

# NEWS & VIEWS

SPRING 2024

## A RATED ALL TVUSD SCHOOLS

### FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

Superintendent announces  
stable budget in light of  
ESSER Funds Expiring

### PRE-K TO SENIOR YEARS

Education and Enrichment for  
children, families and adults in  
the Tanque Verde Community

### TANQUE VERDE FOUNDATION

How the collective  
Tanque Verde community  
supports student learning  
opportunities



PERFORMING  
ARTS TAKE  
CENTER STAGE

[WWW.TANQUEVERDESCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.TANQUEVERDESCHOOLS.ORG)

# A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As discussed at our February 21st Governing Board Meeting, Board Clerk Ms. Anne Velosa and I recently attended the Summit on Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with a group of teachers and site leaders. As the Governing Board President, it has been incredibly enlightening to better understand the work our district is doing in alignment of our Mission, Vision and Values. In addition, several of the board members, myself included, have visited our district schools and observed our teacher teams in action during their weekly PLC meetings. I am proud of the incredible work of our teachers, site leaders, and administration to ensure student learning at the highest levels.



I want to take the opportunity here for potentially a wider audience to reiterate what Ms. Velosa and I shared at that February 21st meeting.

- We are the PLC: Each of us in the district collaborate to focus on student learning. This is our work - TVUSD is all in, today and in the future.
- We have a moral imperative to do this work - "We can't not do this.": This PLC Summit highlighted the need of ensuring high levels of student learning.
- The PLC process is science and evidence based: Various studies support the practices and successes of the PLC process.
- Transformed people transform: The PLC work is transformational and happens at all levels of the community from the superintendent, site leaders, and teachers.
- Professional learning community: Teachers are professional - teaching without student learning is just presenting! Keep in mind students have been learning since they were six years old, and the average teacher was a good student - teachers have to employ interesting lessons for high student engagement.
- Wellness for Staff and Teachers: We've discussed the whole student in the past, wellness is just as important for teachers and staff for high engagement.
- Embedding extensions in Tier 1 teaching: Including deep thinking and learning in regular unit lessons provides opportunities for all students to learn at high levels.
- Things to remember about Students: Having students take ownership of their learning is an important aspect of their growth and development into adults and citizens.

Personally, beyond gaining knowledge at the Summit to support our district initiatives, one of my favorite take-aways is that teaching without student learning is just presenting. Professionally, as part of my career, I frequently present. The Summit has changed my perception and helped me understand the value of presenting with the intention of learning. It is not enough to have all the facts and figures to share if my audience is not learning in the process. I too need to be a teacher. And whereas I can only aspire to the level of skill, knowledge, and expertise of our impressive TVUSD professionals, I am reminded that I too can always learn and grow my skills.

I appreciate that our district is modeling a growth mindset and giving our professionals the skills, time, and support for "PLCs at Work" to benefit our student learning so that indeed we have equipped our graduates for mastery, founded upon excellence and integrity.

Sincerely,

Beth Peterson, TVUSD President



## SUPERINTENDENT SCOTT HAGERMAN UPDATE

# STABLE BUDGET MAKES WAY FOR CONTINUOUS GROWTH

I hope this message finds you in good health. As we continue to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of education in the aftermath of the pandemic, I am writing to provide you with an update on how the Tanque Verde Unified School District (TVUSD) has utilized the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, commonly known as COVID dollars, and to shed light on the potential impact of the end of these funds on our district.

**ALLOCATION OF ESSER FUNDS:**

ESSER 1: \$75,949.69 (Project Dates: 3/13/2020-9/30/2022)

Utilized for:

- Online learning platform
- Trust Covid insurance
- Nursing coordinators

ESSER 2: \$183,402.30 (Project Dates: 03/13/2021-09/30/2023)

Utilized for:

- Full-day kindergarten

ESSER 3: \$959,225.45 (Project Dates: 07/13/2021-09/30/2024)

Utilized for:

- Flex teachers for 2021 summer school
- Dean of Students at Emily Gray Junior High
- College and career readiness counselor at Tanque Verde High School
- Improving security on school campuses
- Chromebooks
- Replacing HVAC systems

Total ESSER Funds Utilized: \$1,218,577.44

**POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR TVUSD:**

Stanford and Harvard University's Education Recovery Score Card, examining the period between 2019 and 2022, revealed that the majority of students across the nation experienced significant learning loss due to the challenges presented by the pandemic. However, I am proud to announce Tanque Verde Unified School District is one of only 3% of school districts nationwide that accomplished an increase in learning rates during this time period in both Math and ELA.

