



1988
ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF LATINO
ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

AZALAS

Newsletter

MARCH 2025



Thank You

What you do *matters.*

Joe Quintana
Training Facilitator, AZALAS

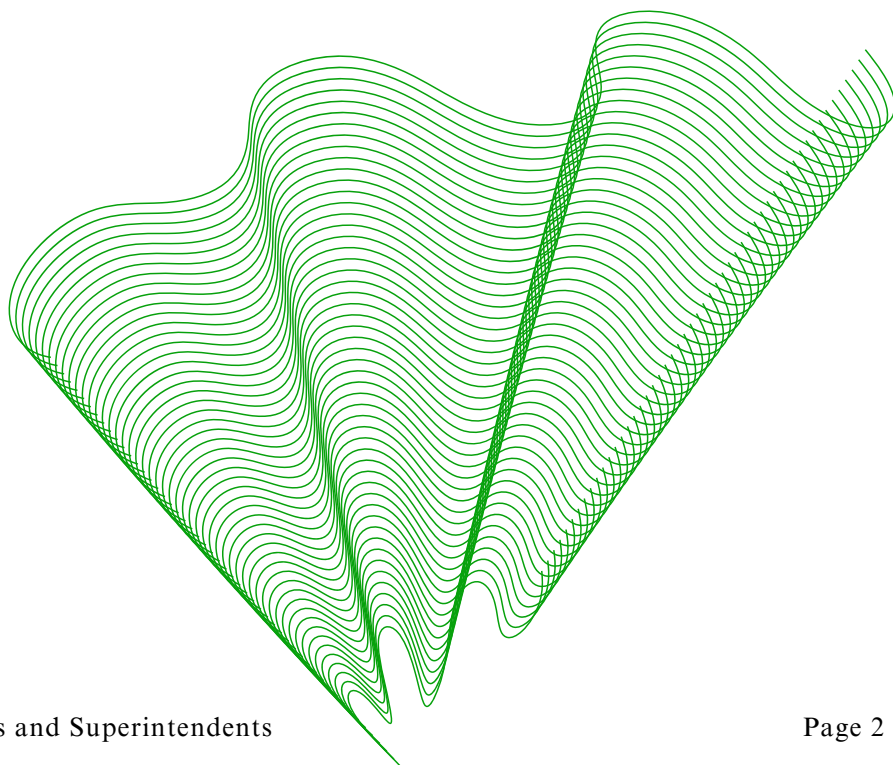


The March edition of the AZALAS newsletter is dedicated to the members of Sunnyside School District, Yuma Union High School District, and Tolleson Union High School District who support the work of the AZALAS Aspiring Leaders training program. In addition, we want to recognize two businesses in Yuma that prepare and deliver lunches to our workshop location when we are in Yuma.

In 2019, when I became the training facilitator for the AZALAS Aspiring Leaders training program, we had approximately 30 participants from the Phoenix region and the Tucson region combined. In subsequent years, the number of participants grew to approximately 60 participants, including three cohort members from the Yuma Union School District that made the trip to Phoenix every five weeks to participate in the training workshops. Those numbers dwindled during the pandemic, but we are proud to share our numbers have grown to 195 training participants since that time. We provide two workshops, approximately every five weeks, in Tucson and Phoenix, and recently added the Yuma region. The Yuma region currently has the highest number of participants (80).

Our Phoenix region participants include aspiring leaders from the following districts:

- Mesa School District
- Tolleson Union High School District
- Tolleson Elementary School District
- Avondale School District
- Roosevelt School District
- Cartwright School District
- Phoenix Elementary School District
- Phoenix Union School District
- Littleton School District
- Balz School District
- Isaac School District
- Pendergast School District



Training participants from the Tucson region are from the following districts:

- Tucson Unified School District
- Sunnyside School District
- Santa Cruz Valley School District
- Nogales School District
- Sahuarita School District
- Continental School District

Training participants from the Yuma region are from the following districts:

