

FALL 2025

# COMMUNITY CONNECT

**FOLLOW US!**



## Family



Mayor Joe Pizzillo,  
City of Goodyear

### #BetterTogether

Partnerships like these fuel innovation, opportunity, and lasting impact. If you'd like to connect with us and make a difference, JOIN US!

WE EXTEND OUR HUGE THANKS TO MAYOR JOE PIZZILLO AND THE CITY OF GOODYEAR FOR THEIR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT. COLLABORATING WITH THE CITY HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE ACADEMIES OF THE SOUTHWEST VALLEY, HELPING US CONNECT STUDENTS TO REAL-WORLD CAREER PATHWAYS AND BUILD A STRONGER FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITY. CHECK OUT A SPECIAL FEATURE ON PAGE 12.

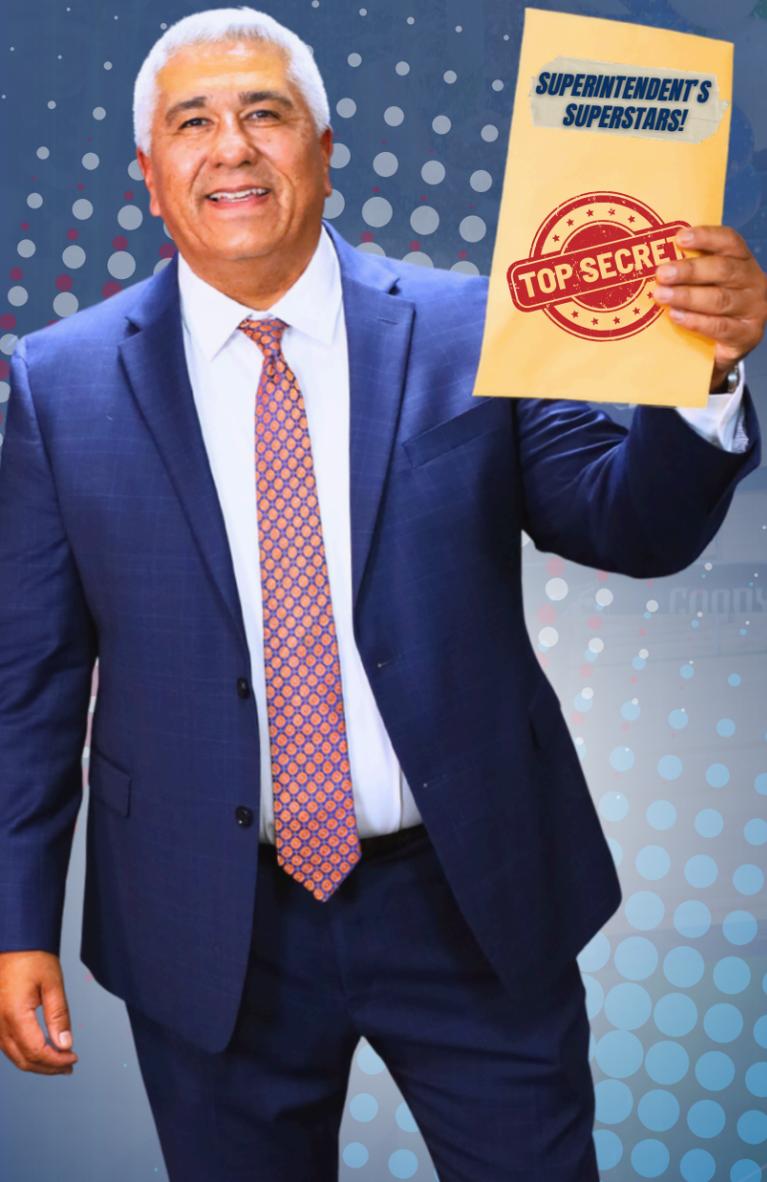


## ACADEMIC SUPERSTARS!



# Celebrating ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE!

In this issue, we proudly celebrate the incredible accomplishments of our students. Their hard work, talent, and determination have led to impressive academic achievements that deserve recognition. Whether through top honors, innovative projects, or consistent excellence in the classroom, our students continue to set a high standard of success. This issue is dedicated to shining a light on their achievements and the bright futures they are building.



