

# #TUHSD

## Strong NEWSLETTER



### IN THIS ISSUE

LETTER GRADES	Pg. 2
DE TODO CORAZON AWARD	Pg. 3
AZALAS	
KINDNESS CAMPAIGN WINNERS	Pg. 4
CALLAHAN CARE	Pg. 5
SUCCESSFUL JOB FAIR	Pg. 6
NEW GOVERNING BOARD	Pg. 7
FACILITY REQUESTS	Pg. 8
THANKSGIVING DINNER	Pg. 9
TUHSD ANGEL TREE	Pg. 10
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS	Pg. 11-14
TUHSD BAND FESTIVAL	Pg. 15-16
TUHSD IN THE NEWS	Pg. 17
GOT NEWS?	Pg. 18
SOCIAL MEDIA RECAP	Pg. 19



**December 2024**



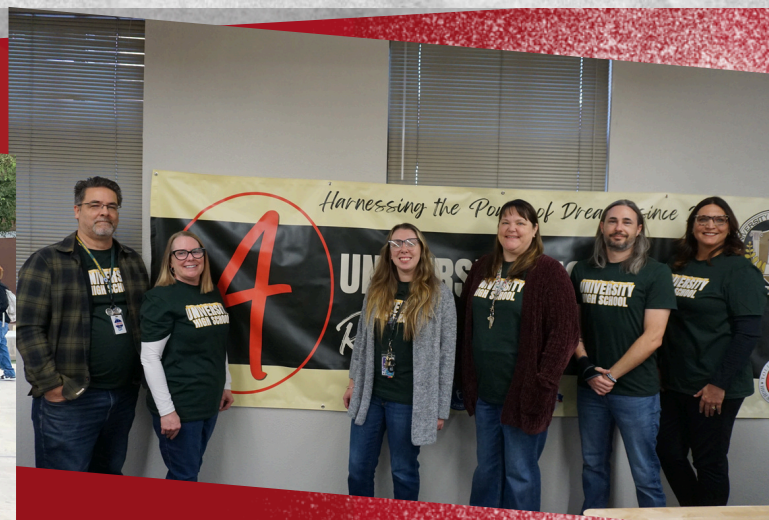
# LETTER GRADES ARE IN!



In late October, letter grades for all schools were released by the state. West Point is our newest school to achieve an A rating by the Arizona Department of Education. The Dragons join University High School, who has remained an A school for many years now. All high schools are now ranked as a B grade or higher and we're very proud of everyone's effort to increase scores across the district. We want to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work and dedication of our teachers, support staff and leaders. Your dedication and efforts are helping our entire district to rise!

West Point Principal Brandi Haskins was interviewed by ABC 15 News Reporter Ellenee Dao about the letter grade achievement.

**“When you know the hundreds of people that put in all the man-hours, the hard work, and the belief in our students, it's really exciting to see that recognition,” she said.**



# PRINCIPAL OXFORD RECEIVES THE AZALAS DE TODO CORAZON AWARD



We are happy to announce that Copper Canyon Principal, Mr. Alfred "Bo" Oxford, has been named as an Educator of the Year with the Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (AZALAS), being awarded the prestigious De Todo Corazon (With all my Heart) recognition.

Principal Oxford embodies the qualities of a servant leader, consistently prioritizing the well-being and success of both staff and students. His positive influence on the school's culture and climate has been transformative, guiding Copper Canyon closer to an "A-rating" each year.

Mr. Oxford recognizes achievements, both big and small, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued. Mr. Oxford brings enthusiasm to professional development, incorporating innovative team-building activities and tools that enhance collaboration. Mr. Oxford tirelessly seeks ways to improve student academic achievement and create a positive atmosphere at CCHS.

While Mr. Oxford's academic insight is impressive, his support goes beyond academics; he is genuinely invested in students' social-emotional well-being and continually seeks new ways to foster their growth.

Principal Oxford truly embodies the spirit of this award. His leadership, sincere care for others, and relentless efforts to enhance his school's community create a lasting impact. The Educator of the Year award was clearly designed for exceptional leaders like Mr. Oxford, and he deserves this recognition for his significant contributions to Copper Canyon High School and the lives he has touched.

We are proud of you Mr. Oxford!



