



The Tolleson Quarterly

A Message from Your Superintendent



Dr. Lupita Hightower
Superintendent

Dear Tolleson ESD Families & Community;

As we look to the end of the 2023-2024 school year, we have so much to celebrate as you will see highlighted throughout this edition of The Tolleson Quarterly. These opportunities to celebrate our achievements and awards could not be possible without the support of our entire community! We are grateful for your support!

I want to give a special thanks to all the teachers, leaders, staff, students, and families who were involved in Tolleson Virtual Academy over the last four years. We are incredibly grateful for all those who made the school a reality during covid and provided continuity as we are bringing the school to a close at the end of this school year. Thank you!

The first day of school for the 2024-2025 school year is July 31st, and we encourage you to share this newsletter with your friends and family to spread the word about our four amazing PreK - 8 schools. We welcome students within and beyond our district boundaries, to our A and B rated schools, and our Welcome Center is available to answer questions and enroll students for the new school year at 623-533-3980.

Our Welcome Center offers numerous support and services for our students and families in addition to enrolling students in all our schools.

Services include: Community & Parent Workshops & Education, Eligibility for Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), Family & Social Support, Food Distribution for Students & Families, Student Enrollment in our Schools and Student Uniforms.

We are proud to host Banner's Children's Community Clinic providing caring, compassionate and free health care services for uninsured students.

We are also connected with numerous resources to connect our students and families including: Citizen & Immigration Services, Counseling, Domestic Violence Support, Emergency Utility Assistance, Healthcare, Housing, Vision & Hearing Needs.

At Tolleson ESD we are focused to ensure we deliver a great public education for our students as well as the support services children and families need to thrive.

Together we can ensure - All Children are Capable of Success: NO EXCEPTIONS!

Sincerely,
Dr. Lupita Hightower
Treasure Hunter & Superintendent
Tolleson Elementary School District

ENROLLING KINDER STUDENTS 2024-2025 School Year

We held our Kindergarten Enrollment Events in February, and we want to be sure we get all the kindergarteners enrolled for the new school year. The new school year will be here before we know it. Our Welcome Center is here to enroll upcoming kindergarten students. Please spread the word. Children five years of age by August 31 who live within or outside our boundaries should enroll as soon as possible. We welcome all! If your child turns 5 between September 1 and December 31, please ask about our Kinder Early Entrance Program (KEEP). Please call The Welcome Center at 623-533-3980.

Important Dates

May 2024

- 8th, Wednesday
 - Governing Board Meeting.
- 24th, Friday
 - Last Day of School. Early Dismissal.

June 2024

- 12th, Wednesday
 - Governing Board Meeting.

July 2024

- 31st, Wednesday
 - First Day New School Year.



For more detailed and up-to-date information, visit TollesonSchools.com. Meeting dates, times and locations are subject to change.

TollesonSchools.com
623-533-3980

EXCELLENCE ACROSS THE DISTRICT



CESAR CHAVEZ LEGACY AWARD

Dr. Lupita Hightower was honored to receive the Cesar Chavez Legacy Award from West Valley Foundation at their annual Cesar Chavez Celebration of Education, Diversity & Scholarship Awards Dinner 2024.

Dr. Lupita Hightower is featured in this photo surrounded by her family



WHITE HOUSE PERFORMANCE

We are incredibly honored to share that our Mariachi Band, led by Mr. Efrain Casillas, 2024 Arizona Teacher of the Year, was invited to perform at the White House Easter Egg Roll in Washington DC on April 1st. This was an experience our students will remember for a lifetime. The students visited the White House and Capitol.



JOBS FOR ARIZONA GRADUATES

We are so incredibly proud of our Jobs for Arizona Graduates (JAG) students. They are working to acquire the academic, personal, leadership and vocational skills they will need to be successful upon graduation from high school. The students are featured here at the state competition. Five of the students will represent our district at the National Career Development Conference in St. Louis, Missouri this month under the leadership of Ms. Tamira Cross and all our school counselors.



SAINT MARY'S FOOD BANK

Ms. Melissa Acosta received a Visionary Leadership Award for the establishment of food pantries on all our campuses.



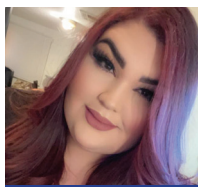
ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

Desert Oasis Elementary School students represented our district at Odyssey of the Mind state competition in Oro Valley, Arizona on March 30th under the leadership of Ms. Mandy Fierro. They placed 3rd at the regional competition and 5th at state.

