

The Community Connect – Spring 2026

Agua Fria High School District

1481 N. Eliseo Felix Jr. Way
Avondale, AZ 85323

Heading 1: Our Schools. Our Community.

Agua Fria High School District is committed to leading with purpose, promoting academic excellence, maintaining fiscal transparency, and expanding career and technical education pathways that prepare students for success beyond graduation.

Heading 2: Local Leaders, Shared Vision

Our mayors regularly attend school events, connect with students and families, and strengthen the bond between our schools and communities. We are grateful for their continued partnership and support.

The district recognizes the support of:

- Mayor Thomas Schoaf, City of Litchfield Park
- Mayor Joe Pizzillo, City of Goodyear
- Mayor Mike Pineda, City of Avondale
- Mayor Eric Orsborn, City of Buckeye

Heading 2: District Priorities

- Leading with Purpose
- Academic Excellence
- Fiscal Transparency
- Trades and Career Pathways

Heading 2: Governing Board Leadership

The district's governing board continues to support initiatives that strengthen educational opportunities, promote student achievement, and prepare students for future success.

Heading 2: Preparing Students for the Future

Agua Fria High School District prepares students for a variety of post-graduation pathways, including higher education, skilled trades, and healthcare careers. Through rigorous academics, career and technical education programs, and community partnerships, students gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college, careers, and life.

This edition of Community Connect highlights the district's commitment to student achievement, workforce development, community engagement, and educational excellence.

Heading 1

Our Academic Superstars

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. 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 Community Connect.

— Mark Yslas, Superintendent

Heading 2

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
- Kyras Veloz-Meginnis
- Caleb Whitehorse
- Brady Wynne

Heading 2

A Message from Our Board and Academic Leadership

Heading 3

Vickie Landis, Governing Board Vice President

"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."

Heading 3

Eric Cultum, Governing Board Member

"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."

Heading 3

Dr. Sarah Pearson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

"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."

Heading 1: OUR VALEDICTORIANS

The district proudly recognizes our valedictorians for achieving the highest level of academic excellence. These students are graduating first in their class and exemplify outstanding dedication, perseverance, and achievement.

Heading 2: BRIELLE ROMERO

School: Agua Fria High School

Class: 2026

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 the National Honor Society and Vice President of the 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.

Heading 2: BERNADETTE CARRANZA

School: Canyon View High School

Class: 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 National Honor Society Community Service Chair. After graduation, Bernadette plans to major in Pre-Med or Biology, pursue a doctorate degree, and continue exploring collegiate basketball opportunities.

Heading 2: MIA KLEINOW

School: Canyon View High School

Class: 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 Arizona State University 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.

Heading 2: MACKENZIE RUBEL

School: Millennium High School

Class: 2026

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 and 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.

Heading 2: AMARACHUKWU E. NNAMDI-GEOFFREY

School: Desert Edge High School

Class: 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.

Heading 2: MANUEL RAMIREZ CHAVIRA

School: Verrado High School

Class: 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, National Honor Society, and the ASU JBMSHP program. His commitment to growth and hands-on learning is evident in both academics and extracurricular activities. After graduation, Manuel plans to attend Arizona State University to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering at the Fulton School of Engineering.

Heading 1

OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

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.

Heading 2

NO TAX RATE INCREASE

Heading 2

WHY ARE BONDS IMPORTANT?

Heading 3

Safety and Modern Schools

Bond funding supports:

- School safety improvements
- Security upgrades
- Perimeter fencing
- Bullet-resistant window film
- Modern learning environments

Heading 3

Prevent Overcrowding

Bond funding supports:

- New campuses, including Goodyear High School and the Arts School
- Reduced overcrowding
- Expanded educational opportunities for students

Heading 3

Critical Maintenance

Bond funding supports:

- Roof replacements
- HVAC upgrades
- Infrastructure improvements
- Flexible classroom seating
- Facility modernization projects

Heading 2

WHY ARE OVERRIDES IMPORTANT?

