

# BALSZ FALL NEWSLETTER 2024



ELEMENTARY  
GRADES KG-5TH  
1350 N 48TH STREET  
(602) 629-6900



ELEMENTARY  
GRADES KG - 5TH  
501 N 36TH STREET  
(602) 629-6600



ELEMENTARY  
GRADES KG - 5TH  
4505 E PALM LANE  
(602) 629-6700



GRADES 4TH-8TH  
(602) 629-6435



GRADES 6TH - 8TH  
4309 E BELLEVIEW  
(602) 629-6500



EARLY LEARNING  
CENTER  
PRESCHOOL  
5048 E OAK STREET  
(602) 629-6800

**welCOME HOME**  
To YOUR Neighborhood Schools

BALSZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT #31  
4825 E ROOSEVELT STREET, PHOENIX, AZ 85008  
(602) 629-6400



**Balsz Elementary School District #31**  
**A Legacy of Education since 1888**



### **A Humble Beginning**

Mrs. (David) Luz Redondo Balsz was an educational pioneer and opened the first Balsz School in a single-room schoolhouse, built to serve the children of local farming families. At the time, the area was primarily rural, and the district played a vital role in providing basic education to students who would one day become the backbone of the growing region. Over the years, as the Phoenix metropolitan area expanded, the district kept pace, expanding its facilities and resources to meet the needs of a changing population.

### **Growth and Development**

Throughout the 20th century, the Balsz Elementary School District steadily grew, adding new schools and programs to accommodate the increasing number of students. Today, the district operates multiple elementary schools that offer a range of services, including early childhood education, special education, and programs designed to meet the needs of English language learners. The district continues to focus on providing professional development opportunities for all staff members to strive for excellence.

### **Innovative Education in the 21st Century**

In recent years, the Balsz Elementary School District has embraced modern educational practices, integrating technology into the classroom and focusing on a curriculum that prepares students for the future. The district's schools offer state-of-the-art facilities, personalized learning experiences, and extracurricular activities that engage students in the arts, music, and athletics. Balsz is committed to fostering not just academic achievement but also social-emotional development, ensuring that students are well-rounded individuals ready to succeed in an increasingly globalized world. With programs like STEM education and initiatives aimed at enhancing literacy, the district continues to adapt to the evolving educational landscape while maintaining its core values of community and student success.

### **A Community-Centered Approach**

One of the hallmarks of the Balsz Elementary School District is its strong connection to the community. Parents, teachers, and local leaders work collaboratively to ensure the success of each child. The district frequently hosts events and the schools offer family engagement activities to strengthen these ties, recognizing that a supportive community is essential for student success.

### **Looking to the Future**

As the Balsz Elementary School District looks ahead, it remains dedicated to its mission of providing high-quality education to all students. The district continues to seek innovative ways to improve the learning experience, staying at the forefront of educational trends while remaining true to its long-standing commitment to "Children First".



Balsz Elementary School District Governing Board Members play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape of their communities. These individuals make decisions that affect our students, teachers, and the broader community. We THANK our Governing Board Members for their numerous volunteer hours to ensure they have adequate information to help with their decision making for the future of Balsz students, staff, and the community.

Governing Board Members:

**Todd Schwarz**, Board President, Board Member since 2010

**Muktar Sheikh**, Board Vice President, Board Member since 2020

**Dr. Gail Q. Knight**, Board Member since 2012

**Col. Vic Grace**, Board Member since 2022, past member 2010-2018

### **Teacher Recognition September 2024**



**Mr. Walter Smith  
Brunson-Lee Elementary School**

### **Teacher Recognition October 2024**



**Mrs. Hannah Mathewson  
Tillman Middle School**

#### **FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. GEORGE J. BARNES:**

Since the creation of the first Balsz classroom in 1888 to today, Balsz has been about the care for students and increasing the opportunities of our youth through academic and social support that is life changing. Soon our academic letter grades for our schools and our district will be announced. We look forward to all of the hard work of our staff and students paying off, celebrating the "wins", and continuing to look for ways to grow on the journey to excellence. Thanks to your support of past bonds and overrides, our facilities are on their way to becoming powerful representations of our traditions and our innovative future. Onto greatness for us all!



**PAT TILLMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL  
4309 E BELLEVIEW STREET  
PHOENIX, AZ 85008  
(602) 629-6500**

**PRINCIPAL: DEVON SHEHAN  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: NICOLE GORMAN**

**Celebrating 40 Years of Dedication: Mrs. Susie Kittle**

Balsz School District is not just a place for learning; it's a community enriched by the passion and dedication of its staff. Among the many remarkable educators, Mrs. **Susie Kittle** stands out for her incredible **40 years** of service.

Since joining the Balsz School family four decades ago, Mrs. Kittle's journey began in a time when educational methods were evolving, yet her commitment to nurturing young minds has remained constant.

