

OUR MAYORS

Local Leaders, Shared Vision

Our mayors regularly attend school events, connecting with students and families and strengthening the bond between our schools and communities. We are grateful for their continued partnership and support. Pictured: Mayor Thomas Schoaf (Litchfield Park), Mayor Joe Pizzillo (Goodyear), Mayor Mike Pineda (Avondale), and Mayor Eric Orsborn (Buckeye).



SPRING 2026

COMMUNITYCONNECT

OUR SCHOOLS. OUR COMMUNITY.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
FISCAL TRANSPARENCY
TRADES & CAREER PATHWAYS

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER
ERIC CULTUM



GOVERNING BOARD
VICE PRESIDENT
VICKIE LANDIS



OUR WAY!



LEFT TO RIGHT: JALAYNE MILLER, JUAN ARMANDO MANDUJANO HINOJOSA, AND EMILY CULTUM, REPRESENTING HOW OUR DISTRICT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR PATHWAYS BEYOND GRADUATION, FROM A PRESTIGIOUS COLLEGE TO THE TRADES AND MEDICAL CAREERS.

OUR ACADEMIC SUPERSTARS!



SCAN ME TO SEE
THE EVENT!

We recently recognized the top 1% of our students at our Inaugural Academic Superstar Supper, celebrating academic excellence, leadership, and determination across our six schools. This event reflects the strong momentum across our District, from launching our first-of-its-kind arts school to preparing students for in-demand careers, as we remain committed to building bright futures for every student in the West Valley. Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you enjoy this edition of our Community Connect. — Mark Yslas, Superintendent.

Congratulations to our Top 1% Academic Superstars:

Adam Alvarez, Levan Bui, Bernadette L. Carranza, Manuel Ramirez Chavira, Vansh Chokshi, Gurleen Dulay, Alexis Jimenez, Mia Kleinow, Piper MacArthur, Isaiah Medrano, Zarina Melendez, Michael Minor, Tomas Nguyen, Amarachukwu Nnamdi-Geoffrey, Desiree Ramos, Brielle Romero, Mackenzie Rubel, Ozzy Rubino, Leeann Russ, Caleb Shurtleff, Riley Sugihara, Kyrah Veloz-Meginnis, Caleb Whitehorse, and Brady Wynne.

A Message from Our Board and Academic Leadership



VICKIE LANDIS

“Leading with purpose, we place academic excellence at the center of every decision while expanding opportunities in arts, culture, career and technical education, preparing every student for college, careers, and a successful future.”

— Vickie Landis, Governing Board Vice President



ERIC CULTUM

“The Superstar Supper is one of the many ways our District celebrates student success and the strong culture we are building. As governing board members, we are committed to fiscal transparency, maintaining no tax rate increase, and ensuring our schools, owned by this community, deliver academic excellence and strong pathways into trades, careers, and workforce success.”

— Eric Cultum, Governing Board Member



DR. SARAH PEARSON

“Academic excellence is at the core of our District’s mission. Our Academic Superstars represent the very best scholars within our school community. Their hard work, perseverance, and dedication to achievement make us incredibly proud. They have bright futures ahead, and we are excited to see the difference they will make in the years to come.”

— Dr. Sarah Pearson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning



OUR VALEDICTORIANS

The District proudly recognizes our valedictorians for achieving the highest level of academic excellence. These students are graduating #1 in their class, exemplifying outstanding dedication, perseverance, and achievement.

Brielle Romero is a senior at Agua Fria High School, where she has distinguished herself as the top-ranked student with an impressive 5.27 GPA. She has earned strong AP exam scores, including AP Psychology, AP World History, and AP U.S. History. Brielle is actively involved in leadership, serving as President of NHS and Vice President of Psychology Club, along with holding multiple officer roles in other organizations. Her dedication to academics and service highlights her commitment to excellence. After graduation, Brielle plans to attend a four-year university and major in Engineering, continuing to work toward her future goals.




BRIELLE ROMERO
Class of 2026



Bernadette Carranza is a senior at Canyon View High School. She is an AP Statistics award recipient with an impressive 5.21 GPA. She has received the Superintendent Award for Portrait of a Graduate, along with being named District Comeback Player of the Year. Bernadette excels both academically and athletically, contributing as a state champion basketball player and earning All-Academic Team honors. She is also active in service, serving as NHS Community Service Chair. After graduation, Bernadette plans to major in Pre-Med or Biology, pursue a doctorate degree, and continue exploring collegiate basketball opportunities.



BERNADETTE CARRANZA
Class of 2026

Mia Kleinow is a senior at Canyon View High School, where she has distinguished herself with an impressive 5.19 GPA. She has earned the Fine Arts Seal and received the Obama Scholarship and the New American University Recognition Scholarship. Mia has been accepted into Barrett Honors College at ASU and the Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon. She is active in leadership, serving as Treasurer of the Freshman Mentor Program and National Honor Society, as well as a FAFSA Peer Coach. After graduation, Mia plans to attend a four-year university and major in Landscape Architecture or Biology.




MIA KLEINOW
Class of 2026




AMARACHUKWU E. NNAMDI-GEOFFREY
Class of 2026

Amarachukwu E. Nnamdi-Geoffrey is a senior at Desert Edge High School with a 5.14 GPA. She has earned prestigious honors including AP Scholar with Distinction, AP Scholar with Honors, and National Recognition from the College Board. Amarachukwu has also maintained High Honor Roll status and received the Summit Award. She is a dedicated student-athlete, serving as captain of the varsity badminton team and competing in varsity tennis, while also volunteering in her community. After graduation, Amarachukwu plans to attend the University of Arizona to study nursing before pursuing medical school to become a surgeon.