# KINDNESS CAMPAIGN WINNERS

## GRAND PRIZE



SIERRA LINDA FCCLA  
FASHION AND EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## 1ST PLACE



Lighthouse Academy Teacher  
Angela Torres

## 2ND PLACE



Logan Cartony  
Nominated by Mauricio Gomez

## 3RD PLACE



Michael Aguilar



A HUGE thank you to everyone who participated in our  
Kindness Campaign this semester!



# Callahan Closets



Partnership with Tolleson Union High School District

This year, our district has partnered with Callahan Care to retrofit areas of school campuses into donation sites (open closets) for students and families in need. The closets house clothes, toiletries, instructional items and other family resources upon request.

Currently, Callahan Care has completed the first closet at Sierra Linda. The next closet build will be at Westview. The goal is to ensure that every school in the district has its own closet, with an additional central site located at the District Office. At the Community Resource Fair in October, Tolleson successfully partnered with 21 new organizations to prepare for servicing our community once the central site opens.

Please consider a nonprofit tax credit donation to Callahan Care and designate your donation to our district. A portion of your donation will directly support our school closets and our ability to provide resources to our students all year long. Donate here [callahancare.org](http://callahancare.org)

List **Tolleson 214** as the district you are donating from



TUHSD 214

**Donate Now**  
List **TUHSD 214** as the district  
you are donating from



# INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL BUS DRIVER JOB FAIR

In early December, a job fair was held at the district office to hire bus drivers. Since the Covid Pandemic, districts across the state have experienced severe driver shortages. Our district was no exception. This school year our Transportation Department experienced a shortage of 40 drivers.

The bus driver job fair was heavily promoted by the Public Relations Department through printed fliers, paid advertising, social media videos and posts, a Facebook Live session and outreach to local businesses, communities and training facilities. Such efforts have never been seen before and the result was a resounding success. During the four-hour event, more than 95 people attended and were interviewed for positions. Transportation Department Director Robert Herzog reported he received 16 submitted applications on the morning of the job fair after a television news broadcast was aired the previous night.

We are grateful for the public's response to our needs and the community's desire to join our district. Hopefully, we will never see such a shortage of drivers again.

**\$500 stipend**  
for referring a future  
TUHSD employee



*Thank you!*

Applications will continue to be accepted through our website: [www.tuhsd.org/human-resources](http://www.tuhsd.org/human-resources)



# BOND & OVERRIDE ELECTION UPDATES

Thank you voters for continuing to support our district through the passage of the 2024 Bond and Override measures.

Bond funded improvements may include:

- Replacement of old or damaged air conditioning units, roofs, water heaters and other major equipment.
- Upgrades to furniture
- Buses
- Maintenance vehicles
- Student transport vehicles (like activity buses)

The Capital Override passage will fund improvements related specifically to technology, including:

- Software systems
- Devices
- Infrastructure
- Network Equipment
- Hardware, software and peripherals

In addition to the bond and override passing, our community elected new Governing Board members. Mr. Steven Chapman's bid for re-election was successful. Mr. Miguel Ortega-Romero and Ms. Leezah Sun are new electees. All members were officially sworn in during a December 16 ceremony held at the Tolleson Performing Arts Center.



THANK YOU  
**TUHSD VOTERS**





# FACILITY REQUEST FORMS

Fast, Convenient, and Easy



## New Schedule Request

Requests > New Schedule Request

\* Event name   
\* Building   
\* Resources   
\* Starts   
 All day  
\* From   
\* To   
\* Repeats   
Setup time   
Teardown time   
\* Number of Attendees   
Additional Event Details  
(Please be detailed)

The Tolleson Union High School District has introduced a new FMX portal to simplify the process of submitting facility requests. This new system replaces email and phone submissions, allowing facility managers, technicians, and custodians to track time spent on tasks. Faculty can now file two types of requests: maintenance and schedule.

Maintenance requests cover repairs and operational needs, such as fixing a classroom door or setting up tables and chairs for an event. Schedule requests let faculty reserve district facilities, including classrooms and the district office, for events like conferences, athletic games, or community gatherings. These requests can be for one-time or recurring bookings.

## New Maintenance Request

Maintenance Requests > New

Request

\* Request type   
\* Request   
\* Building   
\* Location   
Description   
A Formatting guide  Show preview  
Emergency?   
Notes   
A Formatting guide  Show preview  
Priority Description (Required Data Only)  
Attachments

The FMX portal streamlines communication, boosts operational efficiency and makes managing district facilities easier. Faculty are encouraged to use the portal to ensure timely service and better coordination across the district.