“One of my greatest joys as Superintendent is celebrating our students’ excellence. The Superintendent’s Superstars include several groups of outstanding scholars, such as those in the top 5%. Their achievements reflect the dedication and spirit that define our community.”

– Superintendent  
Mark Yslas  
*Mark Yslas*

## THE SUPERINTENDENT’S SUPERSTARS!

**TOP 5%**

- Abigail Acosta (MHS)
- Abigail Vasquez (VHS)
- Adam Alvarez (DEHS)
- Adan Madera (DEHS)
- Alexis Jimenez (MHS)
- Alexis Rodriguez (CVHS)
- Alfonsa Tovar (CVHS)
- Alicia Nkengurikiyimana (MHS)
- Amarachukwu Nnamdi-Geoffrey (DEHS)
- Anaya Anderson (DEHS)
- Angel Esparza (CVHS)
- Annabelle Just (MHS)
- Athena Bennett (DEHS)
- Aubrey Farris (MHS)
- Audrie Castenda (CVHS)
- Ayesha Usmani (DEHS)
- Benny Chen (VHS)
- Bernadette Carranza (CVHS)
- Bishop Williams (CVHS)
- Bo Lambert (CVHS)
- Brady Grizzell (CVHS)
- Brady Wynne (DEHS)
- Brielle Romero (AFHS)
- Caden Nettles (VHS)
- Caitlyn Schwab (DEHS)
- Caleb Shurtleff (CVHS)
- Caleb Whitehorse (VHS)
- Callaway Lytle (CVHS)
- Carter Inman (CVHS)
- Charlene Roth (VHS)
- Chase Humes (VHS)
- Daniel Roman (VHS)
- Daniel Trigueros (CVHS)
- Deniz Gundogan (DEHS)
- Desiree Ramos (MHS)
- Eliara Santiago (CVHS)
- Elijah Earp (MHS)
- Ella Freund (MHS)
- Emanuel De La Vara Gonzalez (AFHS)
- Emerson Cowan (VHS)
- Emily Beckstead (AFHS)
- Emily Valencia (VHS)
- Endy Dixon (MHS)
- Ethan Murillo (MHS)
- Flavius Seibring Trofin (DEHS)
- Gabriella Guerrero (DEHS)
- Grace Sunjo (DEHS)
- Graciella Aderungboye (DEHS)
- Gurleen Dulay (DEHS)
- Hayden Le (MHS)
- Holly Wilson (VHS)
- Indigo Cullinan (CVHS)
- Isaac Dominguez (CVHS)
- Isaijah Medrano (VHS)
- Izabela Koziela (MHS)
- Izabella Benavidez (MHS)
- Jackson Faccio (VHS)
- Jacob Hodges (AFHS)
- Jada White (CVHS)
- Jason Jiao (VHS)
- Jayda Reynoso (CVHS)
- Johanna McAnulty (CVHS)
- Jonathan Chen (VHS)
- Juan Gutierrez (AFHS)
- Kailani Runeborg (AFHS)
- Kalissa Boschetti (DEHS)
- Katelyn Tagashira (MHS)
- Kloe Garrett (DEHS)
- Kordillia Bailey (DEHS)
- Kyrach Veloz-Meginnis (AFHS)
- Lauren Fugitt (VHS)
- Leeann Russ (VHS)
- Levan Bui (MHS)
- Lexie Bryant (DEHS)
- Lila Armstrong (CVHS)
- Lucas Hamblin (CVHS)
- Luis Sierra (AFHS)
- Mackenzie McEldowney (CVHS)
- Mackenzie Rubel (MHS)
- Madison Seidi (CVHS)
- Maely Levie (VHS)
- Manuel Ramirez Chavira (VHS)
- Manuel Santana Pineda (AFHS)
- Mark Robles (AFHS)
- Marley Marruffo Smith (AFHS)
- Mateo Gardenas (CVHS)
- Melanie Paz Rosales (AFHS)
- Mia Kleinow (CVHS)
- Michael Minor (CVHS)
- Mollie Dittmer (MHS)
- Nohelia Cortez (AFHS)
- Noura Akili (AFHS)
- Olivia Kessman (VHS)
- Olivia Michie (MHS)
- Olivia Neve (VHS)
- Orlaan Sanchez (AFHS)
- Ozzy Rubino (DEHS)
- Piper MacArthur (CVHS)
- Riley Sugihara (DEHS)
- Ryan Hodges (MHS)
- Samara Doversola-Williams (DEHS)
- Sara Shahab (DEHS)
- Skyler Hoover (VHS)
- Sophia Navarrete Razo (AFHS)
- Sophia Tew (MHS)
- Sophia Zimmerman (VHS)
- Stella Waltman (MHS)
- Taylor Pase (CVHS)
- Thomas Tran (MHS)
- Tomas Nguyen (AFHS)
- Vansh Chokshi (VHS)
- Venanzly Martinez (DEHS)
- Vivian Huynh (MHS)
- William Robinson (VHS)
- Zarina Melendez (MHS)
- Zion Clayborn (VHS)
- Zuri Williams (DEHS)

