

# CUSTOMER SERVICE



**A**t Canyons District, customer service means more than answering phones, although we are dedicated to ensuring that patrons who reach out to District are greeted with a helpful and cheerful employee. Canyons believes that stellar customer service, be it a timely response to an email or a phone message, is imperative to the success of our organization. We are, after all, a public entity: We exist to serve the communities of stakeholders that support us, financially and otherwise. Patrons should receive the very best in customer service when interacting with CSD personnel. To that end, we offer customer service training for all school Main Office and District Front Desk personnel. The training emphasizes going the extra mile to respond to the needs of patrons, parents, students and employees. Customer service also means being a good neighbor, providing well-maintained, clean and welcoming campuses, monitoring the District's carbon footprint and managing public resources in an open, responsible way. With an unwavering focus on health and safety of the community's children, Canyons has built or extensively remodeled 14 schools — with another three schools, Alta, Hillcrest and Brighton high schools, in the process of being rebuilt. At Canyons' founding in 2009, there were many issues to overcome, including repairing overcrowded, crumbling buildings equipped with outdated technology and insufficient heating and cooling systems. Now, 12 years after starting the Board of Education's ambitious construction and renovation schedule, Canyons schools are filled with natural light, equipped with security features, and boast numerous computer labs and communal study areas. Auditoriums, gymnasiums and playing fields are used in partnership with communities. Each detail is thoughtfully planned with excellence in mind. As we build soccer fields, we think of every child in the community who will play there, be it as part of a school team or for fun and fitness. As we decrease our energy usage, we think about the judicious use of taxpayer funds and the world our students will inherit long after they leave our schools. To that end, Canyons employs an energy specialist who oversees the District's use of limited natural resources. Canyons' carbon footprint has shrunk even as our square footage has grown. We're always looking for ways to improve. Five of Canyons' high schools now have artificial turf. A student's initiative gave rise to biodegradable lunch trays being used in CSD cafeterias. From the mortar of the building to the food in the cafeteria, Canyons strives to serve its students, teachers and community with safety and quality that encourages health and learning. At Canyons District, we'll answer your call, listen to your ideas and always strive for excellence.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**F**or all its hardships, 2020 has also been a year for re-centering and re-focusing on what's important to us — and families have made it clear how much they value the connection they have with their neighborhood school. Staying connected from a distance poses its challenges, and timely, accurate communication has never been more critical. To cut through the noise so our employees, students, and patrons are able to stay on top of evolving school safety precautions, quarantine rules, and other “breaking” news, Canyons District added a podcast to its array of electronic and print communication tools. The Connect Canyons podcast strives to do what the name implies: Reach people in a more personal way than other mediums allow and give them closer insight to all things Canyons. As a form of portable community engagement, it falls in line with an established tradition within Canyons. Community engagement is not a single event, it is a shared responsibility. We know it takes more than a village to educate a child, so we actively work to forge rewarding partnerships with cities, businesses and nearby colleges to help every student become college-and career-ready and find a meaningful purpose in life. We train School Community Council members to be responsible stewards of precious funds and seek regular input from school councils, the PTA, mayors, city councils and legislators throughout the District. We host town hall meetings several times a year and place a priority on transparency in District decisions. Through the Canyons Education Foundation, board members donate their time to raise funds to provide additional support to teachers and students in Canyons District. Every fall teachers may apply for Teacher Innovation Grants, which can range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. The grants are used for a myriad of things — from wobble chairs for kindergarteners, to iPads in dual language immersion classes, to 3-D printers for STEM classes, to computer programs and apps that help teachers expand their students’ opportunities to use technology in the classroom.

# FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY



**E**very dollar counts. Canyons District is dedicated to ensuring that public funds are spent judiciously and transparently. The District regularly receives awards for its budgeting practices and has maintained a coveted AAA bond rating, saving taxpayers millions by keeping interest rates low on its voter approved bonds. Many of the aging buildings – on average 41 years old — had been neglected for so long that it was cheaper to tear down and rebuild than to repair. One 60-year-old school, Midvale Elementary, had not had a significant upgrade since it opened its doors. Nearly all facilities were in need of seismic, technology and heating and cooling upgrade to bring them up to code. In 2010, the District evaluated its most immediate needs and devised a vigorous plan to being to make the necessary improvements through two bonds, passed by the public in 2010 and 2017, respectively. In 12 years, the District has built or extensively remodeled 14 schools, while maintaining the District’s AAA bond rating. Behind the scenes, the projects are painstakingly pursued. The Purchasing Department solicits bids that will provide a balance in quality and cost to perform the work and obtain the necessary materials. The Facilities Department considers the most effective way to meet our building needs and maintain the asset in which we have invested. Beyond that, Canyons is careful to use its funds in a way that saves its taxpayers money. Canyons’ budget has received awards ever since the District was created. Coupled with top ratings from Fitch Ratings and Moody’s Investors Service that reflect the District’s solid financial operations and low debt burden, Canyons is able to qualify for low interest rates that benefit its community. We know there is more work to be done. In Canyons District, we keep our promises – efficiently, transparently, and judiciously – as we strive to provide a world-class environment for our students to receive a world-class education.

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



**W**hen Canyons District opened its doors in 2009, the mandate was clear: Do what it takes to help students achieve their highest potential. If that means adding unique-to-Canyons Advanced or Honors diploma to state-regulated graduation standards, so be it. If that means rearranging students to place ninth-graders in high school, consider it done. If that means securing funds to help students apply to college for the first time, we'll make it happen. Amid a tide of ever-changing information this year, our focus on student achievement has remained steadfast. Our schools have had to be nimble as we've worked to provide in-person, online and at-home, parent-guided, District-supported learning options, as well as meeting the needs of students in quarantine and isolation, and responding to COVID-19 cases at school. School safety is paramount and when quarantines and COVID-19 cases rise, the Canyons Board of Education has approved a roadmap to guide decisions about temporary school closures. With the ability to swiftly adapt our learning options based on current community need, Canyons will continue to provide a quality education for students, no matter if they are at home or in the classroom. We also remain committed to keeping students in school as much as possible. Our graduation rate and academic indicators suggest that student achievement is on the upswing in Canyons District. Despite the challenges posed by coronavirus-induced school closures and quarantines, Canyons District was able to achieve a 90.4 percent graduation rate in 2020, a slight increase over the prior year's rate of 89.9 percent. This follows years of steady gains in year-end test scores. Remediation efforts are underway to make up for the instructional time lost during last spring's statewide closure of schools — and victories are being celebrated every day in our classrooms. Safety precautions have made it possible for students to continue participating in arts and sports activities, earning state and individual championship trophies, MVP titles, and All-State status. In 2020, Brighton High senior Jacob Simmons was named as Coca-Cola Scholar, Presidential Scholar and National Merit Scholar. Three students earned first place awards in Utah's Sterling Scholars competition. Every day we've been able to preserve of in-person instruction has been a gift, providing students with a sense of normalcy and an avenue to shine. In this most challenging of years, we are reminded of their unlimited potential and the importance of our role in helping them reach it.

# INNOVATION



If the pandemic has revealed how inequity in access to technology can be a barrier to student success, it's also reinforced how technology can remove barriers. Learning need no longer be confined to the four walls of a classroom. Students should feel empowered to choose the pace, place, and path of their education. Today's teachers must find ways to connect with students face-to-face and remotely. Today's schools must find ways to ensure students have the tools they need to excel in both learning environments. Canyons serves students of all ages and walks of life, and we have learned the key to meeting the needs of such a diverse population is innovation. This has been a guiding tenet since the District's earliest days, but the COVID-19 health crisis has made it non-negotiable. Groundwork laid toward preparing students to live in a digital world has paid off as entire schools and classrooms have had to pivot to remote instruction. Established relationships with our municipal and local business partners have made it possible to provide students with the computing devices and connectivity they need to succeed and teachers with the equipment they need to make advances in e-learning. Since the onset of the pandemic, with the help of federal grants and local donations, we've invested more than \$1.5 million in technology to fuel distance education. The Canyons Education Foundation, which raises money for teacher innovation grants and student scholarships, has been a pivotal partner in this effort, focusing much of its energy this year to harness resources in support of CSD's remote-learning goals.

## Partnerships in Innovation

Paired with a five-year subscription to Zoom secured through the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN), livestreaming kits are making it easier for teachers to connect with their students and stay connected.



Canyons is joining with local municipalities, recreation centers, libraries and businesses to host free WiFi learning zones in partnership with the Utah Education and Telehealth Network's eduroam.



CARES Act funding is being used to grow the District's wireless footprint by extending its reach well beyond our school buildings.