# Thanksgiving Day Dinner

## A Joyous Celebration of Community



The 40th Annual Mickie Diaz/Charles A. Landis Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner was a resounding success, bringing together an impressive number of attendees and showcasing the true spirit of community and togetherness. Held at Tolleson Union High School, the event was hosted by the Tolleson Service Committee, who outdid themselves in organizing a memorable and heartwarming celebration.

As in past years, this year's dinner was well-attended, with dozens of community members coming together to share in the festive spirit. The event ran from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day, ensuring that everyone had ample time to enjoy the delicious meal and the company of their fellow attendees.

### *A Unified Effort of Volunteers*

One of the most remarkable aspects of the event was the incredible turnout of volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to make the day special. Students from Tolleson Union High School enthusiastically participated, eager to give back to their community. Alongside them, community members, and even elected officials rolled up their sleeves to help with various tasks, from serving food to organizing and cleaning up. This diverse group of volunteers exemplified the community's strong spirit of service and collaboration, making the event a true team effort.



**TOLLESON UNION HIGH SCHOOL**

### *Extending Hospitality Beyond the Event*

Understanding that not everyone could make it to the school, the organizers thoughtfully arranged for meals to be delivered to community members who were unable to attend. Additionally, guests were encouraged to take plates home, ensuring that the generosity of the event extended beyond the school's walls. This gesture of kindness highlighted the inclusive nature of the dinner, making sure that no one was left out of the celebration.



### *Community Spirit Shines Bright*

The 40th Annual Mickie Diaz/Charles A. Landis Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner was more than just a meal; it was a testament to the power of community and the importance of coming together to support one another. The Tolleson Service Committee's dedication and the overwhelming support from volunteers and attendees alike ensured that this year's dinner was a remarkable success. As the community reflects on this year's celebration, there is no doubt that the 40th Annual Mickie Diaz/Charles A. Landis Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner will be remembered as a shining example of what can be achieved when people come together with a shared purpose and a generous heart.

# TUHS D Angel Tree

For more than six years, the Angel Tree has been set up at the District front office. Angela Williams, the District Receptionist, reaches out to the social workers at every school to gather the names of at least two students from each site who could use assistance during the holiday season. Student requests vary every year from shoes to clothes to makeup. On many occasions, students are not only asking for items for themselves, but for their family members as well. This year, the largest request has been for food. Students are asking for help with meals that their families can enjoy together on holidays.

Angel Tree is a project that begins in November when the tree goes up and is decorated with the names and lists from the students making requests. It then becomes a choice to individually sponsor the angel or do so as a group/department. It is highly encouraged that angels are chosen by a department so that it will allow for a greater opportunity to bless our students.

In total, 24 students received gifts with each student receiving an average of 4 gifts. We thank everyone who continues to give to our students and families! We appreciate the goodwill and service to others.



## Angel Tree Thank You

A heartfelt thank you for the beautiful gifts that were purchased by DO staff to support our students during this festive time of year. All who participated were selfless and your kindness is truly a treasure.

Wishing you and yours all the best this holiday season!

# Employee Spotlight

## Meet Sarah Pastula



NORTH POLE

Sarah Pastula is in her freshmen year with our district. She joined the TUHSD fam after teaching junior high social studies with Peoria Unified. She also taught U.S. History for 10 years and previously worked as an Educator Mentor with the Phoenix Union High School District.

Sarah's position as an Instructional Technology Education Coach gives her an, "opportunity to support teachers every day to help them grow and succeed in their classrooms," she said. "I also love the amazing team I get to collaborate with. I'm incredibly blessed to work alongside such dedicated professionals."

Her experiences with other large and small school districts has helped her transition to her new position with TUHSD.

**"I believe in the power of collaboration and problem-solving, and I'm always up for finding new ways to improve what we do. Please reach out to me with any EDTech questions you have! I would love the chance to collaborate with you," she said.**

Sarah is married and has one daughter, Raelyn. She's lived in the West Valley for quite some time now but has also lived in Florida, Illinois and Wisconsin. Her extended family, including her sister, parents and brother-in-law's family also live in the Phoenix area.

"It's nice to have such a supportive crew around us," Sarah said.

In her spare time, she enjoys getting crafty with her Cricut machine and relaxing with her family.