\*Names pulled Sept. 2025

# ACADEMIC SUPERSTARS!

Academic excellence shines across our District as students reach new heights through hard work, leadership, and a passion for learning. These outstanding scholars embody the spirit of achievement and reflect the strength of our school community. We are proud to celebrate their success.



**GPA: Weighted 5.0 | ACT: 26**  
Leeann Russ is an accomplished scholar and leader, serving as NHS President, Student Government Treasurer, and Freshman Mentor. She earned AP Scholar with Distinction honors and scored perfect 5s on the AP Pre-Calculus and AP Language exams. Leeann also attended the University of California San Diego's Business and Entrepreneurship Program and the University of California Berkeley's Pediatrics Program, showcasing her dedication to academic excellence. She plans to pursue a medical degree and attend medical school to become a physician.

 **Leeann Russ**  
Class of 2026

**GPA: Weighted 5.28 | ACT: 32**  
Zarina Melendez is a high-achieving scholar recognized as an AP Scholar with Distinction, AP Scholar, and honoree in both the Hispanic Recognition Award and National Recognition Program. Dedicated to service, Zarina volunteers at Hospice of the Valley and actively participates in National Honor Society, Key Club, and IB Club. She plans to earn a degree in Biology and pursue a career in medicine, combining her academic strength with her commitment to helping others.



 **Zarina Melendez**  
Class of 2026



**GPA: 4.0**  
Edyn Frett is a freshman at the newly opened Goodyear High School, where she is already making her mark as a high-achieving student. She maintains a perfect GPA and attendance record and is a leader on the Pom team, with prior experience in competitive dance. Edyn has previously been involved in theater, piano, Read Better Be Better, and NJHS. She looks forward to joining many clubs on campus at GHS, including NHS, Key Club, and more. She plans to attend a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in the future.

 **Edyn Frett**  
Class of 2029



**GPA: Weighted 5.10 | ACT: 27**  
Amarachukwu Nnamdi-Geoffrey excels both academically and athletically, ranking first in the Class of 2026. She has been accepted to NAU, ASU, Ohio University, and the University of Northern Colorado, earning the Trustee Scholarship for \$5,500 per year. She has earned the Summit Award, High Honor Roll recognition, the AIA All-State Academic All-Star Award, and multiple College Board honors, including AP Scholar with Distinction. A dedicated leader and volunteer, she serves in Key Club, the Society of Women Scholars, and NHS, while also contributing to the FAFSA Team and her local church. A varsity athlete in badminton and tennis, she plans to pursue a career as an orthopedic surgeon through a nursing pathway.

 **Amarachukwu Nnamdi-Geoffrey**  
Class of 2026

**GPA: Weighted 4.89 | ACT: 32**  
Emily Beckstead stands out as a QuestBridge College Prep Scholar and applicant for the National Match Scholarship. She has earned the Quest for Excellence Humanities Award, AP Scholar with Distinction, and National Top School Recognition for 2025. As President and cofounder of Agua Fria's Psychology Club and Secretary of NHS, Emily demonstrates exceptional leadership and service, including volunteering at Banner Health. She plans to study psychology at Stanford University and continue her passion for behavioral science, having placed sixth in HOSA's Behavioral Health competition and earned a perfect 5 on the AP Psychology exam.



