

NEWS & VIEWS

FALL 2024

A RATED ALL TVUSD SCHOOLS

CREATIVITY AND GROWTH

Artistic offerings throughout TVUSD schools connect students through expression.

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

After school Odyssey of the Mind extends STEAM learning for students at the elementary schools.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Special reprint from the Arizona Daily Star on Bailey Bish, U.S. Adaptive Open Champion



Photos by Andy Morales



OUTSIDE THE LINES

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Tanque Verde Community,

As the new school year unfolds, we are energized by the excitement, anticipation, and sense of new beginnings shared by our students, staff, and families. The Governing Board is actively engaged in refining district goals for the year, taking thoughtful steps to build upon the successes of last year's strategic plan. We are in the process of setting objectives, with a clear focus on key initiatives that will drive continued growth and excellence within our district.

At the heart of our efforts is our focus on the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) statement. Our Mission, Vision and Values serves as the foundation of our commitment to academic excellence and integrity, guiding our goals, decision-making, and future planning for the entire school community. These important principles shape our purpose and are integral to the district's ongoing success.

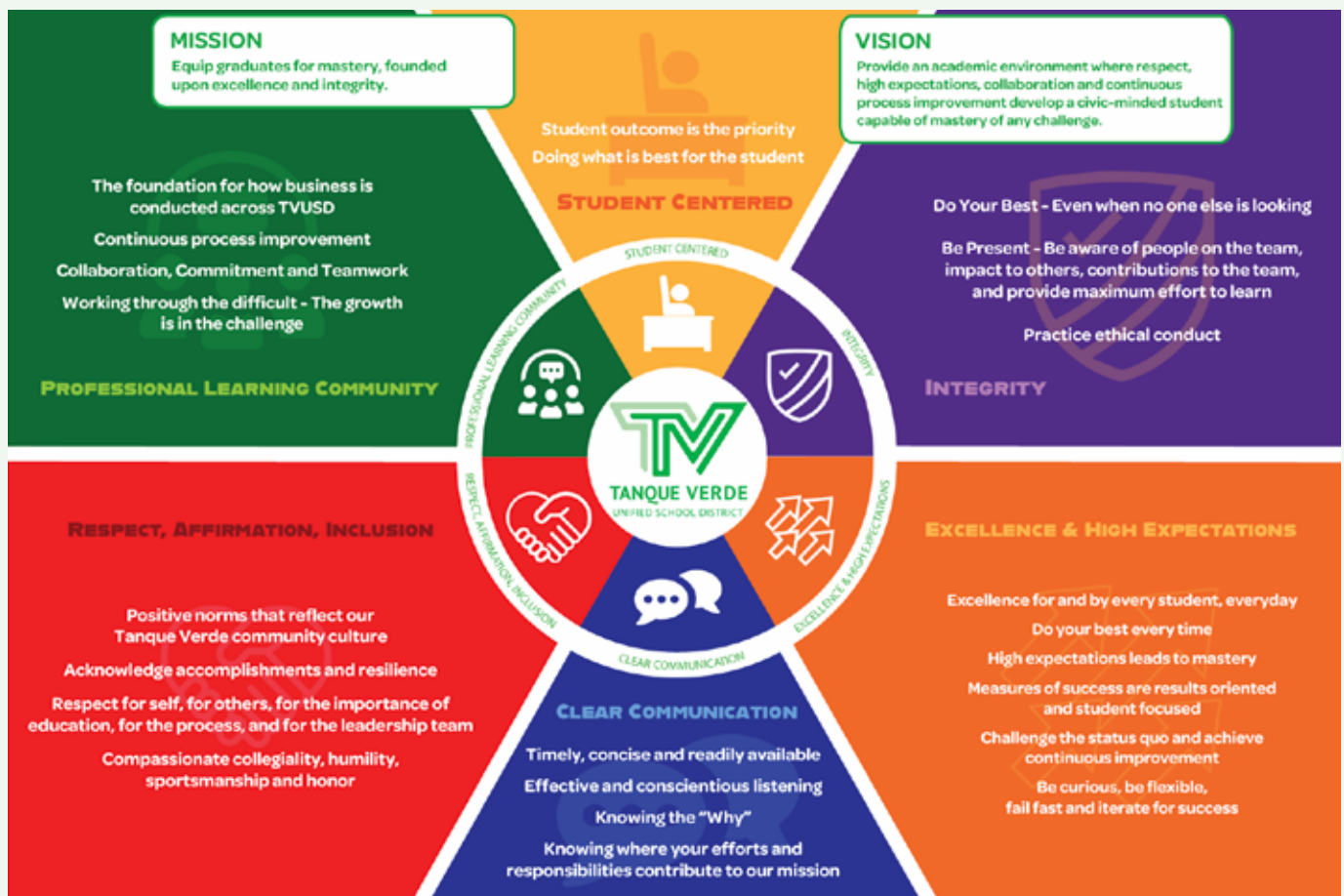


The development of this year's strategic plan and district goals began during our board retreat in August. Discussions from the retreat, along with insights gathered from our bi-monthly meetings, have allowed us to highlight and celebrate the remarkable work of our dedicated educators and staff. We anticipate sharing a draft of the new plan at our meeting on September 25th, with the final approval of the 2024-25 District Goals and Strategic Plan expected in October.

We invite our school community to explore the core elements of our Mission, Vision, and Values, now displayed in our schools and district offices, as well as in the vibrant graphic below. Together, let's embark on another year of excellence, integrity, and achievement.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our shared vision of excellence and integrity.

Sincerely,
Beth Petersen, President



SUPERINTENDENT SCOTT HAGERMAN UPDATE

HONORING EXCELLENCE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Dear Tanque Verde Community,

As we reflect on the past year, it is with pride and gratitude that I share the remarkable achievements of Tanque Verde Unified School District (TVUSD). This year has been exceptional for our district, marked by outstanding accomplishments that underscore our commitment to excellence in education.