# Meet ALEJANDRA LOPEZ

The Administrative Assistant to Dr. Rosalva Lagunas, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Alejandra joined the Tolleson Union High School District at the beginning of this school year. Alejandra is no stranger to education. She brings extensive experience in education from her seven-year tenure at the Glendale Elementary School District. Her career began in the Preschool Department, after which she transitioned to the Business and Finance Department, eventually advancing to the position of Payroll Supervisor.



**“Everyone is so welcoming and nice! It's been great meeting everyone. I have really enjoyed learning about curriculum and how a high school district functions,” Alejandra said**”



An Arizona native, Alejandra grew up in Phoenix and currently resides in Glendale.

She is the mother of two boys, ages 11 and 12, and proudly identifies as a football mom.

Her hobbies include hiking and various sports activities. Having grown up watching baseball, it remains her favorite sport. She enthusiastically supports the Arizona Diamondbacks and roots for all local teams.

**We are pleased to have you with us,  
Alejandra. Welcome to the TUHSD Team!**



# Meet SOPHIA QUIROZ

Sophia Quiroz is no stranger to the district. But, she is new to the district office. Having worked for TUHSD for 13 years, Sophia traces her start with Tolleson as a Guidance Clerk at Copper Canyon High School. She then became Bookstore manager at Sierra Linda High School. From there, she became the Administrative Assistant to the Principal at Westview High School, something she says was a very special opportunity as two of her children were attending Westview at the time. Now, Sophia is excited to be a Budget Analyst for Business Services at the district office.



"I appreciate that the district truly cares for our students and the community," said Sophia. "I've been a parent of district students, and you can truly feel the attention and support provided to students and families. The teachers and faculty have been instrumental in my own children's education and success."

Sophia added that during her time with the district, she has met many warm, kind, and caring people. "I feel that this speaks to the warm and positive culture of TUHSD."

Sophia said she loves that the district gives all employees the opportunity to grow and learn in their professional development.

Sophia is a proud Arizona native, and currently lives in Goodyear. She adds that she grew up in West Phoenix, where she attended Trevor G. Browne High School.

"I have three amazing children, Marisa, Juan, and Aliyah," said Sophia. "They are my world, and they can always make me smile. I also have my dog, Emmy, who makes us laugh and brightens up my day."

Sophia added that she has been married to her high school sweetheart, John, for 27 years.

Outside of work, Sophia really enjoys interior design.

"I love browsing home décor stores and putting together beautiful and cozy spaces in my home," she said.

Sophia added that some of her favorite days are spent watching romantic comedies, having dance parties and being with her family.

"My favorite place to visit is the beach to enjoy the ocean views and lounge on the sand," said Sophia. "I am happy to have joined the District Office team and aspire to bring a positive impact to this new role."

**We're happy to have you, Sophia.  
Welcome to the District Office!**



# Meet Loren Sanabria

Meet Loren Sanabria. She is new to the district. She started her tenure at the District Office on November 6, 2024. Loren is the new Administrative Assistant to Ms. Joyce Council, Director of Business Services at the District Office.

This is Loren's first time working in our district. Previously, she had worked in the automotive industry for 11 years prior to coming on board.

**"I am really enjoying the culture here," said Loren. "I am noticing that everyone here likes to look out for one another, almost like a family, and everyone is very helpful. I am enjoying coming to work to a positive environment. It is different from any other place I have worked. Everyone is very welcoming and helpful."**



Loren currently lives in Goodyear. "I have always lived in the West Valley," said Loren. "I was born in California, but I was raised in Phoenix."

As for family, Loren says she has a "wonderful son," who is 11 years old. Loren also adds that she is a fellow Tolleson Wolverine.

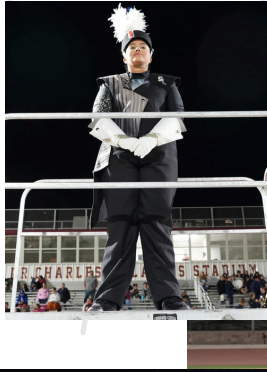
"I went to Tolleson Union High School," said Loren. "I was in JAG (Jobs for Arizona Graduates) and I really enjoyed going to school. I am always willing to help and learn as much as I can to be a great asset to my fellow coworkers."