 **Emily Beckstead**  
Class of 2026



**GPA: Weighted 4.94 | ACT: 35**  
Michael Minor is an outstanding scholar and leader who has maintained High Honor Roll status throughout high school. As a DECA and NHS officer, varsity football player, and community volunteer, he demonstrates dedication both academically and personally. He earned first place at DECA District, advanced to State and International competitions, and plans to study medicine, starting at ASU's Barrett Honors College before pursuing medical school at Harvard or another Ivy League university.

 **Michael Minor**  
Class of 2026

# PATHWAYS *of* POSSIBILITIES!

All seniors in the AFHSD have the opportunity to have release time in their schedules to participate in an Internship experience. Student interns can earn valuable experience, network with professionals in the Southwest Valley and even in some placements, be paid for their work. The internship program is the perfect opportunity for our students to showcase their skills and to truly immerse themselves in the professional world. We are very thankful for all of our Internship Partners!



Lauren Fugitt, earned a Regional Student Production Award from the Rocky Mountain Emmy Association and a National Award for Best Talent from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. She currently interns with the District CTE Department, creating video productions, and plans to study aerospace engineering while continuing to explore acting opportunities in the future.



Herman Montoya Carranza, participated in the District's first-ever paid summer internship with Chasse Building Team. As part of the program, Herman completed over 130 on-site hours at the Goodyear High School construction project, gaining valuable hands-on experience while earning a paycheck. Working alongside Chasse professionals, he helped with the finishing touches on the District's newest high school.

# FIRE & RESCUE PATHWAY



*new!*

In a partnership with Buckeye Fire Department and Rescue Ready Education, AFHSD will launch a Fire & Rescue program at Verrado High School beginning in the 26-27 school year. The Fire & Rescue program will be a 3-year program that allows students to learn skills and earn credentials in the areas of Fire Science and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The first level of the program will be open to 10th graders next fall.



**ACADEMIES**  
OF THE SOUTHWEST VALLEY

**WE'RE  
LOOKING  
FOR NEW  
PARTNERS!**



SCAN TO LEARN  
ABOUT BECOMING  
A PARTNER

[CONNECT@AGUAFRIA.ORG](mailto:CONNECT@AGUAFRIA.ORG)

# EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The ESS Workforce programs provide a seamless pathway from school to employment for students with varying disabilities. The LEAP program builds employability skills through classroom learning and on-campus internships. “Moving Forward” offers an additional year of vocational training, soft skills development, and community-based internships. The Alumni Workforce Program, a “Grow Our Own” initiative, provides paid district employment to recent graduates gaining real-world experience. Together, these programs empower students to transition confidently from school to work.

*Growing our Own!*

*Noah Salas is a junior in the Life Skills class at Canyon View High School. He earned his food handler's card, started as an intern in the Jaguar Java program, completed a paid internship in the CVHS kitchen, and now has a paid internship in the campus bookstore as a sales clerk.*

**FROM LEAP INTERN TO FUTURE FULL-TIME TEAM MEMBER!**



*Dominic Ozuna is LEAP program alumnus, began as a paid intern in the Verrado High School kitchen and now works as a paid employee in the Goodyear High School kitchen, a future full-time employee in the making!*

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Growing with the Southwest Valley

To address the nationwide shortage of water and wastewater operators, the City of Goodyear Water Services partnered with the Agua Fria High School District Academies of the Southwest Valley to launch a high school internship program. During the 2024-25 school year, six students received mentorship and hands-on experience across all operational divisions, with four later hired into full-time positions that include tuition assistance and support for state certifications. This education-to-career pathway helps strengthen the West Valley's workforce and community. Pictured (right to left): Sabrina Dezso (Talent Attraction and Engagement Manager), AFHSD alumni Wesley Campbell (Desert Edge) and Camden Hart (Canyon View), and Goodyear Mayor Joe Pizzillo. Campbell and Hart, former interns, are now full-time members of Goodyear Water Services.



“Whether that’s through internships, science labs, trade programs, or community projects, my goal is to invest in hands-on experiences so students don’t just learn about the world, but learn in it.”

**-Mayor Joe Pizzillo, City of Goodyear**



Opening Fall 2026...

# The Hilltop

SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS



**PUBLIC ARTS HIGH SCHOOL**  
**ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 9-12 GRADES!**

[HILLTOP.AGUAFRIA.ORG/APPLICATION](https://hilltop.aguafria.org/application)



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**SCAN ME**