



The Tolleson Quarterly

A Message from Your Superintendent



Dr. Lupita Hightower
Superintendent

Dear Tolleson ESD Families & Community;

We are so focused on teaching and learning in our Tolleson ESD schools as we look to the close of another great year of public education across our community. As we wind down the year, we eagerly look to the beginning of the 2023 – 2024 school year that will begin on August 2nd. We have new staff members to announce for the upcoming school year, and I am honored to share this news with you as they were approved by our Governing Board at the March meeting. They are:

- Principal, Desert Oasis Elementary School - Ms. Cynthia Leon Cantu will join us from Wilson Elementary School District beginning July 1, 2023, as Ms. Claudia Espinoza retires. Thank you, Ms. Espinoza, for your leadership.
- Principal, Porfirio H. Gonzales Elementary School – Mr. Joseph de la Huerta has been serving as the interim principal and becomes the official principal on July 1st.
- Executive Director of Business Services - Ms. Anita Percell will join us from Laveen Elementary School District beginning July 1, 2023, as Dr. Roa will retire in June. Thank you, Dr. Roa, for your service and financial expertise.

Please join me in welcoming our new leaders to Tolleson ESD!

As we look forward to the new school year, I encourage you to share this newsletter with your neighbors, families and friends encouraging them to join our schools. We have robust and rigorous programs and many support services to ensure our students and families receive a great public education. Below is a quick preview of some of our offerings:

- 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, Lunch & Dinner, Student Transportation (for those who qualify), and Community Education for Parents

Teacher Appreciation Week is approaching in early May, and I ask you to join me to show your gratitude to our amazing teachers. I am confident they are the best of the best, and we are fortunate so many are returning to teach with us next year. We experience very high teacher retention rates as you will see in our progress report in this newsletter, and this year may be our highest rate of retention to date. As the country is experiencing a teacher shortage, I believe it is our amazing community support that keeps our teachers and staff returning. Thank you to all our teachers and our entire community for your support and dedication to our students and families.

We believe all children are capable of success – NO EXCEPTIONS!

Sincerely,

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

Important Dates

April 2023

- 5th, Wednesday
 - Governing Board Meeting.
- 7th, Friday
 - Spring Recess. No School.
- 10th, Monday
 - Spring Recess. No School.

May 2023

- 10th, Wednesday
 - Governing Board Meeting.
- 26th, Friday
 - Last Day of School. Early Release.

June 2023

- 14th, Wednesday
 - Governing Board Meeting.

August 2023

- 2nd, Wednesday
 - First Day of School.

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



ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

We are so proud of our treasures who competed in Odyssey of the Mind and grateful for the teachers, staff and families who made it possible. Odyssey of the Mind is an annual competition with schools from all over the U.S. competing. Preparation begins in September each year, as teams of seven members are created. The teams are given scenarios and a problem to solve. They must write an eight-minute skit, create costumes, props and backdrops. The teams perform their skit in front of judges and an audience. Seven Tolleson ESD teams competed on March 4th with schools and students from across the valley. We are so proud of all our students and proud to note Arizona Desert Elementary School had two 4th place teams, and a Desert Oasis Elementary School team placed 5th. Congratulations to all these teams and all who participated.

We are grateful to Porfirio H. Gonzales Elementary School for hosting the event. Their student council and JAG hosted an amazing food court. Special shoutouts to Dr. Kennedy, Mr. Peters, Mr. Weete, Ms. Segovia, Mr. de la Huerta, Ms. Golden, Ms. Fierro and Dr. Inskeep.



NAU
NORTHERN
ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY

College of Education



Make a difference. Become a teacher!
Tuition-free opportunity

Follow your passion. Study locally. Serve your community.

NAU is excited to announce a West Valley partnership with Tolleson, Littleton and Union Elementary School Districts to offer a pathway to teacher certification.

This unique partnership is available to anyone interested in pursuing an NAU degree that leads to teacher certification. The **Arizona Teachers Academy Scholarship** is available for those who qualify, allowing the NAU degree programs to be completed tuition-free. The goal of this new partnership is to attract talented people to become educators for their community. NAU's in-person courses will be offered in the afternoon/evening, making it convenient for paraprofessionals and other working professionals.

Available degree programs leading to teacher certification include:

- BSED Elementary Education (primarily in-person courses)
- BSED Special and Elementary Education (blend of in-person and online courses)
 - Add on Early Childhood Certificate leading to Endorsement (online courses)
- MED Special Education (online program)
 - Early Childhood OR Mild Moderate Disabilities
- MED Elementary Education (online program)
- MAT Teaching Science (online program)

Contact NAU to get started or schedule an advising appointment:

Josh Perkins
NAU Enrollment Coordinator
602-298-4014
northvalley@nau.edu



Benefits of the Partnership

The benefits of this partnership include financial, professional, and academic support.

