



AZALAS NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024



Be *Amazing*
Today
Believe in Yourself
Anything
is
Possible
Never Give Up
- Anonymous

A student's life is full of choices. The path they take can make all the difference. Teachers and parents encourage them to be courageous and follow their unique journey. They are encouraged to rise above challenges, practice self-discipline and embrace their inner strength. Opportunities are provided to students which inspire them to control their fate. Teachers and parents relay to students the value of staying focused, allowing them to move forward. Students learn how to celebrate intrinsically and extrinsically with their teachers and parents.

Celebrations are held throughout the school year providing motivation to students to challenge themselves to reach the next level. The end of a school year is filled with reasons to celebrate at all levels. School districts schedule awards ceremonies, promotions, and graduations to recognize students for their accomplishments.

Our May newsletter is dedicated to celebrating our students and their accomplishments. AZALAS member school districts and Executive Board Member districts are proud of their students and want to highlight some successes achieved during the 2023-2024 school year.

AZALAS wishes each of you a smooth end to the school year.

Best Wishes,

Dr. Marvene Lolato

Executive Director

Education is the
most powerful
weapon which
you can use
to change
the world.

- Nelson Mandela





Cartwright Superintendent Scholar Council *Takes the Lead* in Decision-Making

In the realm of student governance, there exists a remarkable entity: the Cartwright School District Superintendent Scholar Council. Conceived by Superintendent Dr. LeeAnn Aguilar Lawlor, the council has revolutionized student involvement in decision-making. No matter the scale, every issue finds a platform with the Scholar Council. Consider, for instance, the recent overhaul of the dress code for this academic year.

Under the revised policy, students now have the liberty to sport blue or black sweatpants and jeans of their choosing, provided they are devoid of any distressing. Plain tee or polo shirts without symbols are permissible, while v-tops, tank tops, or crop tops are strictly off-limits. This revamped dress code owes its inception entirely to the ingenuity of the Superintendent Scholar Council. Comprised of scholars from each K-8 and middle school, these students took the initiative even further by starring in an informative video detailing the new guidelines. Dr. Lawlor's vision for the Scholar Council was to establish a conduit for dialogue between school leaders across the district. This platform empowers students to address pertinent issues, and their response has been nothing short of remarkable. Their brainstorming has yielded numerous ideas and innovations. A recent standout initiative was the brainchild of eighth graders district-wide: the pioneering College and Career Readiness Expo. This event underscored the Scholar Council's capacity to conceive and execute impactful projects. Indeed, the Scholar Council has proven that given the opportunity, students not only rise to the occasion but also exhibit responsibility and diligence in tackling diverse challenges.



DUSD embraces KIDS AT HOPE Philosophy

THE POWER OF HOPE

What is HOPE? According to Rick Miller, Professor of Practice, Arizona State University and Founder of Kids at Hope, "**Hope is the ability to visit your future -Mental Time Travel...return to the present and prepare for the journey.**"

This school year, DUSD became a KIDS AT HOPE District! Several Town Hall meetings were held with the staff, students, parents, and community to inspire them to create an environment and culture where all children experience success. We wanted to show our students, parents, and community that we can all work together to help our students succeed.

In November, the District celebrated the Kids at Hope Month, *Traveling at the Speed of Hope*. Students created drawings, wrote essays, etc. about their future self and were displayed all over the community. Students were given "PASSPORTS" to visit several community buildings to view student's artwork and essays. This was a huge success as it exposed our students to the community and vice versa!

The Kids at Hope Trainer Academy was held during the month of January. This was an intense, two-day training, where 20 staff volunteered to become trainers. The training taught the staff about the philosophy and ideals behind Kids at Hope which ultimately benefits our students.

Our District is truly embracing the philosophy behind "**Every Child is Capable of Success. No Exceptions!**" We are excited to continue on this journey with our staff, students, and community members!





Introducing the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) for the 2023-2024 School Year

The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) in the Isaac School District (ISD) includes fourteen exemplary middle school students. These student leaders, representing all ISD middle schools, meet bi-monthly with Superintendent Dr. Mario Ventura to foster their civic engagement, leadership, and communication development.

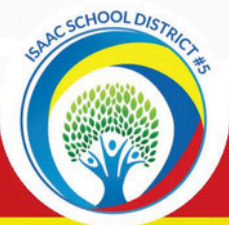
The SSAC has prioritized enhancing the district's food services this academic year, illustrating their commitment to impactful changes. They serve as a crucial communication channel between their peers and district leadership, effectively voicing student successes and concerns.