A-Rated Schools: A Testament to Our Collective Efforts

For the second consecutive year, every school in TVUSD has earned an "A" letter grade from the Arizona Department of Education. This distinction is a testament to the hard work of our students, families, and dedicated staff. Our schools—Agua Caliente Elementary, Tanque Verde Elementary, Emily Gray Junior High, and Tanque Verde High—have demonstrated exceptional performance, reflecting our core values of excellence and integrity.

The A-F School Letter Grades system evaluates schools based on academic growth, proficiency in core subjects like English language arts, math, and science, and readiness indicators for college and careers. Our consistent "A" ratings affirm that we are providing a top-notch educational environment where every student can thrive.

Advancing Student Achievement

Our commitment to academic excellence is further highlighted by several key achievements:

1. **Third-Grade Reading Proficiency:** Despite the challenges of the pandemic, both Agua Caliente and Tanque Verde Elementary Schools have shown significant growth in third-grade reading proficiency. Agua Caliente's passing rate surged by 25 percentage points, while Tanque Verde Elementary saw a 15-point increase. These gains reflect our strategic efforts in collaborative teaching, data-driven instruction, and re-engagement of students and families.
2. **Advanced Placement (AP) Success:** In 2023, TVUSD was recognized with a Silver Award on the AP School Honor Roll. This accolade celebrates our district's efforts to broaden access to AP courses while maintaining or improving the success rates of our students. Our commitment to equitable access to advanced coursework ensures that all students have the opportunity to excel.

Honoring Excellence Beyond the Classroom

Our students and staff continue to shine in various arenas:

Tanque Verde High School earned notable rankings in the 2024 U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools, underscoring our dedication to high academic standards. Additionally, Finn

McGill, a sophomore at Tanque Verde High, has been named a finalist for the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) with his innovative project, A-BiRD, which advances bird research through automated recognition technology.



Emily Gray Junior High School

has sustained its excellence with top honors at the Southern Arizona Research, Science, and Engineering Foundation (SARSEF) Fair for five consecutive years. Our junior high continues to demonstrate its academic prowess through exceptional science projects and a strong focus on mathematics, which has been showcased in the 2023 Solution Tree case study.

Our **Bobcat Athletic Teams** have also made us proud.

