

## Future looks bright for building partnerships

Same as in life, education is better when you have partners.

In the Quincy School District, some folks are taking that belief to new heights, building a strong series of partnerships between the district, its schools and its schools' parents.

Victoria Hodge, Director of Support Services and Programs for the QSD, said that partnerships are not only an important cog in the day-to-day education of children, but they also serve as a cornerstone of the district's strategic plan. "If we are going to meet our vision of having our students feel a sense of belonging in our schools, partnerships are extremely important," said Hodge. The road to stronger partnerships begins not with a single step but with many, she added.

We know this to be true when families are culturally accepted, safe, and heard. They are valued as partners in their child's learning and are authentically engaged in collaboration and decision-making.

"That's the foundation of partnerships in the Quincy School District," Hodge said, "We work together with leadership at the district level, community members, nurses, social workers, etc. throughout the system to accomplish our goals," Hodge said.

The core group involves people like Maria Valle, the Family & Community Outreach Coordinator for the district, who highlighted the importance of partnerships, particularly when dealing with migrant families. Valle is one of the point people when it comes to the Migrant



The Superintendent Parent Advisory Committee is new this year. The committee's main goals are to keep parents informed about important updates from the district, seek input from families to shape the work outlined in the Strategic Plan, and determine achievable next steps to take.

PACs (Parent Advisory Councils). The success of the Migrant PAC is one of the longstanding success stories of the district's outreach efforts, focused particularly in improving the graduation rates among migrant students.

In addition, due to the success of the Migrant PAC each building now has a school PAC. This provides an opportunity to "go beyond the bake sale" and really begin to hear parents' voices at each school, Valle said.

"This school year, we have met three times with the Superintendent PAC, and we look forward to offering four in the upcoming school year. The purpose of these meetings is to share important district updates relevant to previous meetings, gather input from our families to guide work within the Strategic Plan, and identify actionable next steps. We provide an opportunity for school parent groups to learn from one another and share celebrations and concerns with the superintendent," Valle said.

As an example, Valle offered a recent situation at George Elementary regarding a safety



Students and parents attend the first Pathways to Graduation and Beyond event at QHS.

concern related to students having to walk. The parents went to their building PAC, and their principal, and then they went to the

*See partnerships page 2*

## Superintendent's Message:

# A year filled with engagement, dedication, and collaboration

Dear Quincy School District Community,

As the school year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the progress we've made together this year toward fulfilling our promise of "Successful Students Today, Bright Futures Tomorrow." It has been a year filled with engagement, dedication, and collaboration, and I am immensely proud of our entire Quincy School District community.

First, I would like to extend my appreciation to our educators—you create such engaging and nurturing learning environments in our schools! Your dedication helped students to excel at every level across TK-12 this year, competing in state, national, and international competitions in academics, the arts, and athletics. Thank you for your dedication to their academic, social, and emotional success.

I would also like to recognize all our support staff who work diligently behind the scenes to ensure our district operates smoothly every day. Whether maintaining our facilities, feeding our students, safely transporting students, or keeping our technology running smoothly, your contributions are integral to our success.

Additionally, our administrators have conscientiously implemented our new Strategic Plan, ensuring our students' academic experience is centered on excellence and equity, and that we

are working together across the district to support every student in every school. Thank you for your dedication to our school community.

All these staff efforts are strengthened by



Superintendent, Dr. Nik Bergman and students from George Elementary.

the sponsorship of our school board, whose effort to implement and monitor our Strategic Plan were recognized at the state and regional level this year. Thank you for the support, time, and dedication you have given to serving our students, staff, families, and community. You are so valued and appreciated.

To our families and Quincy Valley Community, thank you for entrusting us with your children's

education. We are grateful to have partnered with you this year to activate Parent Volunteer/Advisory Committees at every school. We recognize that your feedback and guidance in decisions about your students is vital to creating healthy and thriving schools. I also want to specifically thank the Quincy Booster Club, the FFA Booster Club, the Music Boosters, and Quincy Rotary for their incredible contributions to our students.

