

# A Message From Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed. D. Superintendent



Dear Sahuarita Community:

The state of any organization is not determined in isolation, but rather in the context of the broader picture including economics, policy, and political landscapes. Clearly, in our State, many of those dimensions continue to create apprehension and uncertainty about the present and future. However, there are numerous reasons to be encouraged about the state of the Sahuarita Unified School District.

First, the heart of any organization is its people. Our people, throughout the community, continue to be recognized for excellence and achievement. Some of the highlights, over the course of the last year, include:

- Sahuarita Unified School District Governing Board – ASBA Total Board Boardsmanship Award
- Arizona Teacher of the Year Finalist – Ms. Mary McGraw
- Metropolitan Pima Alliance Common Ground Award – SahuaritaWINS!
- Arizona Education Foundation A+ Schools of Excellence - Anza Trail School and Sahuarita Primary School
- Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association (ASPAA), Administrator of the Year – Mr. Scott Downs
- Circle K High School Faculty Program Finalist – Ms. Kristi Lopez, WGHS Faculty Member
- Arizona School Administrators (ASA), All Arizona Superintendent of the Year (Large Districts) – Dr. Manny Valenzuela

The people in our community are creating programs which are delivering exemplary educational opportunities for our students. After the first year of implementation, the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) has yielded amazing results. Over 400 high school students took at least one college level Advanced Placement (AP) course in the 2014-15 School Year. This is double the number from the previous year. Similarly, our two high schools produced 125 qualifying scores, again more than twice the prior year. Our graduating seniors yielded over four million dollars of scholarships for their postsecondary education. New, rigorous, and meaningful programs are being developed, including the new heavy equipment operations program, which was conceptualized and developed through the SahuaritaWins! partnership. We also have a new program in Law and Public Safety. Through SahuaritaWins!, we are currently developing an internship program offering, to support students with authentic field and work experiences prior to graduation from high school. The Reading Foundations Model is solidly in place and supported by high quality and comprehensive professional development. A training partnership with the Rodel Foundation is advancing high quality professional training for elementary teachers to deliver effective and rigorous mathematics instruction. After School learning opportunities have expanded through the Excel<sup>2</sup> 21st Century Learning Center Grant. In partnership with local law enforcement, many of our elementary schools have implemented school safety patrol programs, to support student leadership, pride, service, and personal responsibility. The Concussion Management Protocol, developed by one of our Speech Language Pathologists, Dr. Sarah Dachtyl, is becoming a highly regarded model for managing the effective health and wellness of students pertaining to the management of injuries.

The last year has also yielded many interscholastic accomplishments, including a State Dance Championship (Walden Grove High School), Girls Soccer Title (Walden Grove High School), and a State Runner-up Title in Girls Track (Sahuarita High School). Additionally, our high school bands have both received excellent ratings at the State level, and our NJROTC Program again received an excellent rating in their Area 11 Annual Military Inspection.

We continue to face very real challenges, including the need for concrete and tangible investment to support foreseeable needs for new school construction, building renovation, and other large scale capital investments. We will continue working with the community in strategizing needs and corresponding action steps to continue advancing the SUSD 2020 Directions Plan. The SUSD 2020 Direction Plan has provided us with shared focus and direction. By working as an inclusive community among different sectors, we have succeeded in identifying common interests, and goals. By sharing ideas, resources, and our collective efforts, we have delivered tangible, mutually beneficial outcomes that support alignment and progress in the areas of education, economic development, workforce investment, and overall quality of life. Despite the challenges, together, we will continue to make a difference!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Manuel O. Valenzuela". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is contained within a white rectangular box.

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.  
Superintendent