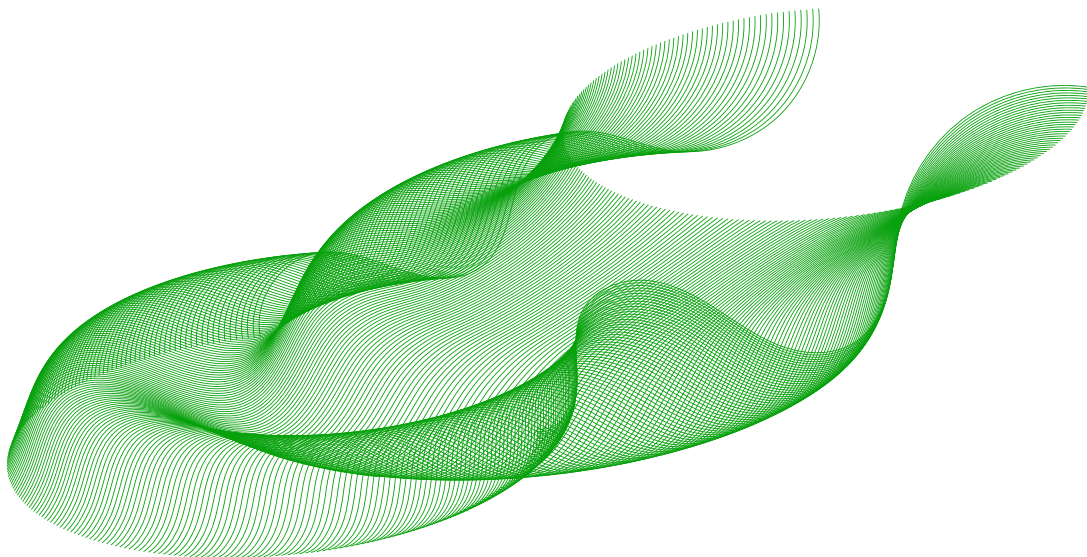
- Yuma Union High School District
- Gadsden Elementary School District
- Somerton School District

It is a pleasure to work with cohort members in our three regions and to be associated with them.

As previously mentioned, we are fortunate to receive help and support from Sunnyside School District, Yuma Union High School District, and Tolleson Union High School District. These three districts serve as hosts for our training workshops and members of their teams have been and continue to be gracious and generous in providing whatever we need to create a comfortable and conducive environment for the workshop participants. Their support continues to be invaluable!

In addition, students from the Copper Canyon High School Culinary Program, with the guidance of their instructors, the food service providers at Sunnyside, and Chick-fil-A and Firehouse Subs in Yuma prepare and serve lunch for each of our workshops. Their attention to detail and service does not go unnoticed.

The success and continued growth of the Aspiring Leaders training program would not be possible without the help and support of these three school districts, and other members of their communities. Below we have highlighted the individuals associated with each district who we would like to recognize. We greatly appreciate everything they do for the AZALAS Aspiring Leaders training program.





Sunnyside *Unified* School District



Jose Gastelum

Superintendent

Mr. Gastelum and his team did not hesitate to offer to host the Aspiring Leaders training sessions when we were looking for training space in the Tucson region. He always makes himself available to help and personally welcomes us every time we are there. His support is greatly appreciated. Mr. Gastelum has been with the district for 28 years.

In addition, Mr. Gastelum is a member of the AZALAS Executive Board and actively supports AZALAS in numerous ways.



Irma Woodward

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Ms. Woodward is one of our primary contacts at the district, as it relates to the Aspiring Leaders workshops. She coordinates the use of the training space with other district events and makes sure any of our other needs are met. She is always pleasant, welcoming and available to us. Her assistance is appreciated. Ms. Woodward has been with the district for three years.



