

TUCSON UNIFIED

SCHOOL DISTRICT



ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT

2024-2025

AUGUST 18, 2025



Human Resources Department

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LET'S GET STARTED!

A YEAR OF RESILIENCE AND GROWTH



Dear Tucson Unified School District Employees and Partners,

Over the past year, we at Tucson Unified have faced significant challenges as we adapt to a changing fiscal landscape. The expiration of federal ESSER funds and a steady decline in student enrollment have led to current and future budget deficits that we must address together. From a Human Resources perspective, the reduction in funding has required us to prioritize our hiring needs. This shift has also allowed us to focus on filling available positions as lower-priority vacant positions have been closed. However, the evolving financial situation has made it more difficult to find resources to raise pay, improve benefits, and recruit for specialized positions that are hard to fill.

This year, we collaborated with other departments to implement a district-wide hiring freeze, aimed at freeing up short-term resources and providing additional time for departments to align their work with next year's budget realities. We anticipate that continued vigilance and collaboration will be necessary in the coming year.

Looking ahead, it is crucial to address the longer-term financial challenges that raise questions about the size of our future workforce and our ability to meet the needs of all our students. We are committed to operating efficiently and participating in future problem-solving efforts, despite the challenges we face in recruitment and retention. We are dedicated to TUSD's vision and mission to serve all students, and we look forward to working together to navigate these financial uncertainties.

JON FERNANDEZ

Chief Human Capital Officer



WHAT WE DO STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



WHO WE ARE WE ARE TUCSON UNIFIED



The Tucson Unified School District is a significant and impactful presence within the city of Tucson. We've been proudly serving Tucson's youth, families, and community since 1867. The district employed 8,367 team members last school year who worked tirelessly to deliver educational services to 40,423 students across 88 school sites and 57 departments.

Thanks to the strong support of our community, our district is implementing a \$480 million school bond program approved back in November 2023 – an incredible investment that will help fund improvements to critical operational needs across our schools. Later this year, TUSD will be seeking voter support again for a \$45 million budget override to help fund compensation and staffing needs. In addition to these financial initiatives, we maintain focus on execution of the Triple Crown curricular initiative, aimed at supporting excellent teaching in all classrooms, resulting in the increased academic growth and proficiency of all students.

QUICK FACTS

40,423
STUDENTS ENROLLED

8,367
DEDICATED EMPLOYEES

88
UNIQUE SCHOOLS

57
SUPPORTING DEPARTMENTS

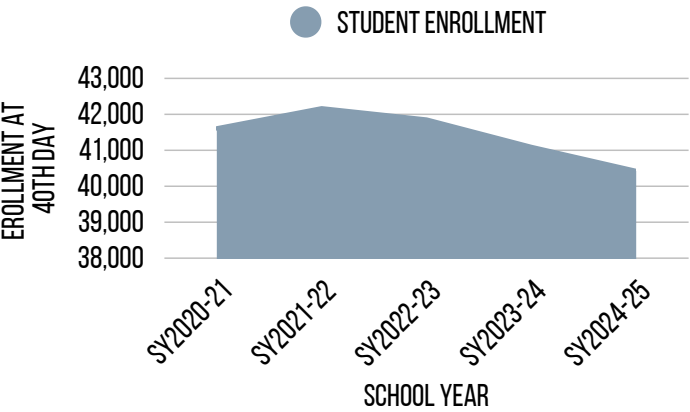


OUR STRENGTH IS OUR PEOPLE

RIISING TO STAFFING CHALLENGES

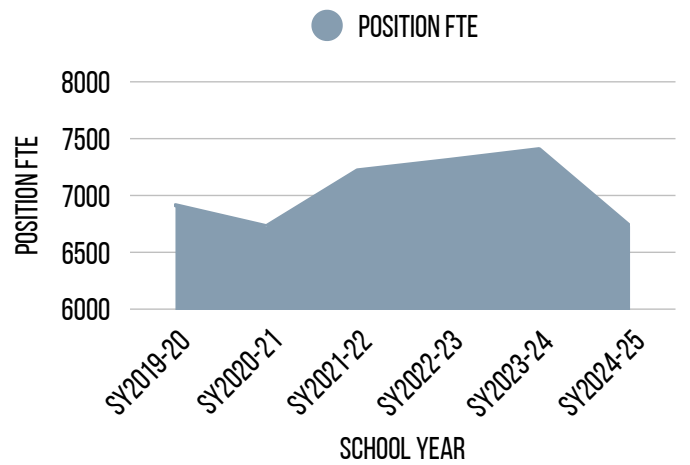
TUSD STUDENT ENROLLMENT

SY2020-21 TO SY2024-25



TUSD POSITION FTE

SY2020-21 TO SY2024-25



WHAT IS FTE?

FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) is a unit that measures an employee's work time in relation to a full-time schedule, where 1.0 FTE equals full-time work.

ENROLLMENT AND GROWTH STRATEGIES

TUSD reported 40,423 students at the 40th day of the 2024-2025 School Year. This represents a 1.6% decline from the prior year and a 2.9% decline from enrollment five years ago. The decline in public school enrollment is a phenomenon being experienced in states and districts across the nation, driven by both demographic trends and expanded school choice for private and home-school opportunities.

TUSD is working to reverse enrollment trends by:

- Improving customer service
- Expanding student transportation options, and
- Proactive recruitment of students and families.

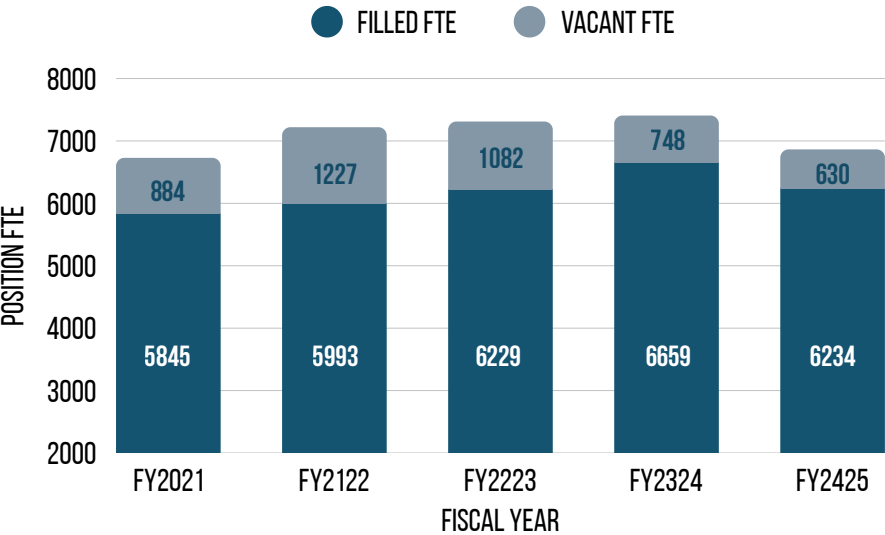


OPTIMIZING RESOURCES

Declining enrollment and the expiration of COVID-era federal funding have resulted in decreased funding overall for TUSD positions. Over the past 12 to 18 months, our district has worked with potentially displaced employees to find other opportunities within Tucson Unified to lend their talents. As an example, Human Resources proactively recruited teacher assistants in federally-funded positions to fill critical teaching assistant positions in Exceptional Education. Additionally, the Governing Board opted to absorb interventionist positions to continue supports for students needing additional assistance.

FILLED VS. VACANT POSITION FTE

FISCAL YEAR 2021 - 2025



LOWEST VACANCY RATE IN YEARS

We are proud to share that in the 2024–2025 school year, our district’s vacancy rate dropped to just 9.21% – a significant decrease from the peak of 17.1% in 2021-2022 when we were emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. This means we had 630 vacant full-time equivalent (FTE) positions at the end of this past school year, compared to 1,227 vacant FTEs three years ago.

By reducing overall positions, we’ve been able to focus our hiring efforts on the most essential roles. We continue to prioritize hard-to-fill positions - such as bus drivers, food service workers, Exceptional Education teaching assistants, and specialized roles like school psychologists and therapists. This targeted approach, paired with close collaboration between Human Resources and hiring sites, has strengthened recruitment, hiring, and onboarding. We are also introducing creative hybrid positions to better meet district needs.

TUSD VACANCY RATES

FISCAL YEAR 2021 - 2025

FISCAL YEAR	VACANT FTE %
2020-2021	13.0%
2021-2022	17.0%
2022-2023	14.8%
2023-2024	10.0%
2024-2025	9.2%

Vacancy rates over the past five school years show a steady decline, reaching a five-year low at 9.2% in SY2024-25.