Emily Gray's teams secured first-place finishes in baseball, softball, girl's soccer, girl's cross country, flag football, and boys basketball in 2023-24 SY. These victories highlight the dedication and talent of our student-athletes and coaches.

Fiscal Responsibility and Recognition

Maintaining fiscal responsibility is crucial to our mission, and TVUSD has excelled in this area as well. We have received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for 29 consecutive years. This recognition is a testament to our commitment to transparency and effective financial management.

A Look Ahead

As we celebrate these accomplishments, we remain focused on our mission to provide a high-quality education for every student, every day. The dedication of our teachers, the support of our families, and the enthusiasm of our students continue to drive our success.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Tanque Verde Unified School District community. Together, we look forward to continuing this journey of excellence and making even greater strides in the coming years.

All my best,

Scott Hagerman
Superintendent



STUDENTS “STEAM” AHEAD

This year, TVUSD is excited to announce the integration of STEAM classes at the elementary level. STEAM is a teaching approach to inquiry based learning that integrates the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. Led by instructors, Dr. Maggie Dominguez (ACES) and Mrs. Lisa Nielsen (TVES), the STEAM lessons encourage students to work through problems, take thoughtful risks, engage in hypotheticals, persevere through trial and error and welcome collaboration.

“Our goal for adding the STEAM curriculum is to teach 21st Century Skills through a problem-based learning (PBL) approach while building a culture of STEAM in our community where everyone belongs’ explains Ms. Nielsen.

Building on the interest from the STEAM classes, the elementary schools have also launched their first ever after school Odyssey of the Mind Teams. Odyssey of the Mind (OM or OotM) is an international program that teaches students creative problem-solving, teamwork, and performance skills through competition. Teams then develop solutions and present them at competitions on the local, state, and world levels.

OM competitions consist of two primary challenges: the Long-Term Project and Spontaneous Problems. Long-Term Projects are intricate problems that teams

work on for months, culminating in a performance at the tournament. Teams might be tasked with problems that are solved through designing and operating a vehicle, constructing a structure that can bear weight, and creating an elaborate skit that addresses a specific theme.

With strict rules and a limited budget, students must be resourceful, often constructing costumes and sets without any outside assistance. The presentation of their solutions and scripted performance is judged on creativity, technical skill, and adherence to the problem's criteria.





In contrast to long-term projects, spontaneous problems require quick thinking and teamwork. These challenges are presented to the teams on the spot during the tournament, with just a few minutes to devise and execute a solution. Spontaneous problems can be verbal, hands-on, or a combination of both, and they test the team's ability to think under pressure and work cohesively.

Both Agua Caliente and Tanque Verde Elementary Schools are forming Primary K-2 grade OM teams, and Secondary 3-6 grade OM teams. Dr. Dominguez and Ms. Nielsen are the district coordinators for the Tanque Verde teams and anticipate participating in the regional tournament in January and the state competition in March.

"One of the most inspiring aspects of OM is the glimpse it provides into the minds of the next generation," said Dr. Dominguez. "The OM competitions are a showcase of what young minds can achieve when given the freedom and confidence to explore, experiment, and take risks. Not only do these students develop valuable skills but also build lasting memories and friendships."

As with any new program, there are some immediate needs. Dr. Dominguez and Mrs. Nielsen are actively recruiting students to join their after school Odyssey of the Mind Teams and Coaches for each team. Coaches can be teachers, parents, relatives, community members or friends ... anyone with a passion for supporting students. Coaching an OM team is a unique experience as coaches are not just mentors; they are facilitators who guide students through the problem-solving process, ensuring that the solutions are entirely student-driven. The goal is to empower students to take ownership of their work and develop the skills they need to work through complex problems.

The skills and strategies mastered in STEAM classes and Odyssey of the Mind are critical components for the 21st century learner. "Odyssey of the Mind drives students to develop and use their natural creativity to become problem-solvers; and that is exactly what STEAM is all about", said Ms. Ms. Nielsen. The challenges, problems and teamwork involved, serves to shape the young minds, and prepare them to tackle the complexities of the real world with creativity, resilience, and optimism.

For more information about STEAM or Odyssey of the Mind, contact Dr. Maggie Dominguez at mdominguez@tanqu.org or Mrs. Lisa Nielsen at lnielsen@tanq.org.



ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

is made possible by volunteers like you

**ACES and TVES need
Coaches and Judges for the
OM teams.**

Register to volunteer today !

Please, contact our OM Coordinators
Dr. Maggie Dominguez (ACES) at
mdominguez@tanqu.org or Mrs. Lisa
Nielsen (TVES) at lnielsen@tanq.org.





ARTS EDUCATION FLOURISHES

The Tanque Verde Unified School District has long been a champion of the visual arts, providing students and the adult community with numerous opportunities to explore their creativity and showcase their talents.

Through a variety of events, programs, and projects our dedicated cohort of art teachers, Ms. Michelle O'Donnell (TVES), Ms. Shannon Jefferery (ACES), Ms. Alicia Marrano (EGJH), Ms. Emma Kageyama and Sedona Heidinger (TVHS) plan and develop curriculum and events which serve to enrich the educational experience and foster a deep connection between the schools and the community.

With an emphasis on expressing art using the creative process, students from preschool to twelfth grade learn fundamental techniques of drawing, painting, 3D, printmaking, collage, sculpture and fiber arts scaffolding skills to prepare for the next level.

Elementary grade students rotate through art classes once a week where skills from core subjects are used in expressive efforts. The results are cross curricular projects that align with literature standards and science standards.

"Dot Day, inspired by Peter H. Reynolds' book *The Dot*, is an annual event at Tanque Verde Elementary," said Ms. O'Donnell. This year Ms. O'Donnell integrated the "Dot Day" art project with the school theme "Better Together".

Each creation of concentric circles was pieced together in a school mural, symbolizing unity and collaboration.

At Emily Gray, Ms. Marrano teaches art, advanced art and in response to recent years has added an animation class. In Ms. Marrano's animation classes characters jump to life through student stop-motion animation and flipbook creations.

Powered by grant funded iPads, coursework highlights where students can bridge curriculum from their math courses with artistic efforts to figure out how to calculate frame rates for desired effects.

Tanque Verde High School offers a robust art curriculum designed to cater to students at various levels of expertise and interest, including an AP Art History class. The traditional sequence of Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Art classes build on the art skills from the years before and explore the use of various media and techniques to create and innovate.

The AP Art course challenges students to develop a portfolio that demonstrates their artistic skills and conceptual understanding aligned with the AP Standards.

To showcase our student's creativity, our Art Teachers host several events that bring students, teachers, and the community together to celebrate artistic expression. The Annual School and District Art Shows highlight the



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incredible talents of students from all grade levels, displaying a wide array of art forms, from paintings and sculptures to digital art and mixed media.

The Chalk Art Marathon is a favorite among TVES students and school community, inspiring young artists with their sidewalk masterpieces. This year the Chalk Art Marathon will go district wide with all district schools participating.

Maintaining a comprehensive Art Program for all students, pre-K through 12 grade has set the Tanque Verde schools apart from those who have had to reduce or cut their art programs altogether. TVUSD's art programs are a testament to fostering creativity and providing students with the tools they need to express themselves. Through talented teachers, showcase events, legacy projects, and innovative classes, TVUSD is dedicated to nurturing the artistic talents of its students, leaving a lasting impact on their path forward.





HAWK PRIDE ON & OFF THE FIELD

As Tanque Verde High School (TVHS) embarks on its 20th year, there is much to celebrate and reflect upon. From humble beginnings with a graduating class of just 25 students in 2008, the high school, housed on a campus designed for the junior high, the high school has grown and outgrown itself, surpassing all expectations. Today, Tanque Verde High School boasts a thriving student body with a current enrollment of over 750 students, 100% graduation rate in 2023, and a diverse offering of over 40 courses that establish clear college, career, and technical pathways for all students.

Tanque Verde High School is a vibrant community of young adults who are encouraged to explore their interests and talents beyond the classroom. The school offers over 25 student clubs and 16 different athletic teams, providing a myriad of choices for students to pursue extracurricular activities. These opportunities play a pivotal role in shaping the school's culture, fostering school spirit, and building a sense of community among students.