Sunnyside *Unified* School District



Maria Montano

Director of Professional Development

Ms. Montano is the person we can count on when we are having difficulty contacting cohort members from the district. She is quick to communicate information and to have cohort members contact us. She always helps in a timely and pleasant manner, allowing us to meet our timelines. Ms. Montano has been with the district for twenty years.



Albert Magallanes

Information Technology Director

Mr. Magallanes takes the initiative to make sure our technology needs are addressed when we are at the district for training. He anticipates our visits and can be counted on to make sure everything is ready to go. He also usually follows up during the day to make sure everything is going well. His attention to detail is appreciated. Mr. Magallanes has been with the district for two years.



Sunnyside *Unified* School District



John Oakley

Food Services Director

Mr. Oakley and his staff consistently make sure our lunch needs are met when we are in Tucson for training. We communicate our lunch counts to him before each visit and he makes sure we receive a delicious meal for lunch. He personally helps his team set up for lunch to make sure there are no issues and that everything meets our expectations. His professionalism is appreciated. Mr. Oakley has been with the district for 19 years.



Antonio Sainz

Southwest Food Services District Chef

Mr. Sainz helps prepare our lunch meals and personally serves the meals. He is professional, service oriented and makes others feel welcomed. Mr. Sainz takes pride in the taste and appearance of all of the meals served. We've truly enjoyed all of the lunch selections prepared. Mr. Sainz has served the district for two years.

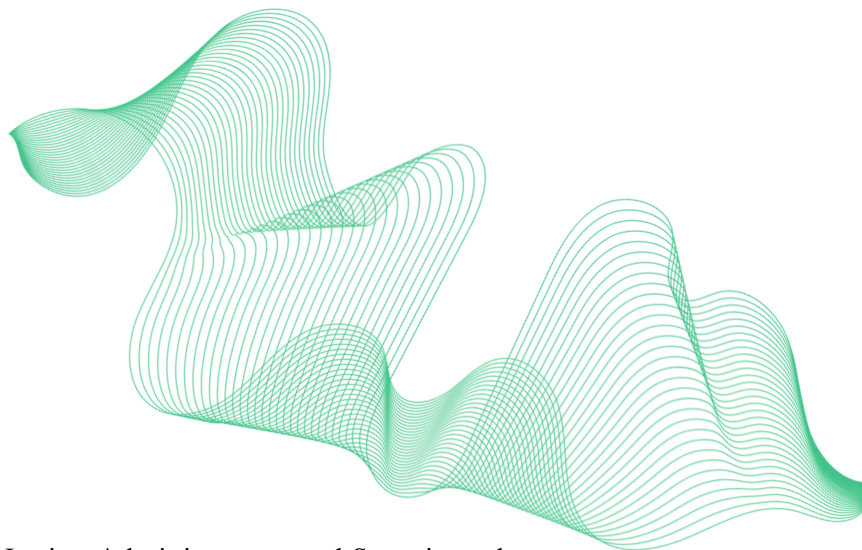


Sunnyside *Unified* School District



Alexa Barajas
Front Lobby Receptionist

Ms. Barajas is the first person we see when we visit the district because our workshops are typically held in the governing boardroom. She is always pleasant, welcoming and willing to help with photocopies, small supplies, and anything else we need. We appreciate her welcoming and helpful nature. She has been with the district for two years.





Yuma Union School District



Tim Brienza

Superintendent

Mr. Brienza is a true advocate of the Aspiring Leaders training program. Soon after we expanded our efforts to include the Yuma area and after seeing the positive results, Mr. Brienza, the Governing Board, and other members of the leadership team committed time, finances, and other resources to support their Aspiring Leaders with training. Yuma Union School District has the largest number of participants in all three training regions. AZALAS and the Aspiring Leaders training program appreciates Mr. Brienza's support. He has been with the district for 29 years.



Christal Buckley

Director of College and Career Readiness

Ms. Buckley was one of our original cohort members from the Yuma area. She and two of her colleagues traveled to Phoenix every five weeks for two years to participate in the workshops. Ms. Buckley was instrumental in expanding our efforts to the Yuma region and in growing the program there. Ms. Buckley is always available and ready to support the training efforts in Yuma in any way that she can. She has been with the district for 21 years.