As we celebrate Mrs. Kittle's remarkable milestone, we reflect on the countless lives she has touched and the legacy she continues to build. Her 40 years at Balsz and Tillman Schools exemplify the spirit of commitment and excellence in education.



**Susie Kittle  
Excellence in Balsz  
Since 1984**

**Thank you Mrs. Kittle, here's to many more years of inspiring the next generation!**

**What programs are available for Tillman students?**

JV and Varsity Sports including Volleyball, Soccer, Football, Basketball and Cheer

Afterschool Clubs: Anima Club, FIT Weight Training, and more!



**Tours available**

by appointment  
between 7:30 am and  
2:00 pm on Mondays,  
Tuesdays, Thursdays  
and Fridays.

Call to schedule your  
tour today!  
(602) 629-6501

**Here's what Tillman students say:**

"I love my school and my teachers. They want us to become the best versions of ourselves and be good hardworking people when we grow up."

"The teachers speak to us with respect and help us prepare for the challenges we'll face in the future."





**PRINCIPAL: EMILY FORTUNATE**  
**ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: MEGAN MCCLUSKEY**

**GRIFFITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**4505 EAST PALM LANE**  
**PHOENIX, AZ 85008**  
**(602) 629-6700**

At Griffith, we bookend our instructional day with recess and free breakfast to give students a strong start, free lunch to sustain their energy, and after school activities to enrich and keep students active in our school community.

We just wrapped up our flag football and volleyball season, and are looking forward to the following extracurricular activities in quarter 2; Girls Basketball (4th & 5th Grade), Boys Soccer (4th & 5th Grade), Cross Country (3rd & 4th Grade), and ongoing Special Olympics and Student Council.

Coming Soon...

Gymnastics, Drum Club, Kindness Club, Dance, Pottery, Science Club, Afterschool Choir, Book Club, Campus Designers Club, Chess and Dance.



**Meet Griffith Plant Manager: Orlando Gamez**

Griffith Elementary is proud to spotlight our plant manager, Mr. Orlando Gamez. Orlando and his team keep Griffith sparkling. We appreciate his kind and helpful presence. Throughout all of our construction updates and in the day to day, Orlando is committed to providing safe and welcoming school grounds for all Griffith staff and students. Come see for yourself!

**STUDENT QUOTE:**

“I like coming to Griffith because we get a lot of learning done and we make our brains smarter. Mr. Davis helps us because he has us read a lot and do extra math practice because he knows we will get better. 6th grade will be harder and we will be ready!” -  
Jonah, 4th Grade



Griffith offers school tours by appointment. Call our Front Office Team at 602-629-6703 to schedule a tour!



# CROCKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOME OF THE BEARS

SEAN HANNAFIN  
PRINCIPAL

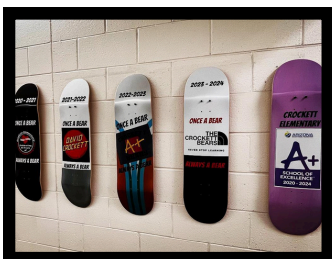
CHRISTOPHER BERG  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL



Crockett is recognized as an AEF A+ School of Excellence, and in 2022, it was selected as one of the top 5 schools in the Phoenix Area. In addition to focusing on academic excellence, Crockett places a strong emphasis on building relationships, not only among the students but also among the staff. The school boasts an impressive 85% staff retention rate, which fosters a sense of stability and mutual respect. This allows students to form lasting connections with their teachers without the worry of frequent changes.



At Crockett, we believe in providing a comprehensive education that extends beyond the confines of the classroom. To achieve this, we offer a diverse range of after-school programs, including sports, leadership, service, and various other enjoyable activities. These programs enable students to explore and engage in their interests, promoting a well-rounded education.





ELEMENTARY

OLGA MENDEZ-PEREZ  
PRINCIPAL

JUAN ZOZAYA  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

## WHERE WE TEACH EAGLES TO FLY!

Brunson-Lee Elementary is home of the Eagles, where we SOAR for greatness each and every day!

At Brunson-Lee, we offer a plethora of academic, athletic, and arts-based opportunities for students. Brunson-Lee is built on a solid foundation of core values in community, student centered teaching and learning, as well as high achievement for both students and staff.

### WHAT DO OUR BRUNSON-LEE STUDENT EAGLES SAY?

**1st:** "I love this school! I love Mrs. Arias!" -Luke B.

**2nd:** "I love Ms. Constant when she helps me."-Poda J.

**3rd:** "Mrs. Perez is the nicest in the world!" - Salman A.

**4th:** "My teachers Mr. Smith, Mr. P, and Mr. Low helped me learn a lot!" - Eli D.

**5th:** "What I love about Brunson-Lee is that Mrs. Perez is really nice and Mr. Zozaya. We do a lot of fun stuff! The lunch ladies are really nice and they take their time for us." Valeria F.



