



PRESS RELEASE

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Agua Fria High School District and Buckeye Fire Department Partner to Launch Fire and Rescue Career Pathway

(AVONDALE, Ariz. - Dec. 3, 2025) The Agua Fria High School District (AFHSD) is proud to announce a new partnership with the Buckeye Fire Department and Rescue Ready Education to launch a Fire and Rescue Career Pathway, which will be located at Verrado High School in Buckeye and Desert Edge High School in Goodyear. This initiative will become part of the Workforce Development Academies of the Southwest Valley, offering students across the District expanded opportunities to pursue careers in public safety and emergency response.

This new Career and Technical Education (CTE) program will allow students across the District to train with professional firefighters, earn industry-recognized certifications, and explore careers in public safety and emergency response, all while completing their high school education.

“This partnership provides our students with real-world, hands-on learning experiences that lead directly to meaningful careers,” said Mark Yslas, Superintendent of Agua Fria High School District. “We’re grateful to the Buckeye Fire Department and proud that Desert Edge and Verrado High Schools will host this exceptional new pathway.”

The Fire and Rescue Career Pathway will launch in the 2026–2027 school year. The Fire and Rescue program will be a three-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. AFHSD will look to expand the program to additional campuses in future years.

“The Fire and Rescue Pathway will be an incredible opportunity for our students,” said Matt Lees, Interim Principal at Verrado High School. “This program gives students hands-on experience and the chance to earn industry-recognized credentials while developing the skills and knowledge needed for a future in Fire Sciences. We are so grateful for the partnership and support of the Buckeye Fire Department and Rescue Ready Education. Their collaboration allows us to bring this exciting and meaningful learning experience to our campus.”

“At Desert Edge, we’re honored to be part of this initiative that opens doors for our students to serve their communities,” said Gretchen Hann, Principal of Desert Edge High School. “Programs like this reflect the culture of learning our students embrace every day, showing them

that education is more than academics; it is a bridge between passion and purpose, preparing them to lead, support others, and make a lasting difference.”

The Fire and Rescue Career Pathway represents the District’s ongoing commitment to expanding opportunities in high-demand industries while strengthening partnerships with local agencies and employers.

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Agua Fria High School District was established in 1955. Today, the district serves the communities of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, and Litchfield Park, with six high schools: Agua Fria, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Goodyear, Millennium, Verrado, and Agua Fria Online. Additionally, the District offers two alternative programs: Coldwater Academy and New Directions. More information can be found at www.aguafria.org