**CASE STUDIES HIGHLIGHTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS:***Solution Tree Evidence of Effectiveness:*

The Solution Tree Evidence of Effectiveness catalog highlights the outstanding work of Emily Gray Junior High's math team in elevating student learning levels in mathematics. This accomplishment speaks volumes about the dedication and effectiveness of our educators.

*Read on Arizona*

In collaboration with Read On Arizona, we've seen exceptional progress in 3rd-grade reading scores at Tanque Verde and Agua Caliente Elementary Schools. These case studies provide insights into our commitment to literacy and academic excellence.



As quoted from the case study, "On average, third grade reading proficiency among Arizona public and charter schools declined by 5 percentage points between 2019 and 2022. Remarkably, both of Tanque Verde Unified School District's elementary schools showed significant increases over the same period, soaring to levels of student achievement even higher than their pre-pandemic rates."

**ACKNOWLEDGING THE COLLECTIVE EFFORT:**

The positive outcomes highlighted in the research would not have been possible without the collective effort of everyone involved in the education journey of our students. Teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and community members all played crucial roles in creating an environment that fosters learning and resilience.

**ESSER FUNDS AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS:**

The prudent use of ESSER funds played a pivotal role in supporting our students during these challenging times. Investments in safety measures, technological advancements, and academic support programs have contributed to the positive outcomes observed in the research findings.

**LOOKING FORWARD:**

As we celebrate these achievements, it is essential to acknowledge that our journey is ongoing. While the ESSER funds have been instrumental, we must continue to adapt, innovate, and work collaboratively to ensure the sustained success of our students. Your continued support and engagement in the educational process are crucial as we navigate the path forward.

I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished together as a community. Let us use these positive outcomes as inspiration to continue striving for excellence in education and fostering an environment where every student can thrive.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the success of the Tanque Verde Unified School District.



# INVESTING IN EARLY EDUCATION

The preschool options in the Tanque Verde Valley have undergone a transformation in recent years, with the opening of the Tanque Verde Community Preschool. Initially the preschools in the area were private or run by a 3rd party contractor on the school site. In 2018, spearheaded by the leadership and advocacy of former Governing Board member Susan Fry, the Tanque Verde Community Preschool officially became a district-supported program, proudly offering education from PreK to 12th grade within the Tanque Verde Unified School District.

Preschool Director, Kristen Kvaran explains, "The Tanque Verde Preschool curriculum places a strong emphasis on child-driven learning, where play serves as a cornerstone of the educational journey. Units and lesson plans are crafted to foster active exploration and discovery. This approach ensures the learning is not only engaging but also tailored to the unique interests and abilities of each child".

Authentic projects, like the quilt-making project is just one example. Ms. Kvaran vividly retells how the project was sparked by a conversation between the children and the teacher about the weather turning cold and keeping warm, which then led to the topic of blankets and quilts.

Taking the children's lead and connecting classroom topics with real-life experiences, the teacher brought



in fabric and blankets the next day so the children could feel textures, look for patterns and discuss fibers. From there the quilt-making project was hatched. The children began planning, measuring, cutting, designing, decorating quilt squares, all resulting in tangible outcome of a class-made quilt.

Tanque Verde Preschool is thriving, so much so, the Preschool is excited to announce two recent developments. In 2021 Ms. Kvaran spearheaded the effort to expand the playground through a grant application. Once awarded the grant Ms. Kvaran, in child-center fashion, sought input from the children about their new playground. From drawings and clay models, the children became an integral part of the design. Just installed this Fall, the new Preschool playground



serves as a natural extension of the classroom, and furthers enhances the opportunities for play-based learning.

Additionally, the Preschool is excited to announce they will be offering more full-day preschool opportunities in the 2024-25 school year in response to the evolving needs of our families. The full-day options provide families with greater flexibility and support and increase opportunities to deliver high-quality early childhood education in the community.