THIRD QUARTER STAFF AWARDS



Elizabeth Bartels
First Grade Teacher
Arizona Desert



Cuquita Portillo
Administrative Secretary
Desert Oasis



Mary Doria
Special Education Teacher
Sheely Farms





CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESS TOGETHER

Tolleson ESD Proud

- Our Governing Board increased salaries significantly placing us in a highly competitive position with teacher salaries starting at \$52,500.00; one of the highest paid elementary school districts in the West Valley and Arizona.
- Our schools all received "A" and "B" letter grades from Arizona Department of Education, and our district was cited for "significant student growth" as we have moved students to a higher proficiency rate.
- Not only are our students performing in the classroom, they have numerous opportunities to perform beyond the classroom including Student Council, JAG, Junior Achievement, Athletics, Mariachi & Marching Bands, Odyssey of the Mind, Jr. Chef Competition, and more!
- We identified 4 Strategic Plan Priority Goals and have kept our focus on those to make great progress. Engaging families is a priority goal, and we are experiencing fabulous turnout at our parent teacher conferences.
- Mr. Efrain Casillas, Music Teacher at Desert Oasis and Porfirio H. Gonzales Elementary Schools, was named 2024 Arizona Teacher of the Year by Arizona Educational Foundation. He represented Arizona in the national award.
- Superintendent Dr. Lupita Hightower was named 2023 Arizona Superintendent of the Year by Arizona School Administrators, and she represented Arizona in the national award.
- We received a Westmarc Quality of Life Education Award for our partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU) to provide tuition-free pathways to teaching for members of our community.
- We reversed the decline in student enrollment and are thrilled to see families enrolling and staying with us from within our district boundaries and through open enrollment. 23% of our student enrollment comes from families beyond our district boundaries.
- We have "5" STAR Preschool Programs – far exceeding the preschool standards!
- Our English Learner Programs Audit continues to be flawless!

Thank you to every member of our team for making these accomplishments possible including our students, staff, teachers, parents, families, leaders, partners, and our entire public education community!

District Governing Board

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Tida Garcia, President
tgarcia@tesd17.org
Roberta Garcia, Vice President
rgarcia@tesd17.org
Anthony Aponte, Member
aaponte@tesd17.org
Belinda Quezada, Member
bquezada@tesd17.org
Samuel Quezada, Jr., Member
squezada@tesd17.org

Military Child Month



We honor all those who serve in our military and their children who also sacrifice for our country.

Copia en Español

Si desea una copia de este boletín en español, por favor llame al 623-533-3980 o visite nuestro sitio web en TollesonSchools.com.

Elementary Schools

Arizona Desert
Desert Oasis
Porfirio H. Gonzales
Sheely Farms
Tolleson Virtual Academy
*through May 2024

ECRWSEDDM
POSTAL CUSTOMER



Our Students Shine!

**ALL are Capable of Success:
NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Enroll Today PreK - 8th Grade

Who should enroll for kindergarten?

Children five years-of-age by August 31st who live within or outside our boundaries. If your child turns 5 between September 1st and December 31st, please ask about our Kinder Early Entrance Program (KEEP).

WELCOME CENTER

We are here to help you enroll at any of our 4 great schools!
9401 West Garfield Street
623-533-3980

At Tolleson Elementary School District we are all treasure hunters committed to search for all the talents, skills and intelligence that exist in all children and youth. We believe All Children are Capable of Success – NO EXCEPTIONS!

Located just off Interstate 10 West of downtown Phoenix, our four schools – Arizona Desert, Desert Oasis, Porfirio H. Gonzales, and Sheely Farms – are ready to welcome you and your children to enroll at any time throughout the year.

- Academics: Preschool, Kindergarten - Free, Full-day Programs, English Language Learners, Gifted Education, Special Education, Targeted Academic Interventions
- Science & Technology: Computer & Technology Lab, Library & Media Center, Science Labs • Beyond Academics: Art, Athletics, Bands, Physical Education • Health Services: Counselors, Nurses, Banner Children's Community Clinic
- After School & Clubs: 21st Century & TASK, Student Council, Yearbook Club • Additional Supports & Services: Breakfast and Lunch, Supper for After School Program Students, Student Transportation (for those who qualify), and Community Education for Parents



**ARIZONA DESERT
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

8803 West Van Buren Street
PreK - Grade 8
8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
623-907-5260



**DESERT OASIS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

8802 West McDowell Road
PreK - Grade 8
7:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
623-533-3901



**PORFIRIO H. GONZALES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

9401 West Garfield Street
PreK - Grade 8
8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
623-907-5181



**SHEELY FARMS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

9450 West Encanto Boulevard
PreK - Grade 8
7:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
623-907-5270

*As defined by Arizona Department of Education