Lastly, I want to express my utmost pride in our students. I am inspired by you daily, whether I am visiting classrooms, watching you compete, attending a play, or a music performance, you are remarkable. Be proud of all you have accomplished this year! Your accomplishments are a testament to your unique abilities, and we are privileged to have you as the heart and soul of Quincy School District.

I wish you all a restful and rejuvenating summer break, filled with cherished moments, relaxation, and time spent with loved ones. I look forward to returning alongside you in the fall with renewed energy and a continuing in our shared commitment to creating "Successful Students Today, Bright Futures Tomorrow."

Have a great summer! And Go Jacks,

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### Partnerships, from page 1

district Superintendent PAC, and together they went to the City Council and shared their concerns. They were able to work on a resolution to fix the issue, finding ways to make it safer for the students. It was really impressive to see the result because we had parents, teachers, district staff and the superintendent involved," she said.

"Other events are aimed at older students, such as the Pathways to Graduation and Beyond, and other events that seek to aid students as they transition from fifth to sixth grade, or from eighth to ninth," said Jessica Alcaraz, the Parent Engagement Coordinator for the district.

The results of the work of these partnerships can be seen in many ways, particularly in the eagerness of parents to participate and collaborate. "It's very nice to see how the parents talk and mentor each other and work together," Valle said. "We have seen that it has made an impact." Below are some examples of what parents have shared about the success of Parent Partnerships.

Jose Nevares is a parent whose children at-

tend Mountain View and Quincy Middle School, and he had high praise for the PACs. "The Superintendent's quarterly PAC has been helpful," he said. "The information that is shared by the superintendent is beneficial. Not only do we have an opportunity to share with the superintendent, but he also brings information to us."

Fellow parent Araceli Olalde agreed. "It is very rewarding to help students, especially because that helps the students feel safe when they see their parents involved. I enjoy being a volunteer and being able to interact with students, teachers and staff," she said.

Olalde went as far as to encourage parents to participate in their schools. "We would love for them to get the experience we are getting," she said. "If you have a spare hour, you can volunteer at your students' schools." For Olalde, "The Superintendent quarterly PAC meetings have been an amazing opportunity. I am privileged to have the opportunity to share and interact with him and other parents and staff."

Kacey Kiehn and Kiely Kiehn are George Elementary parents. Kacey called the PAC meetings a great initiative, and said he wished there was more involvement. Kiely noted the impact

that these meetings can have on a small school. "Parents who have strengths and talents are volunteering. Recently, we had a dad who did painting with students and shared his talent. I like that we are a small school with the resources of a large district," she said.

"I would like to encourage other parents to get involved and come to meetings. District Administration is willing to listen to concerns and work on solutions, Kiely said.

The future looks bright for our partnerships, Hodge said, predicting that engagement will likely grow. Valle and Alcaraz agreed. "At the elementary level, one of the things parents want to do is include the voice of their students," Valle said. "I can see these groups being successful and being able to collaborate and participate in more than just the PACs." "We are looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the work we are doing," she added. Alcaraz agreed.

"We are just scratching the surface," she said. "There are multiple ways to get involved and partner with schools." The District Partnership team looks forward to continuing the collaboration with students, parents, and community.



# QSD facilities making difference in community

Ancient Lakes: renovated school.  
George Elementary: new gym.  
Pioneer Elementary: new gym.  
Mountain View: new gym.  
Quincy High School: new everything.

The checklist could not be rosier for the people in the Quincy Valley in the past half decade. After decades of making do with tight schedules and cafeteriums, the district now has a variety of facilities they can share with the public, as well as with its own students, from performing arts centers, to gymnasiums to play structures.

“We have 30 community users that used the facilities this past year,” said Tom Harris, a City council member and also the head of facilities for the Quincy School District. “From theater clubs to AAU basketball, Farmer-Consumer Awareness Day uses it, dance studios, there’s a lot of community use.”