"Hawk Pride" is deeply rooted in the school culture, in particular with the

Athletic programs. Over 47% of the student body participates in one or more sports, making it the cornerstone of student life.

Among the 16 sports offered, TVHS teams have claimed many State and Regional Titles, with most teams competing in State competitions at various levels each year.

However, beyond the accolades, the most meaningful contribution of TVHS athletics may be how its student-athletes have helped establish cherished school traditions over the last 20 years. Homecoming, Spirit Weeks, and a strong commitment to community service are just a few examples of how athletic programs help to shape the legacy for future students.

Building on this commitment to service, "Outside the Lines," is a student-athlete club led by advisor and mentor Mr. Gary Lewis. The club is dedicated to helping student-athletes develop skills and values that extend beyond the playing field. "Recognizing that high school may be the final opportunity for many students to compete in organized sports, "Outside

the Lines" aims to prepare them for life after athletics by encouraging community involvement and personal growth", explained Mr. Lewis.

Members of "Outside the Lines" have volunteered in numerous service projects, contributing to both their school and the wider community. Recently, the group was inspired by a talk from Jimmy Hart, who emphasized the importance of demonstrating the "8 Habits of the Heart" and looking beyond their immediate surroundings and engaging with the broader world. This program is a testament to TVHS's commitment to developing well-rounded individuals who are ready to make a positive impact, both locally and globally.

Thanks to the successful 2020 bond initiative, Tanque Verde High School has expanded its facilities to better accommodate its growing student population and diverse programs. The school added 19,000 square feet of classroom space and expanded its north end to include a working barn and stables, further enhancing its educational offerings.



In line with the growth in student population, the growth in programs like athletics, marching band, and performing arts has the district researching more physical expansions. The High School hopes to build a track for the track team, add tennis courts and, with the growing interest in Band, Choir and Theater, there is a need for a dedicated Performing Arts Building as well. "Imagine a campus that not only served their students but was an example for how to also serve the community", suggested TVHS Principal Amy Cislak.

"The proposed upgrades would benefit the broader community and the school would become a community hub that hosts community leagues, fitness programs, and larger events like graduation and concerts".





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Dogged determination



JEFF HAYNES, USGA

Tucson's Bailey Bish, left, plays a shot on the eighth hole as caddie Susie Meyers looks on during the first round of the 2024 U.S. Adaptive Open at Sand Creek Station in Newton, Kansas, on July 8.

Tucsonan Bailey Bish found hope, purpose in golf. Today, she's the '24 U.S. Adaptive Open champion

Three years ago, Bailey Bish barely could complete nine holes of golf.

Six weeks ago, the Tucsonan won the 54-hole U.S. Adaptive Open. How's that for a how it started/how it's going?



MICHAEL LEV

The challenges Bish, a 24-year-old graduate of Tanque Verde High School and Pima Community College, faces every day would crush a lesser person.

It's hard to comprehend and contextualize everything she endures on a daily basis — never mind playing golf at a championship level. But we're going to try.

Difficult-to-control muscle spasms, frequent fainting, erratic vision ... it's a lot. Bish wouldn't let any of it break her. She had goals to achieve. Still does.

Winning the U.S. Adaptive Open is one she can check off the list. The national golf championship for players with disabilities has been around for three years. Competing in the Neurological Impairment category, Bish qualified for the first

time last year and finished third. She won it this year, going wire to wire, from July 8-10 at Sand Creek Station in Newton, Kansas.

"We're just so proud of all the hard work and determination that she put in," said Helena Bish, Bailey's mother. "What she had to go through to achieve this goal and the physical challenges she had to overcome."

Helena would know. She's been at Bailey's side for every step — even if, at times, it's been one forward and two back.

Please see LEV, Page A10

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TVHS Step Up Day '24



ARE YOU READY TO BE A HAWK AND FLY WITH US?

#HAWK YEAH! REGISTER HERE:

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/HAWKSTEPUP2024](https://tinyurl.com/hawkstepup2024)

DECEMBER 6, 2024, 9:30AM-12PM

TANQUE VERDE HIGH SCHOOL



ARTS Events

TVUSD Art Chalk Marathon

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

All schools participating

District Art Showcase

Wednesday, April 23, 2025





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