Yuma Union School District



Lucky Arvizu

Principal Somerton High School:

Mr. Arvizu is the principal at Yuma Union High School District's newest school. We appreciate the opportunity to host the workshops at this beautiful school and everything Mr. Arvizu does to make us feel welcome. He always greets us and checks in with us throughout the day to make sure we have what we need. He and his team are wonderful hosts. Mr. Arvizu has been with the district for 24 years.



Rosa Segura

Administrative Assistant

When we arrive at Somerton High School to begin our preparations for the workshops, Ms. Segura is one of the first to greet us and to offer her assistance. She makes sure the training space is set up for us, lunches are being delivered, and technology needs and other needs are being addressed. Ms. Segura is always gracious, helpful and ready to solve any unexpected issues that may arise. She has served the district for 24 years.



Yuma Union School District



David Barrios

Assistant Principal

Mr. Barrios is a member of our Yuma region Cohort Two and serves as the assistant principal at Somerton High School. He is also always extremely helpful in making sure we feel welcomed, and all of our needs are being met so our workshops go as planned. We appreciate him going over and above to do that. Mr. Barrios has been with the district for ten years.



Esteban Ahumada

IT Support Technician

Mr. Ahumada, the IT support technician at Somerton High School, is always available to help with IT needs when I arrive at the school to get everything prepared for the workshops. His assistance is greatly appreciated, and it is comforting to know he will be available to assist. Mr. Ahumada has been with the district for seven years.



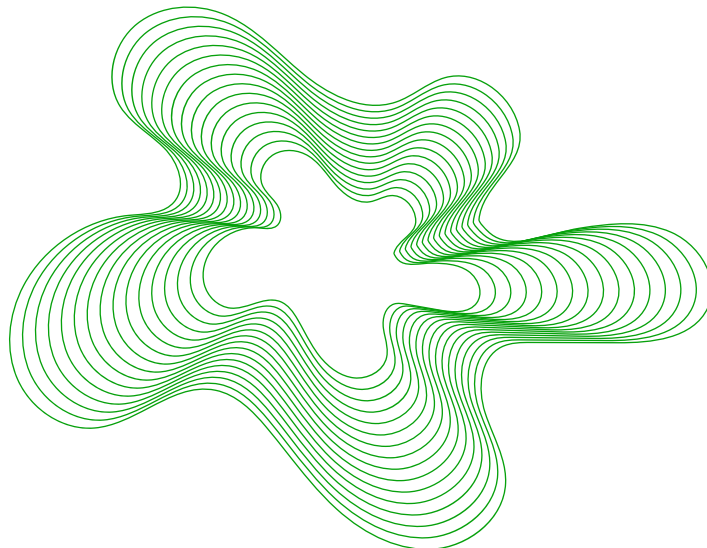
Yuma Union School District



Juan Corrales

Facility Maintenance Technician

Mr. Corrales is always kind and gracious in assisting us with needs related to the facility or providing lunch to the workshop participants and other guests. He is professional, positive, and always willing to go above and beyond to assist us. Mr. Corrales has been with the district for 23 years.