The list goes on, Quincy Partnership for Youth, the city’s recreation department, youth wrestling teams, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, class reunions, the Georgettes, Quincy Valley Allied Arts, and the list seems to be growing. In total, including practices, rehearsals, meetings and actual performances and games, more than 1,720 different events took place this school year.

Marie Jamison of Quincy Valley Allied Arts (QVAA) spoke of the tremendous need for facilities that affected her group prior to the wave of constructions occurred.

“Our space was really limited,” she said. “It limited what we could do. Now in the new high school we can do a lot more, and our seating capacity is a lot higher.”

QVAA has been “blessed” by having a great performing-arts space in a small town, she said.

“Without that space, I don’t even know if we could perform anymore,” she said.

Ernesto Sanchez, with Quincy United soccer, also expressed his joy at having the extra facilities

“The use of the facilities has been fantastic. We got to use them in the winter, and it’s allowed us to get our kids going and in shape during the

winter time,” he said.  
There are 1,243 school events happening outside of school hours, Harris said. It speaks to the bounty of facilities at the district that these events go off without putting a major strain on the district’s resources and staff.

“It does strain our staff a little bit, but it’s something that we always have done,” Harris said, mentioning specifically the great work done by the custodial staff in cleaning up after events. “It seems to have increased a bit with the new facilities.”

The use of the facilities goes beyond needing a stage or a court or a place for a meeting. The Georgettes use the kitchen facilities to finish baking their Fourth of July cherry pie.

“It’s kind of neat to mix our communities like that,” Harris said. Sometimes the mix involves communities a lot farther than George is to Quincy. The UW Marching Band received treatment, food and shelter at George Elementary’s new gym after their bus crashed on Interstate 90 in 2018.

“George Elementary’s custodian Carol Leibelt was able to open the school so that the students could have a place to come, be fed and hang out,” Harris said.

Sometimes, the facilities have a much happier use than treating injured students. This year, the class of 2023 had its senior prom at QHS.

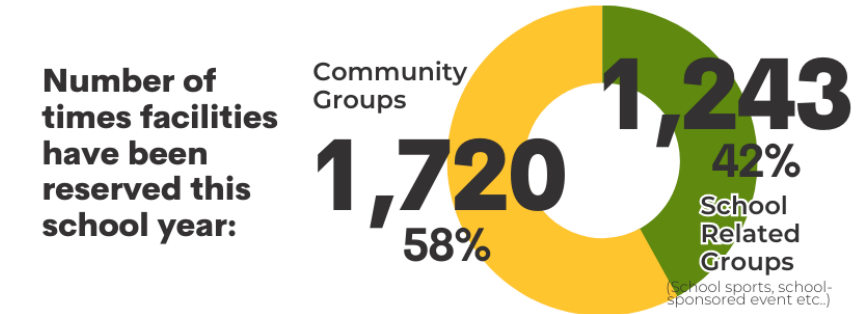
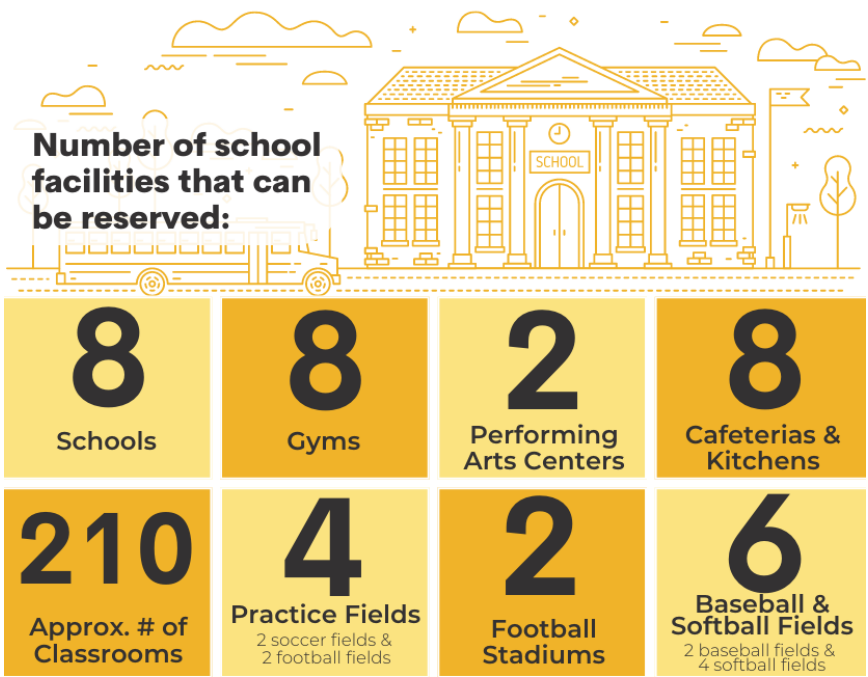
It all makes for a huge blessing for the community to have these facilities available and in good shape.