Mackenzie Rubel is a senior at Millennium High School with an outstanding 5.47 GPA. She has completed an impressive academic program including numerous AP and IB courses such as AP Calculus, AP Physics, and AP Chemistry. Mackenzie has earned All-Academic Team honors for both Flag Football and Track & Field, holding the highest GPA in the state for both sports. She is also President of the National Honor Society and a dedicated varsity athlete. After graduation, Mackenzie plans to attend the United States Air Force Academy, where she will compete in track.




MACKENZIE RUBEL
Class of 2026




MANUEL RAMIREZ CHAVIRA
Class of 2026

Manuel Ramirez Chavira is a senior at Verrado High School with an impressive 5.22 GPA. He has earned recognition as an AP Scholar with Honor and has demonstrated strong academic dedication through rigorous coursework. Manuel is actively involved in leadership, serving as Treasurer for both FBLA and NSTEM, and participating in organizations such as SkillsUSA, NHS, and the ASU JBMSHP program. His commitment to growth and hands-on learning is evident in both academics and extracurriculars. After graduation, Manuel plans to attend Arizona State University to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering at the Fulton School of Engineering.

OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

WHY ARE **BONDS** IMPORTANT?

Safety and Modern Schools



School safety is a top priority. Funding supports perimeter fencing, security upgrades, bullet-resistant window film, and much more.



New campuses like Goodyear High School and the Arts School help reduce overcrowding and expand student opportunities.



Includes roof replacements, HVAC, infrastructure upgrades, and flexible classroom seating.

WHY ARE **OVERRIDES** IMPORTANT?

Teachers, Programs, and Opportunities



Expands academies in trades, medical and agriculture, pathways to serve more students, and meet workforce demands.



Expands student opportunities such as robotics, software engineering, fire science, music, the arts, and advanced manufacturing and much more.



Ensures an appropriate number of school resource officers, teachers, bus drivers, campus safety monitors, and class sizes.

NO TAX RATE INCREASE 

Voter-approved bonds and overrides allow us to maintain healthy learning environments and support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff. The Governing Board and Superintendent Yslas thank you for your investment in our schools. We remain committed to providing a quality educational experience without raising your tax rate.



OUR SHARED INVESTMENT IN ARTS AND COMMUNITY

Pictured left to right: Nora Hannah, Chief Engagement Officer, Sun Health; Mayor Thomas Schoaf, City of Litchfield Park; Tom Huffman, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Agua Fria High School District; and Joe La Rue, President, Sun Health, at the future Hilltop Theatre and Concert Hall (Opening Fall 2026).



A Message from Mayor Schoaf

“The Hilltop School for the Arts and Theatre project is truly representative of my commitment to creating partnerships that strengthen our community. We are excited for the Fall 2026 opening, which will not only provide our students with an educational experience that has historically required travel across the Valley, but will also bring arts and cultural events to the Southwest Valley through the Hilltop Theatre, with nationally renowned concerts, plays, comedy shows, speakers series, and more.

Superintendent Mark Yslas and the Agua Fria High School District Governing Board have worked closely with Council and City staff to bring this to fruition. This project is a concrete example of how community support for our school District’s no-tax-rate-increase bonds and overrides can benefit our schools and our community.

Through this collaboration with the City of Litchfield Park, Sun Health Rancho La Loma, and the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center, the Hilltop School for the Arts and Theater will continue the legacy of the historic La Loma Homestead and fulfill the vision of the Litchfield/Denny families by honoring the past and cultivating a rich and engaged community.”

The Hilltop Theatre in Litchfield Park is a premier performance venue featuring 750 seats. Guests are welcomed through an elegant chandelier lounge, where they can enjoy a coffee and refreshment bar before performances.

Located next door to The Hilltop School for the Arts, the Theatre and Concert hall were built to support student performances; when not in use for school events, the venue brings high-quality live entertainment to the community, including comedy shows, plays, concerts, and more. This dual purpose creates unique opportunities for students to work alongside professional artists performance companies.

The theatre also includes an on-site art gallery that will prominently feature student artwork from The Hilltop School for the Arts, creating a dynamic space that celebrates emerging talent and connects the community to student creativity.

THE HILLTOP THEATRE AND CONCERT HALL



OUR CAREER TRADES PATHWAYS

Agua Fria High School recently hosted the SkillsUSA Regional Construction Competition, bringing together students and industry partners for a powerful day of hands-on, real-world learning. This event reflects our larger commitment to workforce development in the West Valley. Through our partnership with West-MEC and the creation of our Career Trades Center, we are intentionally expanding opportunities for students to gain industry-aligned skills in high-demand fields.

As our region continues to grow, so does the need for a skilled workforce. The District is proud to be part of the solution and we are committed to expanding these opportunities even further for our students and community.

In Partnership with  West-MEC



**“AN HONEST DAY'S WORK
FOR AN HONEST DAY'S PAY”.**

The West Valley is one of the fastest-growing regions in Arizona, attracting thousands of new jobs and major business investments. That growth means a huge demand for skilled workers in construction, trades, and related careers.

Electricians: \$60K-\$100K+, high demand
Plumbers: \$75K-\$100K+, stable careers

BUILDING OUR

WORKFORCE

FOR TOMORROW



Students competed in a SkillsUSA competition showcasing trade-level skills in construction, electrical wiring, and plumbing; pictured left to right are Elianna Torres and Joel Perez Garcia, Herman Montoya Carranza, and Jose Romero Cortez.



“The City of Goodyear is proud to partner with the Agua Fria High School District to invest in our students and our future. Together with Superintendent Mark Yslas, we are building a strong pipeline of talent that will support our growing workforce and strengthen our community.”

— City of Goodyear Mayor Pizzillo

Pictured left to right: Maya Grant, Mayor Joe Pizzillo, and Nathanyel Aguilar.