### EAGLES RISE! SOARING STAFF MEMBERS



Brunson-Lee would like to thank these amazing staff members for going above and beyond their roles each and every day. Their dedication, compassion, and work ethic shines is all that they do.



Ms. Constant  
2nd Grade Teacher



Miss Avitia  
Reading IA

### Upcoming events you are invited!

**October 25th:**  
Book-or-Treat

**November 8th:**  
Veteran's Lunch

**November 20th:**  
Turkey Trot

**November 26th:**  
Thanksgiving Lunch

**December 6th:**  
Movie Night



EARLY LEARNING CENTER  
5048 E Oak Street  
(602) 629-6803

## Preschool Developmental Screenings

**FREE**

for children ages  
2 years + 9 months  
up to 5 years old



**QUALITY FIRST**  
FIRST THINGS FIRST  
**5-STAR RATING!**

If you have **concerns** about your child's developmental growth in any of the following areas:



- Speech or Communication
- Motor Control or Coordination
- Socialization or Behavior
- Self-Help Skills
- Cognitive Functioning



Bring your child to our monthly Child Find Preschool Developmental Screenings, our services are **free!**

*Children must reside within the Balsz School District boundaries.  
If available, please bring any medical records including vision and hearing.*

**Stop by our next screening!**  
**5048 E Oak Street**

**Questions?**  
**Call (602) 629-6803 or 602.629.6826**

**Open 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.**  
 October 30  
 January 15  
 March 19  
 April 9

**Open 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**  
 November 20  
 February 12







Online instruction tailored for 4th - 8th grade students!

Our dedicated team are here to support your family every step of the way!



Call (602) 629-6435 or visit us online at [balsz.org/BOA](https://balsz.org/BOA)

Students enrolled in the Balsz Online Academy (BOA) are provided with a laptop and a hotspot!

## PARTNERSHIPS IN EXCELLENCE



The **Balsz Pediatric Clinic** Mountain Park Health Center is an affordable option for families with or without health insurance and located next to **Brunson-Lee Elementary School!** The clinic offers pediatric medical and dental services for all families, and adults can make appointments at the **Gateway Clinic**, close to **Crockett Elementary School!** Call (602) 243-7277 to make an appointment

Balsz is fortunate to have partners in the community that include Healthcare for families, afterschool programs for students, and Early Childhood education for children from birth to 5 years old.

**Click on the logos to find out more!**



Education begins before Kindergarten and have partnered with Southwest Human Development (SWHD) and Educare Arizona to provide **Head Start, Early Head Start** gives children from **birth through 5 years old** and the families the foundation they need to flourish.

SWHD Programs are offered at:

**Brunson-Lee Elementary**  
1350 N 48th Street

**Crockett Elementary**  
501 N 36th Street

**Educare Arizona**  
1300 N 48th Street

**Call (602) 560-0000 to learn about the programs available for your family!**



The Parsons Branch Boys & Girls Club of the Valley is located next to Pat Tillman Middle School and Balsz offers an after-school bus to take enrolled students to their club! (4309 E Bellevue St, Bld 14) Call (602) 343-1270



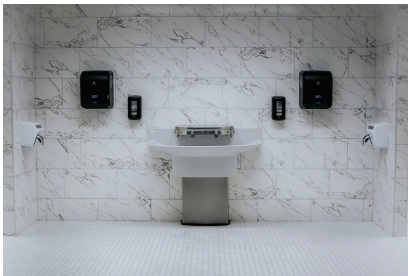
The City of Phoenix **Afterschool Center (PAC)** is available for students enrolled at:

**Griffith Elementary and Brunson-Lee Elementary**

Call the PAC team at (602) 262-7370

THANK YOU BALSZ COMMUNITY FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Balsz Elementary School District is fortunate to have a supportive community and with your support of the Balsz District override and bond in 2018, it allowed the District to upgrade ALL school buildings inside and out. Students love their new classroom furniture and upgraded fields and playgrounds! With your support in 2018, Balsz was prepared during the pandemic, when resources were low throughout the nation, Balsz already had 1:1 technology including laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots!



Balsz Community Education Foundation



The Balsz Community Education Foundation continues to support student programs, teacher mini-grants, Balsz community events! Their generous donations give us the opportunity to enhance our programs and activities.

Did you know that the BCEF holds an annual fundraiser and will host their 13th Annual BCEF Golf Tournament on May 16th at Papago Golf Course, in the Balsz Community! Visit [balszfoundation.org](http://balszfoundation.org).

Learn how you can qualify for a DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR reduction in your AZ State Income Taxes!



Take advantage of the AZ TAX CREDIT OPPORTUNITY!

YOUR Arizona State Income Tax dollars can help strengthen extra-curricular opportunities for Balsz students! You can select which school and what program:



FIELD TRIPS



ATHLETICS



ART



MUSIC