It wasn’t always the case, Harris remembers. When he first arrived in Quincy in the mid-1990s, the buildings were aging and showing it. A bond allowed a remodel of the grade school and the construction of Monument Elementary in 1998. Then between 2016-17, the big push to remodel the elementaries’ gyms and build the new QHS occurred. Another stunning development was the thorough reworking of the district’s oldest building, the one housing the then-Quincy Junior High, into its newest school, Ancient Lakes Elementary.

Jeremy McCreary, a former  
*See Facilities, page 4*

## FACILITIES USE By the Numbers

How Quincy School District facilities support community activities at no cost to organizations/groups.




**Who uses QSD facilities?**  
A few examples:

- AAU Basketball
- Alumni Groups
- Area Churches
- Area school districts & colleges
- Dance clubs
- Georgettes
- Grid Kids
- Farmer Awareness Consumer Day
- Q Town Soccer
- Quincy Brazilian Jiu-jitsu
- Quincy Partnership for Youth
- Quincy Recreation Department
- Quincy Rotary
- Quincy Valley Allied Arts
- Unified Soccer
- Youth Wrestling

**QSD Staff who support facility use:**

- Administration
- Teachers
- Custodians
- Maintenance/Groundsman
- Transportation
- Food Services



# Representative Alex Ybarra: From Migrant Roots to the State Capitol

Get State Rep. Alex Ybarra to reminisce about his high school days in Quincy, and the topic pretty quickly turns to sports, either tennis, the sport which both he and his late brother Arnold played during their prep days, or wrestling, the sport in which one or more members of the Ybarra family participated for more than 50 years in one fashion or another. Even his daughter Micaela (Mee-kah-EH-lah), a cheerleader, cheered for the wrestling team during the winter.

When the time came to judge his own performance in tennis, Ybarra was typically self-deprecating. “I was the worst of the good.” When it comes to wrestling, he repeats the mantra of how bad he was. “I was the worst of the brothers.” Having started school early meant he was always undersized, which hurt him when on the mat.

Of course, same as for most of us, prep sports were but just one part of the picture for Ybarra back in those days. Academically, he got good grades, focusing on some rather unpopular subjects like advanced calculus, thanks to the invaluable boost he received from teachers during his junior-high years.

“Mrs. Lanbach was the one who convinced me that I am not a dumb guy,” Ybarra said. “She was the one who encouraged me to take higher-level math, and convinced me that I’m a lot smarter than I think I am.”

Other teachers that had a deep impact were Larry Spence and Jim Spence, the latter of whom was a math teacher. Lastly, he mentioned Bill Sund, who taught for almost 40 years in the district. Sund and Spence were inducted together into the Quincy Wall of Fame in 2020.

And it worked, too, because Ybarra not only went on to graduate from QHS in 1979, but to receive a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Central Washington University, and a career with what today is known as Lockheed-Martin, in Redmond, WA, helping build rockets as a reliability engineer.