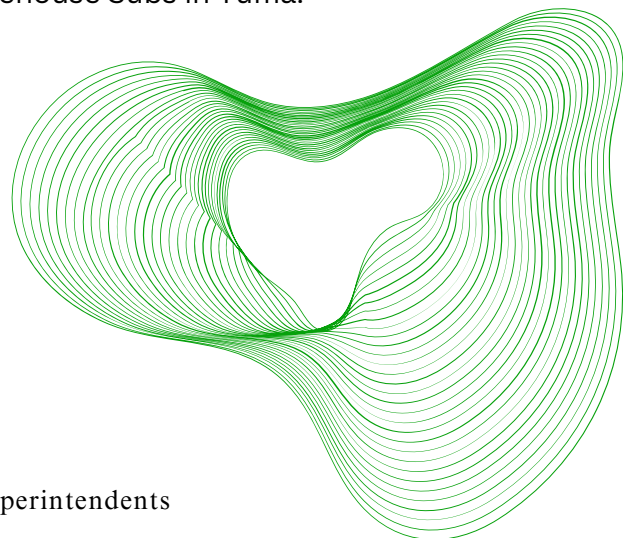
Firehouse Subs

Yuma



Firehouse Subs Big Curve in Yuma is one of the community businesses that serves lunch for our Aspiring Leaders workshops. Cat, the catering manager, and crew members Vee and Junior take our orders, prepare our sandwiches, and put together the lunch boxes that get delivered to us. Cat goes the extra mile to deliver the lunch boxes to our meeting location in Somerton.

Cat is always friendly, professional and attentive to our requests and needs. The sandwiches, and other food items included in the lunch boxes, are always fresh and tasty. Sadie, the general manager, Nikki, the assistant manager, and Allison, the manager also contribute for filling our large lunch orders. We appreciate our working relationship with Firehouse Subs in Yuma.





Chick fil-A *Yuma*



Melissa & Angela



Jacob

Melissa, the business lead, Angela, the community lead, and Jacob, the executive director at Chick-fil-A in Yuma have done an outstanding job in preparing and delivering lunch for our workshops when we are there. They prepare and deliver warm and tasty lunches to our training location at Somerton High School. Somerton High School is about a 25-minute drive from their restaurant location, adding to the great service they have provided.

Melissa has been with Chick-fil-A for ten years, Angela has been with the company for two years, and Jacob has been with the company for seven years. John Clingen is the operator.



Tolleson *Union* High School District



Jeremy Calles

Superintendent

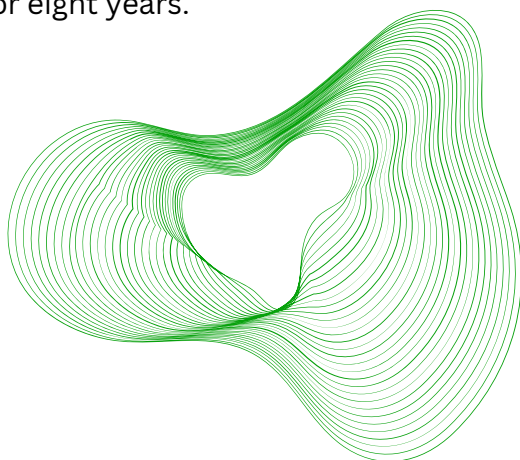
Superintendent Calles and his team have allowed AZALAS and Tolleson Union to enter an agreement that allows for the district to host the training workshops. His support is appreciated! Superintendent Calles has been with the district for eight years.



Juan Ceja

Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Ceja has set the tone in valuing the work of the Aspiring Leaders Program and has been instrumental in serving as a host district. He is a strong advocate for AZALAS and the Aspiring Leaders training program. His advocacy is appreciated! Mr. Ceja has been with the district for seven years.





Tolleson *Union* High School District



Jorge Moreno

CTE Coordinator

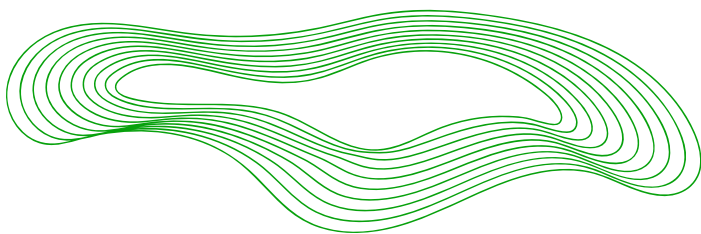
Mr. Moreno is one of our primary district contacts and goes over and above to make sure our needs are met. He is always there to greet us and to make sure everything, including facilities, technology, and food service needs are being met. He is always happy and willing to help and is a pleasure to work with. Mr. Moreno has been with the district for a year and a half.