With an award winning staff including Director Ms. Kvaran, the 2021 Raytheon Teacher of the Year and 2021 United Way Literacy Champion, and Natalea Lusk and Becky Kopiec, 2022 Camp Cooper 100 Outstanding teachers in Tucson, the District is committed surrounding our youngest learners with a well trained staff. The growth and progress of the Tanque Verde Community Preschool is a testament to the collaborative efforts of educators, administrators, and families working together to serving all children in a nurturing and enriching environment where children are competent and capable learners.



Register today!

# TANQUE VERDE COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

[tves.tanqueverdeschools.org/preschool](https://tves.tanqueverdeschools.org/preschool)



Call (520) 749-4244 ext 3080 to schedule a tour today.



## UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES SUCCESSFUL ADULT EDUCATION

The Lew Sorensen Community Center in the Tanque Verde School District represents a valued partnership in our Tanque Verde Valley. It has come to symbolize the collaborative spirit of the district and our community by providing the space and opportunity for all learners of all ages to explore their creative passions and cultivate new skills.

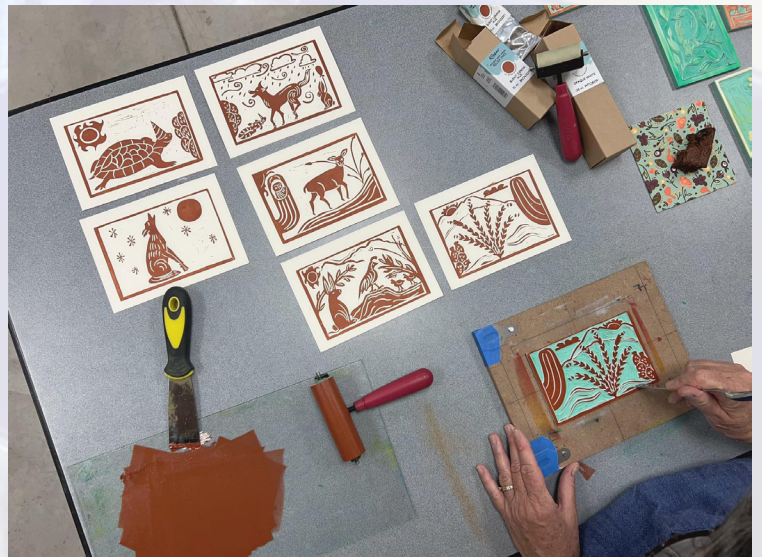
Named in honor of esteemed educator Lew Sorensen (1936-2005), who dedicated 38 years to Tucson schools as a teacher, principal, and superintendent for districts such as Sunnyside, Catalina Foothills, and Tanque Verde, the Community Center stands as a testament the long standing partners between TVUSD and Pima County which started back in the day with Tanque Verde Antique Fair.

The Center's beloved arts and craft program, once overseen by Pima County at the old Tanque Verde Elementary School, faced closure in 2009 due to budget constraints. However, TVUSD stepped in, honoring a commitment to adult education and structured an upcoming bond for Emily Gray Junior High to include a new building for the center.

The revival of the adult learning program owed much to the dedication of individuals like former TVUSD Governing Board Member Peter Livingston and Superintendent Dr. Doug Price. Mr. Livingston championed the Community Center, highlighting TVUSD's commitment to reciprocating community support. Dr. Price made sure the vision became a reality as he oversaw the project, ensuring the building

and the programs were up and running.

The programs have flourished with the expansion and enhancement of the Center. Honoring the legacy of Program Coordinator Karen Reifschneider, the Center stays committed to offering, staffing and supporting these valued programs for the adult community. From experienced level wheel pottery class, complemented by the addition of a 24-cubic foot gas kiln courtesy of the school district, to the tapestry weaving class and vibrant visual arts programs like drawing with charcoal and printmaking, the Center continues to be the hub for artistic and social engagement.





# PERFORMING ARTS TAKES CENTER STAGE

With a focus on collaboration, retention, and community involvement for continued growth and success, the Performing Arts Programs in the Tanque Verde School District are proudly taking center stage.

## **Band Program:**

Opportunities for band begins as early as 5th grade with instruction for 5th and 6th graders. Both Ben Johnson and Matt Harris serve as the Band instructors for all of our elementary, junior high and high school students. Because of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Harris' commitment, students from 5th grade through high school master the essential skills and with a sequence of instructions that focuses on building fundamentals and skills over time.