Not bad for the son and grandson of migrant



**Representative Alex Ybarra** Photo courtesy of the Office of Alex Ybarra

workers, who found himself entering this world in a town that had become home base for his parents during the 1950s, although they were still working from state to state, following the harvests.

Several of his siblings also put down roots nearby with longtime Quincy coaches and educators Arnold, Fred and Manuel, among them. After a tough meeting with a principal, Alex decided to throw his hat in the ring and become a school board member, where he served for nine years.

“We had a really good team, a really good school board,” he said. “We had Tricia Lubach with a lot of experience, and a good superintendent, and then pretty soon after we hired John Boyd, who was great. I learned a lot from everybody and as time went on, I just started liking it, and we accomplished a lot of good things over that time frame.”

Of his nine years on the board, Ybarra says he is proudest of the work to raise test scores for children in Quincy schools. The language barrier had proven pretty challenging back then, affecting

the performance of the children and the teachers. Ybarra said that one of the things the board recognized immediately was a need for more Spanish-speaking teachers.

The district began recruiting bilingual teachers, to where now one-quarter of all teachers in the district is bilingual. With better communication, test scores improved. In 2020, he left the school board to take on his current challenge as state representative.

“It was a complete surprise,” said Alex when appointed by the legislative district’s county chapters of the Republican Party to replace an Ellensburg legislator who resigned. Ybarra feels that his years on the school board were very instrumental in laying the groundwork.

Being on the board was a great training ground for becoming a state representative.

“Working in a professional environment, learning the ropes of what a procedure is, what a policy is, learning through the state school board association how a district gets its money, how it gets its curriculum. It was a big step (in learning) how things work.”

If given the chance, he would definitely encourage Micaela to go into state politics.

“I’d say yea, go for it,” he said. “Whatever you want to do, I’d be right behind you.”

Now in his fifth year in Olympia, Ybarra was once the only Latino Republican when he first arrived.

Asked what needs to happen to see more Latinos in posts of leadership, Ybarra said the key lies on just having more people take their hat and toss it in the ring.

“We just need to have more in,” he said. “Like with teachers. There used to be very few Hispanic teachers and now we have tons, because we started to get more and more into the system.”

“It does not have to be as a state representative,” Ybarra said. “Cemetery boards, school boards, city council, port districts, all offer a chance to run for office. And if that’s not available, then do volunteer work and get yourself out there.”

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## Facilities from page 3

City council member, and current assistant coach for the Quincy High School basketball program, has had a front row seat to the transformation of availability in the valley, from the early days of crowded would-be hoopsters waiting for their turn, to today, when rival schools refer to the district’s expansive facilities as “Quincy U.”

Back then, the prime “gym time”, right around 5 p.m. until around 8 p.m. would vanish fast, affected by high demand and only

a few courts available for a variety of activities.

“Some of our youth basketball teams weren’t able to get prime time because the facilities would be in use by things like youth soccer, or sometimes our own City of Quincy would use it,” McCreary said. “You were crammin’ 40 people in multiple teams just to have practice. It was just nuts. People would not show up because they knew they could not get a court. You could be watching three games before you could get on a court.”

Then came the new gyms, and the new schools, and everything changed.

“This last year, everybody was able to get gym time,” McCreary said. Just basketball alone had eight teams between second and sixth grade. The time wasn’t always “prime” but it was better than it was.

This bonanza of facilities is happening at just the right time. Furthermore, the planned arrival of the Q-Plex (an indoor fieldhouse with a handful of courts for several

sports) will free up even more prime “gym time,” McCreary said, giving the soccer players a different hub for their winter games.

The gymnasiums get the lion’s share of the usage.

“That’s the big one,” Harris said. Nevertheless, regardless of the usage, it’s a plus for all of the people who call Quincy home.

“We are really fortunate to have the facilities we have,” said Harris, a 29-year resident of Quincy. “It’s a really cool thing for our town to have such nice facilities.”