Alfred "Bo" Oxford

Principal Copper Canyon High School

Mr. Oxford is always welcoming, pleasant and easy to work with. He works with his staff to make the training space at Copper Canyon High School available to us and to support in any other way that he can. Mr. Oxford has been with the district for 18 years. We appreciate the opportunity to meet at this beautiful school.





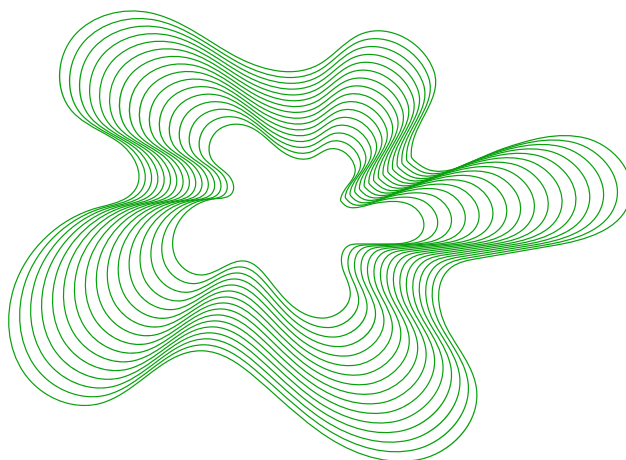
Tolleson *Union* High School District



Lupita Goodman

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Ms. Goodman is the go-to person when we have unexpected scheduling challenges or need to confirm participant attendance. She graciously reaches out to people on our behalf to allow us to firm up our attendance for Aspiring Leaders from her district. She also makes herself available to assist with anything else we may need. Ms. Goodman has been with the district for five years.





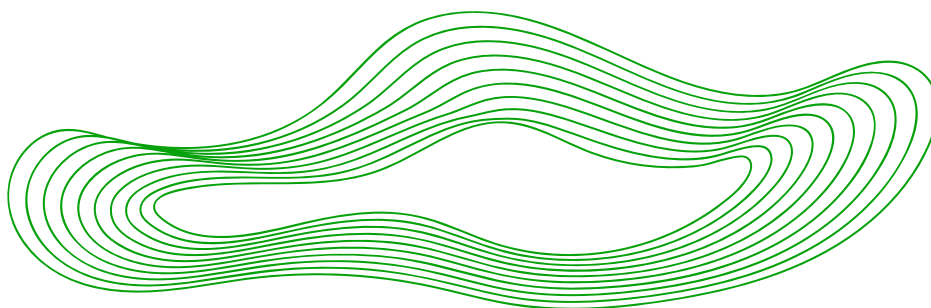
Tolleson *Union* High School District



Copper Canyon Culinary Program Students

Interacting with the students is always one of the best parts of the day. They are eager to please, well-mannered, and take great pride in consistently serving a delicious lunch. The presentation of the meals is also important to them. Having the students prepare and serve our meals provides them with valuable experience and it provides a great service to the Aspiring Leaders training program.

Hats off to this incredible team! Their passion, creativity, and collaborative spirit emphasizes their potential and commitment to the craft. We wish them continued success at Copper Canyon and all future culinary adventures.