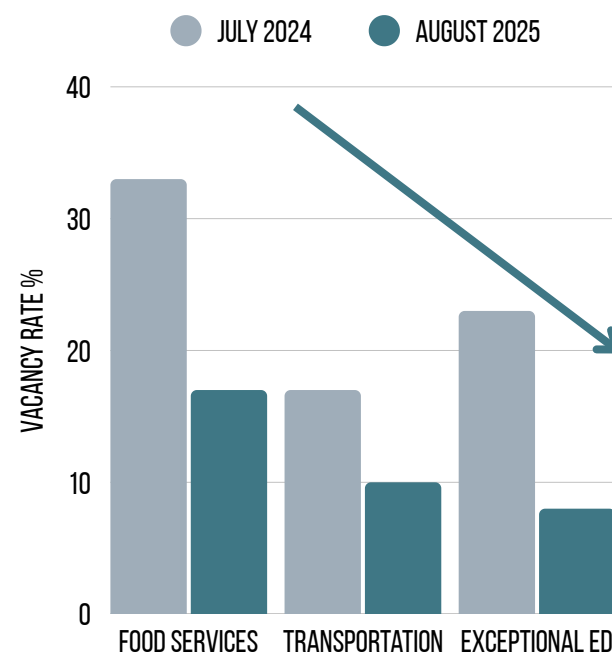
FILLING CRITICAL ROLES

TEAMWORK IN ACTION

Over the past year, Human Resources has partnered closely with departments experiencing staffing challenges. Through targeted efforts in partnership with Food Services, Transportation, and Exceptional Education (Ex Ed), we've worked to identify solutions and remove barriers to hiring. We're proud to share the progress and positive outcomes that have resulted from this collaboration.

MEASURABLE RESULTS

During the SY2024-25, Human Resources successfully reduced vacancies in Food Services by 16%, in Transportation by 7%, and 15% in Ex Ed as of August 1, 2025.



OUR STRATEGY

01 TARGETED COMPENSATION AND INNOVATION

In SY2024-25, we implemented targeted compensation and position adjustments to help reduce vacancies in high-need areas.

- Increase bus driver pay to \$21.33/hour
- New Ex Ed Certified salary schedule, resulting in a pay increase of \$4,000 for most Ex Ed Teachers, and a \$10,000 to Ex Ed Self-Contained.
- Compensation adjustments to various specialized Food Services roles.
- Introduction of flexible hybrid positions for School Psychologists and Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs).

02 EXPANDED RECRUITMENT

This year, we broadened our recruitment efforts by leveraging various strategies, including engaging our retiree pool for specialized skills, using online platforms like Indeed and LinkedIn, partnering with local colleges, and collaborating with various community organizations to attract a larger pool of applicants.

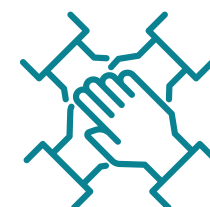
We also amplified recruitment through targeted use of social media campaigns, maintained financial incentives – including 250 stipends for hard-to-fill roles – and continued an aggressive international hiring effort. These coordinated strategies have helped reduce vacancy rates in key district areas.

REMOVING BARRIERS, GROWING TALENT

As part of a broader strategy to address staffing shortages in critical areas within Exceptional Education (Ex Ed), Human Resources has taken a proactive, multi-pronged approach to strengthen recruitment and retention. We have also worked to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified mental health professionals, by investing in hiring interns, externs, and clinician support specialists.

Working together we were able to implement changes to make high-need roles - such as Ex Ed Teacher Assistants - more accessible and attractive to candidates. These efforts included covering the cost of the ParaPro exam and extending work schedules to 7 or 7.5 hours per day, allowing these positions to qualify for full-time benefits.

Additionally, anticipating the impact expiring ESSER funds would have, we proactively engaged affected employees to offer continued employment in critical Ex Ed TA roles - helping retain experienced staff while addressing vacancies in hard-to-fill positions.