In addition to leadership training, public speaking, and mentorship from local leaders, the SSAC members contribute to community initiatives like the City of Phoenix Adopt a Street program and partake in a specialized online civics education.



A notable project this year involved the SSAC in renaming a key facility. They led the naming process for the 4006 W. Osborn Road building, now called the Estrellas Brillantes (Shining Stars) Center for Learning. This center, serving our youngest learners, embodies the hope and potential of early education. The SSAC's "Estrellas Brillantes" choice highlights their vision of students striving for lifelong success.

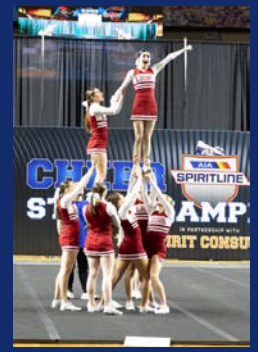
Through these activities, the SSAC plays an essential role in creating a responsive and inclusive educational environment, ensuring that student voices drive district improvements and foster a vibrant community.





With over 57,000 students across 81 campuses, Mesa Public Schools is a beacon of student achievement and excellence. Assistant Superintendent Monica Mesa highlights, “At Mesa Public Schools, we are proud to offer programs that provide students with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing world. By embracing the cultural richness of our community and offering diverse programming to match diverse preferences, we foster an environment where every student can thrive academically and reach their full potential.”

And thrive, they do. This year, Mesa Public Schools celebrates 11 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists and three 2024 Flinn Scholarship Semifinalists. Additionally, Red Mountain High School’s Aerospace Engineering students clinched victory in NASA’s TechRise Challenge for the second consecutive year. At the state level, a team of students from the Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies became National Academic League State Champions. In a similar manner, Career & Technical Education teams from Dobson, Mesa, Red Mountain, Mountain View and Skyline high schools received multiple accolades at the state and conference level. Notably, Skyline High School’s marching band is set to perform at the Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade, a testament to the district’s thriving music program.



But that’s not all. Thanks to its innovative Graduation Plus model, hundreds of high school students will graduate this month with industry-recognized certifications, earned college credit, advanced diploma designations, and even work-based learning experiences achieved through partnerships with various industry leaders such as Honeywell.

At Mesa Public Schools, the impact of empowering students with educational choice is undeniable. In providing educational choice and diverse programs, Mesa Public Schools empowers students to succeed and make their mark on the world.

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate the accomplishments of our Roosevelt students. This has been a year of academic growth across the district, from increased proficiency rates on all STAR exams to having the first “A” rated school in our history.

At Ignacio Conchos school, Ms. Landingham’s third grade class logged enough reading minutes to earn them a spot in the elite eight of the Read to the Final Four literacy challenge. Their commitment to reading and expanding their horizons is inspiring and serves as an example for their peers.

We are not only proud of how they have excelled academically, but also how they have shown great creativity and talent in the arts, music, and sports.

Students from all grades at Sunland STEAM Academy have shown remarkable acting and singing skills in their production of “The Lion King.” The cast performed multiple full shows last May for families, as well as a selection of songs in August for Roosevelt staff and in January at the School Connect Summit in front of educators and organizations from across Arizona. We look forward to their rendition of “Moana” this May.

Lastly, we would like to congratulate our promoting eighth grade students as they prepare to embark on their high school journey. We are certain they will continue to make us proud and achieve great things in the future.

We are thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of all our Roosevelt students, and we look forward to seeing them continue to thrive.



The artistic talents of Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District students have once again captured the spotlight at the annual Hi/Mid Art Show hosted by the Tubac Center of the Arts.

The Hi/Mid Art Show is known for celebrating emerging talent and innovative artwork from students in grades 4-12 along the I-19 corridor including Nogales, Sahuarita, and Rio Rico.

From captivating paintings to mesmerizing sculptures, SCV35 students showcased their diverse range of artistic expression. Rio Rico High School students won three of the eight awards presented that evening.

Junior Anabelle Mendoza received the Innovation Award for her sculpture "Pushing Daisies." The Special Achievement Award was presented to junior Sophia Jaramillo for her vase the "Blue Path of Fortune." Senior Paulina Fontes took home the evening's top prize, a \$3,500 scholarship, for her painting "Break Me Open" which depicted two hands breaking open a pomegranate.

In addition to student accolades, area teachers were recognized for their commitment to fostering artistic excellence. SCV35 art teachers from every school attended to support their students and explain to passers-by the work and commitment that went into each piece.

"It was the first time my two students had used their respective mediums (oil pastel, charcoal) on such a large piece. Each piece took more than 15 hours to create," said Mountain View Elementary teacher Mark Dittmar, who had two fourth-grade students contribute pieces to the show.