Tolleson *Union* High School District



Melissa Tracy

Culinary Arts Teacher

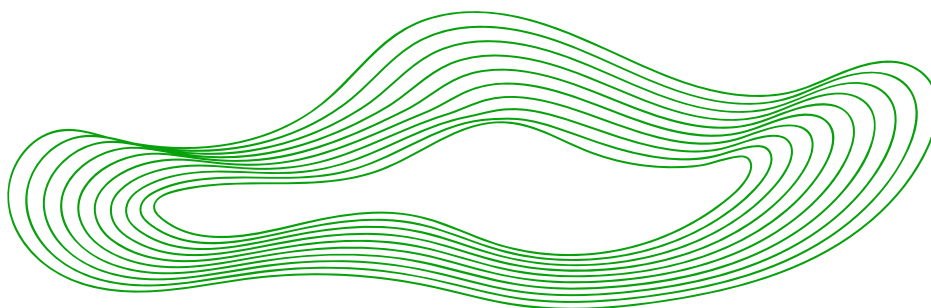
Ms. Tracy is professional and responsive in working with her students to prepare and serve delicious lunch meals for our workshop participants and in guiding her students as they gain this valuable experience. Ms. Tracy and the students are always prepared and pleasant to work with. Ms. Tracy has been with the district for sixteen years.



Michael Okenwa

Culinary Arts Teacher

Mr. Okenwa is always enthusiastic, pleasant and has a great working relationship with his students. He is always helpful, and he and his students take great pride in serving us. We appreciate his pleasant and positive demeanor. Mr. Okenwa has been with the district for six years.





Scholarship **PROGRAM** 2025

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

The Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (AZALAS) is happy to announce our annual High School Scholarship program for graduating high school seniors.

If selected, a scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 will be provided to students who will be attending a higher institution of postsecondary education during the 2025-2026 school year.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a graduating high school senior
- One parent must be of Hispanic heritage
- Possess a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5

Scholarships will be awarded at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee and are contingent upon high school graduation, as well as proof of acceptance to a higher institution of postsecondary education. (Check will be mailed following receipt of your first semester schedule at your college/university.)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Sunday, March 31, 2025

NOTE: Incomplete application packages will not be accepted.

Family members of AZALAS Scholarship Committee Members are ineligible to apply.

APPLICATION PROCESS

For scholarship consideration, scan the QR code shown or visit <https://forms.gle/rfmwcou1tMQ8DAzC9> to complete the **application** **AND** submit the following:

- ✓ Letter of recommendation from a school counselor, teacher, coach, minister or other school official
- ✓ A typewritten essay (500 words or less). The essay must be written in the applicant's own words and elaborate on the following:
- ✓ *How has your Latino heritage influenced your life's goals, mission and desire to impact the world?*

A high school transcript (a scanned unofficial transcript)

Submit all documents by the deadline of March 31, 2025.



QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Tracy Harris

tracy.harris@azalas.org

AZALAS MARCH MIXER

Friday, March 21 • 5-7 PM

Desert Diamond Casino, 7350 S. Nogales Highway
Tucson, Arizona 85756

Please join us for refreshments and connect with old friends, new members and business partners at our March Mixer! Sign in at the registration table for complimentary refreshment tickets. Cash bar will also be available.

Please RSVP to rsvp.azalas@gmail.com by Tuesday, March 18.



2025 HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

DEADLINE: Sunday, March 31, 2025

If selected, \$1,500.00 will be provided to students who will be attending a higher institution of postsecondary education during the 2025-2026 school year.
For more information, scan the QR code.



Thank You to Our Sponsors

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Ms. Monica Mesa
Board President

Dr. Marvene Lobato
Executive Director



JOB POSTINGS!

OPEN POSITIONS

Administrator of Human Resources - TESD

25/26 SY Administrator of Human Resources Tolleson El...
Posted on March 1, 2025

Santa Cruz Valley Job Vacancies

Posted on March 1, 2025

Accounts Payable Receptionist - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Assistant Principal - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Certified Teacher - 7th Grade Math - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Part Time - District Testing Coordinator - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Elementary Certified Teacher - Music K-5 - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Special Education Teacher - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Speech Pathologist - Balsz

Posted on March 1, 2025

Transportation Director - Gadsden

School Psychologist - Gadsden

Occupational Therapist - Gadsden

Sunnyside Unified School District Job Vacancies



For more information on these career opportunities, visit azalas.org.

May you be
PROUD
of the work

you do, the person you are,

and the difference you make
each and every day.



Make it a great day!

Tracy Harris