Heading 3

Teachers, Programs, and Opportunities

Override funding supports:

- Recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff
- Appropriate class sizes
- School resource officers
- Teachers
- Bus drivers
- Campus safety monitors

Heading 3

Workforce Development

Override funding supports:

- Expansion of trades, medical, and agriculture academies
- Career pathway opportunities
- Workforce readiness programs
- Industry-aligned training opportunities

Heading 3

Additional Student Opportunities

Override funding supports:

- Robotics programs
- Software engineering programs
- Fire science programs
- Music and arts programs
- Advanced manufacturing opportunities
- Additional academic and extracurricular experiences

Heading 2

THANK YOU, VOTERS!

Your support helps maintain safe schools, modern facilities, strong academic programs, workforce development opportunities, and a high-quality educational experience for students throughout Agua Fria High School District.

Heading 1: OUR SHARED INVESTMENT IN ARTS AND COMMUNITY

Heading 2: THE HILLTOP THEATRE AND CONCERT HALL

The Hilltop Theatre and Concert Hall is a new performing arts venue in Litchfield Park scheduled to open in Fall 2026. The facility is designed to support student performances while also serving as a community destination for arts and cultural events.

Heading 2: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The project is the result of collaboration among Agua Fria High School District, the City of Litchfield Park, Sun Health Rancho La Loma, and the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center. These partnerships help strengthen educational opportunities and community engagement throughout the West Valley.

Heading 2: A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR THOMAS 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, speaker 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 vision 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 both our schools and our community.

Through 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 Theatre will continue the legacy of the historic La Loma Homestead while honoring the past and cultivating a rich and engaged community."

Heading 2: ABOUT THE HILLTOP THEATRE

The Hilltop Theatre is a premier performance venue featuring approximately 750 seats.

The facility includes:

- A theatre and concert hall designed to support student performances
- Space for concerts, plays, comedy shows, speaker series, and community events
- A chandelier lounge where guests can gather before performances
- An on-site art gallery featuring student artwork from The Hilltop School for the Arts

When not being used for school activities, the theatre will host professional performances and community events, creating opportunities for students to learn alongside professional artists and performers.

Heading 2: BENEFITS TO STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

The Hilltop Theatre and Concert Hall will:

- Expand arts education opportunities for students
- Provide access to high-quality performing arts experiences
- Showcase student talent and creativity
- Support community engagement and cultural enrichment
- Create opportunities for collaboration between students and professional artists
- Strengthen partnerships between schools and the community

The project reflects Agua Fria High School District's ongoing commitment to educational excellence, community partnerships, and expanding opportunities for students throughout the West Valley.

Heading 1: OUR CAREER TRADES PATHWAYS

Heading 2: BUILDING OUR WORKFORCE FOR TOMORROW

Agua Fria High School District is committed to preparing students for high-demand careers through career and technical education programs, workforce development initiatives, and industry partnerships.

Heading 2: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST VALLEY

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

Through partnerships with organizations such as West-MEC and the development of the District's Career Trades Center, students gain access to industry-aligned training and hands-on learning experiences that prepare them for future careers.

Heading 2: CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TRADES

Examples of high-demand careers include:

- Plumbers: approximately \$75,000–\$100,000+ annually
- Electricians: approximately \$60,000–\$100,000+ annually

These careers provide stable employment opportunities and play an important role in supporting the continued growth of the West Valley.

Heading 2: SKILLSUSA REGIONAL CONSTRUCTION COMPETITION

Agua Fria High School recently hosted the SkillsUSA Regional Construction Competition, bringing together students and industry partners for a day of hands-on, real-world learning.

Students demonstrated trade-related skills in areas including:

- Construction
- Electrical wiring
- Plumbing

The competition reflects the District's commitment to workforce development and expanding opportunities for students to gain practical experience in high-demand fields.

Heading 2: DISTRICT COMMITMENT TO CAREER READINESS

As the region continues to grow, so does the need for a skilled workforce. Agua Fria High School District is committed to being part of the solution by expanding career and technical education opportunities for students and strengthening partnerships with local industries and workforce organizations.

Heading 2: A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR JOE PIZZILLO

"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."

Heading 2: LOOKING AHEAD

The District remains committed to preparing students for success after graduation by providing pathways into skilled trades, technical careers, higher education, and workforce opportunities that meet the needs of the region's growing economy.