One program of note is the progress and achievement for the TVHS Jazz Band. Transitioning from a small ensemble to a full jazz big band with consistent enrollment demonstrates the dedication and hard work of both the students and the music program leadership.

Recently, the TVHS Jazz Band earned its first ever Superior With Distinction rating at the Arizona Band and Orchestra Director's Area Jazz Festival. Considering it's the highest rating possible and requires unanimous agreement from all judges on a virtually flawless performance, we are incredibly proud of this accomplishment.

## **Musical Theater:**

The Musical Theatre program at Emily Gray Junior High has grown from around 20 students to an average of 55 students and demonstrates the program's popularity and the impact it's had on students' interest in theater arts. To accommodate the growing interest, EGJH added separate classes for 7th and 8th graders allowing the program to include performances of both Broadway Jr. one-act musicals and Broadway Musical Revues. Drawing crowds of 600+ attendees between two shows underscores the community's support for the program. Additionally, performing for TVUSD 1st graders not only provides a fun experience but also serves as a valuable outreach effort to inspire younger students.







In addition to adding more Musical Theater classes, EGJH established a Stagecraft class to support the production aspects of the musicals, including set design and stage crew support. Currently over 50 students attend the Stagecraft classes, learning the trade and skills they can continue as they move to the High School. The Musical Theatre opportunities for students offer a pathway for artistic expression, skill development, and unforgettable performances.

#### Orchestra Program:

The elementary-level orchestra program started in 2018 and since then the enrollment has doubled. District administration and elementary school teachers embraced the cohort model in 5th and 6th grades which allowed for orchestra classes twice a week during the school day. With a commitment to early orchestra instruction at the elementary level, the orchestra programs at the Junior High have increased three-fold, with over 50 students participating and three separate classes for novice to advanced.

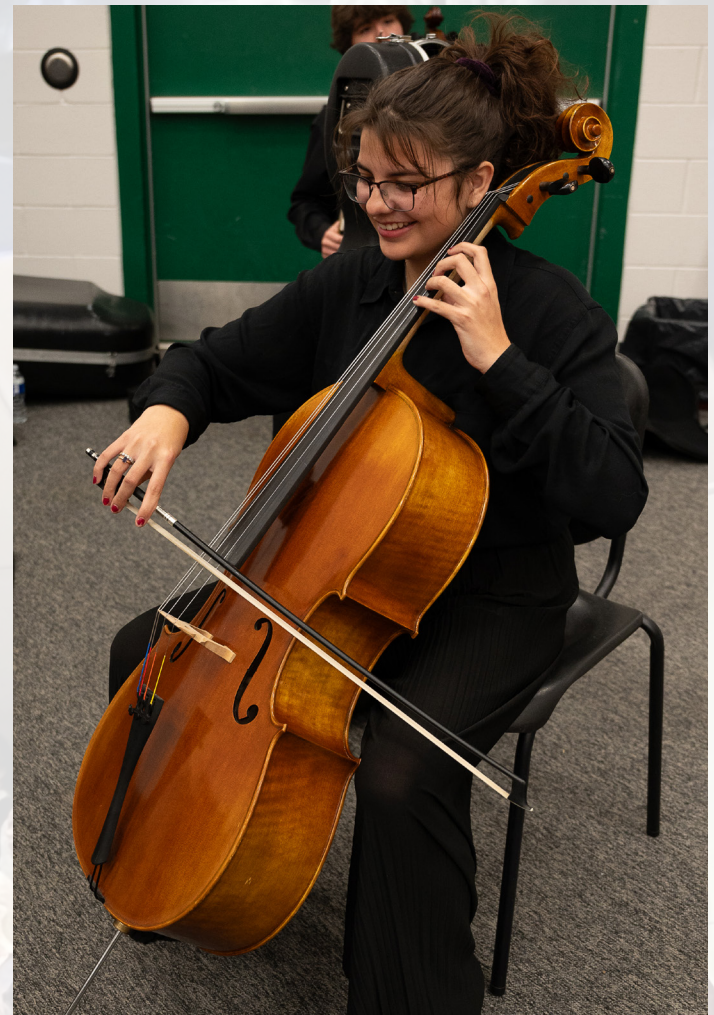
The orchestra programs led by instructors Seth Murzyn and Alicia Hagerman encompass a total of 180 orchestra students districtwide from 5th grade through 12th grade. Mr. Murzyn and Ms. Hagerman collaborate weekly, utilizing the district's Professional Learning Community model to stay aligned and gather feedback for continuous improvement as they support and enrich the orchestra opportunities for our students.

