



For Immediate Release

Contacts:

Chad Colby, Great Minds: Chad.Colby@greatminds.org, (202) 297-9437

Rita Ann Ezzai-Reznick, Florence Unified School District: rezzai@fusdaz.org, (520) 866-3532

Florence Unified School District #1 and Great Minds Announce New Partnership Focus on High-Quality Curriculum and Professional Development

JULY 2, 2021—Florence (Arizona) Unified School District #1 and the nonprofit Great Minds have entered into a five year agreement that will provide all students in San Tan Heights K–8 School access to Great Minds high-quality curriculum and aligned teacher professional development. This collaboration, approved by the district’s governing board earlier this year, will start in the 2021–2022 school year.

Under the agreement, San Tan Heights K–8 will receive Great Minds PBC’s highly rated curricula—*Eureka Math*®, *Wit & Wisdom*® (English language arts), *PhD Science*®, and *Geodes*® books for early readers—along with extensive professional development and on-site coaching. Great Minds will also consult with the school on the purchase and implementation of high-quality curriculum for other subjects, such as social studies.

A research partnership with the [Johns Hopkins University Institute for Education Policy](#) will provide an independent third-party evaluation of the project’s impact over time on a range of outcomes, from student achievement to school climate and culture.

“Having used *Eureka Math* and *Wit & Wisdom* already, we have seen the power of daily learning materials that are both rigorous and engaging,” says Florence (Arizona) Unified School District #1 Superintendent Chris Knutsen.

While retaining existing positions and roles at the school, the Great Minds team will work closely with the principal as well as school and district leaders to implement the program.

“We know that having quality materials is necessary but not sufficient for student learning to thrive. We look forward to working closely with teachers, parents, and school and district leaders to implement these lessons well,” says Great Minds founder and CEO Lynne Munson.

The project will also encourage strong involvement by parents and guardians. Events and activities such as math nights, science fairs, home supports for families, and book giveaways to younger siblings will bolster the joy of learning for everyone. The project planners welcome ideas from the community to further the important goal of increased parental involvement in educational outcomes.

“Our goal is to make San Tan Heights K–8 one of the finest institutions not just in this area, but nationally. Our staff is excited for the opportunity to be the first Great Minds School,” says Dr. Henry Saylor-Scheetz, the school’s principal.

The school will continue to receive the usual per pupil funding from state and local sources. Great Minds will cover the difference between current funding levels and additional expenditures necessary for successful implementation of the curricula and professional development.

“We are looking to empower teachers through access to high-quality curriculum materials and commitment to ongoing professional development,” says Steven Shadel, director of Great Minds Schools.

Florence Unified School District #1 is about 60 miles southeast of Phoenix. It comprises eight K–8 schools, an online K–12 school, three high schools, and one alternative school. Total enrollment is 9,500 students in Prekindergarten through Grade 12.

San Tan Heights is a public K–8 school serving 681 students. The school adopted *Eureka Math* four years ago and is in its first year of implementing *Wit & Wisdom* for students in Kindergarten through Grade 5.

ABOUT GREAT MINDS

Great Minds is a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 to promote the development and widespread use of high-quality curriculum in U.S. K–12 schools. Its subsidiary, Great Minds PBC, a public benefit corporation, produces *Eureka Math*, *Wit & Wisdom*, *PhD Science*, and *Geodes* books for early readers. Steven Shadel will serve as the director of the Great Minds Schools initiative of the nonprofit. As the executive director for teaching and learning for ten school districts in Skokie, Illinois, Shadel previously developed and executed a five-year instructional plan that focused on a shift to high-quality curriculum materials and teacher professional development.