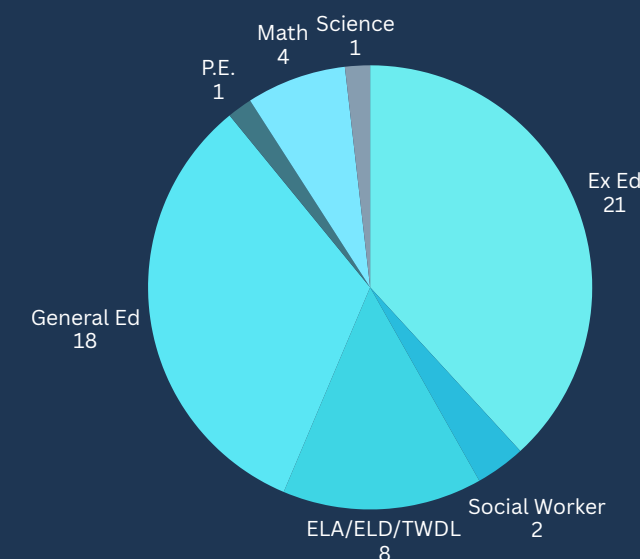
STRENGTHENING EX ED STAFFING

KEY INITIATIVES

01

Human Resources has continued to recruit internationally in response to persistent vacancies in Exceptional Education. This strategy helps us connect with highly qualified candidates.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHER HIRES SY2024-25



02 PROVIDING CLASSROOM SUPPORT

In order to help address Ex Ed Teacher staffing shortages, Human Resources has worked with the Ex Ed to provide long-term Substitute Teachers and supported the utilization of contracted teachers, ensuring continuity of services to students.



INVESTING IN OUR EMPLOYEES

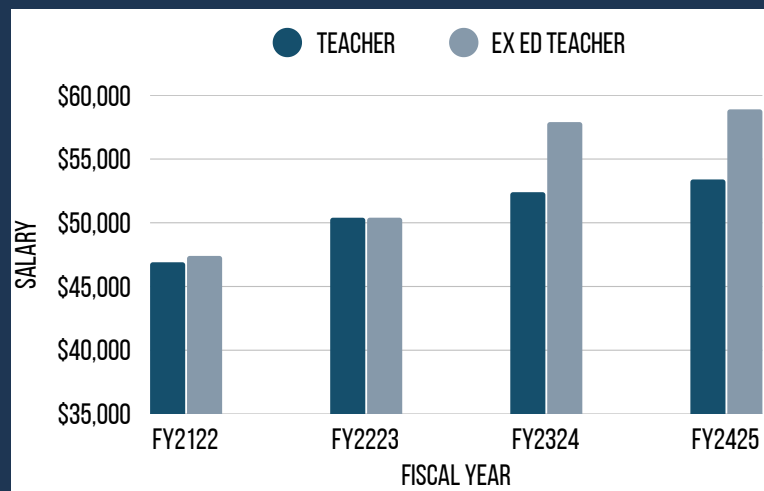
DRIVING RETENTION

When it comes to retention, compensation is definitely a factor. As such, TUSD has taken intentional steps to strengthen this area over the past several school years. We engaged compensation experts to conduct a district-wide review of salaries and classifications, resulting in pay increases for employees in roles that were below 90% of market value. We've also implemented targeted raises for hard-to-fill, high-need positions, and provided several one-time stipends to help recognize and retain our dedicated staff.

While compensation is a meaningful way to recognize the dedication of our employees, we also understand the financial limitations we face as a district. To help address this, TUSD will be seeking voter support in the fall for a budget override that would generate \$45 million over seven years. If successful, this money will help fund critical school programs and support salary increases for our employees.

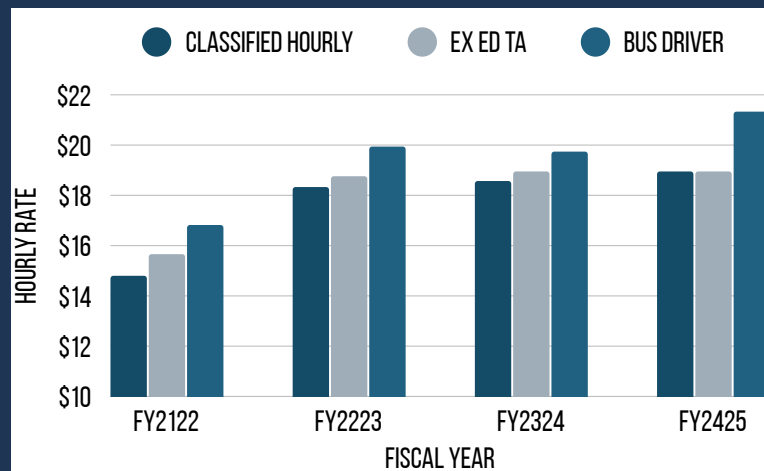
But retention isn't just about the paycheck. There are other ways we can show up for employees. As we navigate a landscape of limited resources, we remain committed to showing our employees they are valued. In fact, this moment presents an opportunity to place a greater focus on the many other factors that drive retention.