The growth and success of our Performing Arts Programs reflects the talent and skill of the students but also speaks to the high level of instruction and guidance provided by our accomplished teachers and directors.

Community support through attendance at performances, tax credit donations and participation in the Tanque Verde Music Club whether volunteering or supporting their fundraisers are paramount to the continuing success of our programs. As the interest and programs in Performing Arts grows as a whole, we are ever hopeful of a larger performance space on district campus.

Successful programs enhance the reputation of the district but also serve as a source of pride for the entire community. It's a testament to the transformative power of the performing arts education and the positive impact it can have on students' lives.

Together, the community can ensure that the performing arts continue to thrive in the Tanque Verde School District, enriching the lives of students and fostering pride throughout the community.



# TANQUE VERDE FOUNDATION: A CALL TO ACTION



Tanque Verde Schools Educational Enrichment Foundation (TVF) has been an active support arm for the educational mission of the Tanque Verde School Unified District for over 30 years. As a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation, TVF has proudly hosted their popular annual fundraising events the Nerdy Derby and the Taste of Tanque Verde and solicits direct dollar donations, all to raise money to support the Tanque Verde Schools.

TVF works closely with the schools and collaborates with the parent and teacher groups to support the traditions and events at each school. In particular, TVF now oversees Char's Art Fund, a fund started by beloved TVUSD Art Teacher, Charlene Atkinson. What started as a fund for elementary art has grown, and now Char's Art Fund generously supports the visual

art teachers at all four schools.

Recently, the TVF Board voted to adopt a focus statement for their mission. "Our goal in adopting this focus statement is to ensure we are directly impacting student experiences in the full spectrum of their educational career, as flexibly and responsively as possible", said Elizabeth Spilotro, Board President.

TVF will endeavor to deliver a direct positive impact to the educational experience of TVUSD students through (1) increased access to opportunities, (2) targeted responses to unique student challenges, and (3) improved resources and materials used in regular curriculum. The Foundation is committed to providing students and staff with supplemental educational materials and expenses that are

not otherwise covered by the regular district budget.

TVF relies solely on volunteers to support their mission and is currently looking for a Social Media Chair and Liaisons for each of the four schools. Ideally, the Foundation would like to have at least 15 serving members with opportunities to be on the board and on committees for the fundraising events.

The Foundation is grateful for the families and their vital role in our fundraising efforts and

mission to serve the students in the Tanque Verde School. Because of this long standing support, the Foundation has been able to fund requests year after year through the community's kind and generous donations and support for these events.

"The TVF Board is always available and open to discuss ideas and proposals from any staff member at any time. We also welcome any new members to reach out to our board who want to be involved in making our mission happen," encouraged Ms. Spilotro.

## For more information please contact TVF members below:

- Vieri Tenuta, President - [vieri.tenuta@gmail.com](mailto:vieri.tenuta@gmail.com)
- Elizabeth Spilotro, Treasurer - [tanqueverdefoundation@gmail.com](mailto:tanqueverdefoundation@gmail.com)
- Brianna Tenuta, [Brianna.Tenuta@gmail.com](mailto:Brianna.Tenuta@gmail.com)
- Amy Heacock, [amyfitch4@gmail.com](mailto:amyfitch4@gmail.com)
- Patrick Heacock, [shenbodyworks@gmail.com](mailto:shenbodyworks@gmail.com)



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**TANQUE VERDE FOUNDATION**  
Tanque Verde Schools Educational Enrichment Foundation

## HELP WANTED

Did you know ? The Tanque Verde Foundation supports all four TVUSD schools with discretionary grants to meet off-budget needs ... and WE NEED YOU !

Many of our volunteer parents are "graduating" and we need an influx of new board and committee members to keep supporting our teachers and your students. Service on the board is light load with an opportunity to have a say in meeting our community's needs.

**EMAIL US: [TANQUEVERDEFUNDATION@GMAIL.ORG](mailto:TANQUEVERDEFUNDATION@GMAIL.ORG)**



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