SUNNYSIDE STUDENTS CAN HAVE IT ALL!

Learning and growing to graduate College,
Career, and Community ready!...

Don't believe us, just watch!

At **Sunnyside Unified School District**
we are preparing our graduates with
real-world skills and experiences.

Our graduates are leaving Sunnyside to
pursue an Ivy League Education, becoming
collegiate level athletes, and earning
prestigious scholarships such as the
Gates Millennium, Dell, and Dorrance.



**YOU
WILL
LOVE
SUSD**

Don't Believe Us, Just Watch!

sUSD12.org



TESD: Celebrating Our Students

The achievements and highlights of Tolleson Elementary School District students and educators are many. Students have demonstrated significant growth in academic performance in mathematics and reading, surpassing state growth averages due to the dedication of their educators.

“Los Tigres de Tolleson“ Mariachi Band continues to entertain audiences with their exceptional talent, performing at prestigious events like the White House Egg Roll and numerous local performances. The district extends heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Efrain Casillas, the coordinator of music programs and the current Arizona Teacher of the Year, for his exemplary leadership.

Student leaders from Jobs for Arizona Graduates have also attained notable success at the national level, securing First Place in employability and Second Place for the LOVE Community Project. Their achievements stand as a testament to their hard work and the support provided by counselors and school administrators.

Additionally, all of the preschool programs have earned the highest rating of “5 Stars” from Quality First of Arizona, reflecting the district’s commitment to exceptional early childhood education.

Under the guidance of Ms. Mandy Fierro, S.T.E.M students secured 5th place in the state Odyssey of the Mind Competition. Ms. Fierro’s national selection to participate in a Teacher Innovator Institute at the National Air and Space Museum further highlights her dedication and expertise.



**TOLLESON ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

As Tolleson ESD celebrates these accomplishments, the district celebrates the dedication of all staff and support from our families. The district is committed to providing enriching opportunities and empowering ALL students to pursue their dreams and achieve success, no exception!

TOLLESON UNION

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student Accomplishments



Adolfo Miranda Alvarado

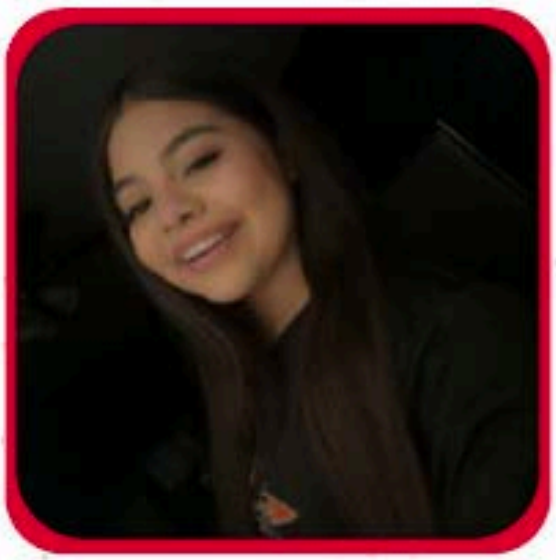


Adolfo is hardworking, resilient, and full of genuine curiosity about the world around him. He works hard in all his classes and challenges himself to be the best version of himself every day. Adolfo just got approved for the Quest Bridge scholarship program. Adolfo has signed up to take the ACT and SAT several times and has completed extra-curricular study guides that have been assigned to him. He sets a marvelous example for all La Joya Lobos.



Evelyn Perez Chun

Evelyn is an exemplary student who has shown resilient dedication to her education. She has consistently achieved high honors, earning a place on the Superintendent's Honor List and dedicating countless hours to community service through the National Honor Society throughout her high school career. Additionally, Evelyn is an active member of the Jobs for Arizona Graduates community, which has fueled her passion for engineering and solidified her commitment to attending ASU to pursue a degree in Engineering Management. Evelyn credits her success to the invaluable support of her counselor, inspiring sister, dedicated teachers, and encouraging parents, who have always motivated her to embrace life's challenges.



Sergio Acosta



University High School has provided me the opportunities necessary for my success. Thanks to the challenging curriculum, I learned how to hone my skills and apply them for the benefit of my future. The relationships I made with my teachers and classmates only extends my gratitude for my time here at University High. Going to college at Hofstra University in Long Island, New York will be a completely new experience and it would not have been possible without the education I received at University High School.





**You don't have to be great to
start, but you have to start
to be great.**

-Zig Ziglar

Make it a great day!

Tracy Harris