School in 2013, Cherokee is one of 21 Arizona Public Schools to receive the AEF seal of approval for the 2021-2022 school year. This is the school's second successful renewal.

To undergo the AEF certification process, initial or renewal, is a challenge whenever it is undertaken, but Cherokee not only undertook its renewal during a global pandemic – it took it on while the school, located at 8801 N. 56th St., Paradise Valley, was being rebuilt.

“We were supposed to re-apply during the ‘20-‘21 school year, but because of the pandemic and construction, we made the decision to wait a year,” explains Principal Walt Chantler. “Many staff were nervous about re-applying for the ‘21-‘22 school year, but we decided that it was the right thing to do and knew that we could demonstrate excellence, no matter what was going on around us.”

While COVID-19 restrictions did affect some Cherokee programs and teaching models, Chantler says he knew the school would be able to validate its growth mind-set and dedication to student growth to the AEF judges.

Being an A+ School of Excellence is not about resting on its laurels, according to Chantler. “We learned many things by going through the renewal process again and will use what we learned to keep moving forward in a positive direction.”

“The Cherokee staff are hardworking and always looking to grow, and our community supports the staff in so many ways and provides us with resources that help us achieve our goals. We have created an inclusive and supportive school community where all are welcome and all can find success. You can feel the pride when you step on our campus,” adds the principal.

Dr. Scott Menzel is Scottsdale Unified School District's proud superintendent. “Achieving the A+ designation not once, but three times, is a product of the consistent, hard work and dedication of the entire Cherokee team over the years. This recognition confirms what our parents already know – that Cherokee provides an amazing learning opportunity for our students.”

To celebrate Cherokee's A+ achievement, school assemblies will be held tomorrow, March 4, during which AEF representatives will officially present the school with its new A+ banner and a check for \$500. Other signature AEF programs include the teachSTEM initiative, the Arizona Spelling Bee and the Principals Leadership Academy of Arizona. To learn more about the AEF, go to azedfoundation.org.

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About the Scottsdale Unified School District

With 22,000 students in 30 schools, the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) has been a premier choice for pre-kindergarten through grade 12 public education for 125 years. Located northeast of metropolitan Phoenix, the District serves the educational needs of students and families in Phoenix, Paradise Valley, Fountain Hills, Tempe and Scottsdale. A highly experienced, professionally certified teaching staff fosters a diverse and rigorous educational environment that engages all students in world-class, future-focused learning. Offering gifted learning, special education, career and technical education, and a variety of athletics, arts and enrichment programs and clubs, SUSD provides the rich environment today's students need to explore their interests, develop important social skills and grow into tomorrow's leaders. For more information, visit www.susd.org and follow along on social media: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ScottsdaleUSD): @ScottsdaleUSD, [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ScottsdaleUSD): @ScottsdaleUSD, [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ScottsdaleUnifiedSD): @ScottsdaleUnifiedSD, [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ScottsdaleUnifiedSchoolDistrict) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8).