**We're happy that you are here Loren.  
Welcome to the TUHSD Team!**

The Tolleson Union High School District's annual marching band festival is a vibrant celebration of musical talent and community spirit. Unlike traditional competitions, this event is purely an exhibition, allowing students from our schools to showcase their hard work and creativity without the pressure of scoring.

TOLLESON UNION  
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MARCHING BAND FESTIVAL  
2024

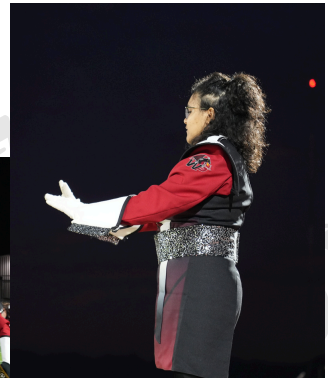
Each performance is a unique expression of the students' dedication and passion for music, creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual appreciation. This photo essay captures the energy, enthusiasm, and artistry that make this festival a highlight of the school year.



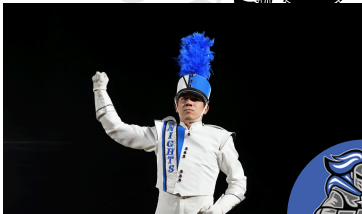
"HOW TO SURVIVE A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE"



"CLEOPATRA"



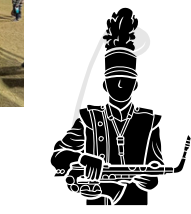
"EVOLVING ECHOES:  
NATURE'S TIMELESS  
TRANSFORMATION"



"INDRA'S WRATH"



"VENGEANCE"



A big shoutout and congratulations to Sierra Linda for placing 3rd at AZMBA Championships this season!

And a HUGE shoutout and thank you to our band directors, band staff, and band boosters for making this possible for the students!



**TUHSD**

# IN THE NEWS

Take a look at some of the positive news stories on local media in recent months involving our schools and our district.

**TOLLESON HIGH SCHOOLS LOOKING TO HIRE 40 BUS DRIVERS**



**COPPER CANYON OL JOHN-ALEXANDER LOPEZ MAKES SCHOOL HISTORY SIGNING WITH NAU**



**ARIZONA LOST HALF OF THEIR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS DURING THE PANDEMIC. DISTRICT OFFICIALS HOPE THE PAY AND BENEFITS WILL HELP BRING THEM BACK.**

**ARIZONA HAS A SHORTAGE OF BUS DRIVERS; TOLLESON UNION HOPES TO HIRE 40 OF THEM**



**ARIZONA HS TRACK AND FIELD 2025 COMMITMENT LIST: COPPER CANYON JUMPER TO OKLAHOMA**



**ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS SELECTED BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PARTICIPATE IN 2025-26 FAFSA BETA TESTING**





Tolleson Union High School District invites students, faculty, and community members to pitch the stories they want to see through the new "Got News?" button on our website. This feature creates a direct connection between you and our communications team, ensuring they highlight content that matters most. By receiving news submissions, the Public Relations Department can share a wider variety of inspiring and important stories throughout the district.

With seven schools, there is no shortage of compelling news to cover. The "Got News?" button helps bring our community closer by strengthening the connection between our schools, students, and residents, allowing everyone to share in the district's successes and achievements. Submit your story ideas today and help shape the future of our news coverage!

The Got News? submission form is located at [www.tuhsd.org/public-relations](http://www.tuhsd.org/public-relations)

## Got News to Share?

We'd love to hear! Click the "Got News" button to send us the information.

Got News



@tuhsd214



430 likes

An amazing performance from everyone who participated at West Point's pep rally!

#highschool #school #homecoming #peprally #fyp #explore #fyp



430 likes



175 likes

# SOCIAL MEDIA Recap



@tuhsd214



1,437 likes

It's back and forth between @tolleson\_girlsflagfootball and @wvknightsff! The first half has concluded and the Wolverines are up 24-13!



525 likes



1,144 likes



# EXCELLENCE IN EVERY ENDEAVOR



**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL**



**EDITED BY:**

JOSEPH ORTIZ

Director of Public Relations and Marketing

SARA CLAWSON

Public Relations/Marketing Specialist

AUDREY HERNANDEZ

Visual Communication Specialist

KILLIAN DAVIES

Video Production Specialist

**INTERNS:**

ANTHONY SANCHEZ

MARCUS LOPEZ