- Invitations for specialized professional development events
- Advanced consideration for open positions
- Local faculty support
- Attend tuition-free with the Arizona Teachers Academy (must complete a current FAFSA)
- \$2,000 annual stipend (for up to eight semesters of NAU coursework)

2022-2023

PRIORITY GOALS for 2022 -2023

REPORTING OUR PROGRESS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2023 PRIORITY GOALS

As we report on the progress we are making district-wide on our Strategic Plan 2022-2023 Priority Goals, we are pleased to share great progress and results for all four goals. We also want to share important updates regarding our fiscal responsibility considering the recent salary increases approved by our Governing Board that ensure we can recruit, develop, and maintain diverse, high quality, high-performing staff committed to our mission and the field of education. The Arizona Auditor General report indicates our district spending directed to the classroom on instruction, student support and instruction support is on par with "peer districts." Peer districts share similar qualities as ours to make meaningful comparisons. Our non-classroom spending is on par or below "peer districts" in all categories except food services. To top it off, last fall we were awarded Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting - 25 Years of Excellence by Association of School Business Officials International.

Priority Goal #1: Ensure instruction, curriculum and assessment are relevant and rigorous to promote academic and life success for students.

Each of our schools recently received a "B" letter grade by Arizona Department of Education. Our student growth rates are improving and indicate our students are growing academically at a rate faster than their peers statewide.

Priority Goal #2: Foster the social-emotional learning, character development, and mental health of all students.

With Governing Board support for two counselors in each of our schools, we are on track to foster overall well-being for all students.

Priority Goal #3: Recruit, develop, and maintain diverse, high-quality, high-performing staff committed to the district's mission and to the field of education.

We are predicting high teacher retention rates for the 2023-2024 school year and look forward to a great school year.

Priority Goal #4: Intentionally engage parents and caregivers in all aspects of teaching and learning.

Our parents and families are engaged and turning out to attend parent teacher conferences at unprecedented rates as we strive to and are approaching 100% turnout for the conferences.

TollesonSchools.com 623-533-3980

1. Ensure instruction, curriculum and assessment are relevant and rigorous to promote academic and life success for students.
2. Foster the social-emotional learning, character development, and mental health of all students.
3. Recruit, develop, and maintain diverse, high-quality, high-performing staff committed to the district's mission and to the field of education.
4. Intentionally engage parents and caregivers in all aspects of teaching and learning.

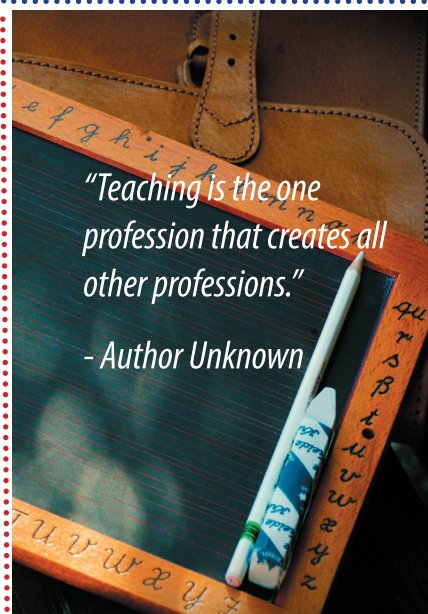
District Governing Board

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

Thank You!

Thank you to all the amazing leaders and staff members across our five great schools where we -
Expect Excellence, Inspire Innovation & Achieve Greatness!



Copia en Español

Si desea una copia de este informe 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

ECRWSSDDM
POSTAL CUSTOMER



Tolleson ESD where all children are capable of success – NO EXCEPTIONS!

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 five schools – Arizona Desert, Desert Oasis, Porfirio H. Gonzales, Sheely Farms, and Tolleson Virtual Academy - are ready to welcome you and your children to enroll at any time throughout the year.



WELCOME CENTER

We are here to help you enroll
at any of our 5 great schools!
9401 West Garfield Street
623-533-3980

For children ready for kindergarten who will not be 5 years of age by August 31st but will be 5 years of age by December 31st, please ask about our Kindergarten Early Entrance Program (KEEP). For all the details regarding enrollment and KEEP, please call our Welcome Center at 623-533-3980.



**ARIZONA DESERT
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

8803 West Van Buren Street
PreKindergarten - Grade 8
623-907-5260



**DESERT OASIS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

8802 West McDowell Road
PreKindergarten - Grade 8
623-533-3901



**PORFIRIO H. GONZALES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

9401 West Garfield Street
PreKindergarten - Grade 8
623-907-5181



**SHEELY FARMS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

9450 West Encanto Boulevard
PreKindergarten - Grade 8
623-907-5270



Beginning August 2023
Serving Grades 5-8
2023-2024
623-533-3900

TollesonSchools.com 623-533-3980