TEACHER AND EX ED TEACHER MEDIAN SALARY 2021-2025



Median teacher salaries have steadily increased over the past four years, with a strong focus on boosting compensation for Ex Ed in the last two years.

CLASSIFIED HOURLY MEDIAN WAGE RATE 2021-2025



Classified hourly wages have risen by approximately \$4 or more since SY2021-22, with bus drivers now earning some of the highest wages overall.



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND WELL-BEING

BEYOND THE PAYCHECK

In Human Resources, we know that employee benefits play a crucial role in attracting, retaining, and supporting a thriving workforce. Because of this, we work hard on curating a robust benefits package for TUSD employees and their dependents to enjoy. Over the past year, we've explored meaningful ways to enhance employee well-being, and we're proud to share the progress and outcomes of those efforts.

Our benefits package includes traditional offerings like medical, dental, and vision coverage, along with life and pet insurance, plus wellness incentives to support a healthy lifestyle. For the fourth consecutive year, our Governing Board has approved funding to help offset rising health insurance premiums for employees. Currently, over 6,744 employees and their dependents are enrolled in TUSD's benefits program.

SCAN FOR A
COMPREHENSIVE
LIST OF BENEFITS
OFFERINGS!



OUR PRIORITIES

01 STABILIZING YOUR BENEFITS

The Governing Board once again passed the recommendation for the Employee Benefits Trust to subsidize rising employee premium costs, keeping employee deductions flat since 2021.

Thanks to a contribution of approximately \$1.1 million, the Employee Benefits Trust (EBT) will cover the FY2025 increase and absorb the FY2024 subsidy, ensuring our employees do not experience a rise in premiums for the upcoming school year.



02 LEADING WITH PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

We're proud to lead the way as the first district among our peers to offer employees up to 12 weeks of district-paid parental leave – a bold step forward in supporting our workforce and reinforcing our commitment to being a top workplace.

Paid Parental Leave has become a valuable benefit for our employees. It has provided new parents with the opportunity to bond with their child without the added stress of lost income. During this first year, we've already seen 52 employees enjoy this benefit, which reflects how meaningful and supportive it has been during such an important life event.



PERKS AT WORK

ENHANCING EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

We're excited to launch TUSD's new partnership with WellStyles! In the year ahead, employees can look forward to expanded wellness offerings – including virtual events, in-person challenges, nutritional support, and more.

Our popular Mammograms on the Move (MOM) and flu shot clinics will continue as we explore additional on-site preventative screenings to make it easier than ever to prioritize your health. Stay tuned for upcoming event details and ways to get involved!

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Well-being goes beyond physical health – it's about mental and emotional support too. That's why TUSD is proud to offer all employees and their dependents free and confidential access to Jorgensen Brooks' Employee Assistance Program (EAP). With up to 8 counseling sessions available, the EAP is here 24/7 to support your well-being and help you thrive both at work and in life.

SUPPORTING EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

In addition to emotional support, we want to make navigating your benefits as easy and stress-free as possible. Thanks to our partnership with Colonial Life, TUSD employees now have access to BRELLA. Employees can book confidential 1-on-1 session with benefit specialists virtually or by phone to explore benefit options, get answers, and breeze through enrollment. Bilingual help available!

BUILDING A HEALTHIER WORKFORCE

To unite our wellness efforts, we're excited to announce that we are gearing up to launch a district-wide wellness initiative dedicated to supporting the well-being of our entire workforce. Our goal: to build a culture where employees thrive – balancing work and life.

Kicking off this important chapter is our first annual Tucson Unified 5K Fun Run – an event designed to bring our community together, get moving, and celebrate wellness like never before!

NEW AND RETURNING CORE BENEFIT OFFERINGS FOR 2025-2026



STEP INTO WELLNESS TUCSON UNIFIED 5K FUN RUN

MOVE, PLAY, AND CONNECT

We are excited to launch the first annual Tucson Unified School District 5K Fun Run and Wellness Fair – an energizing event that blends movement, connection, and health education. This event supports our commitment to employee well-being by inspiring healthy habits and strengthening community ties.

Enjoy the 5K Fun Run, the 1-mile Kid Dash, and the TUSD Wellness Fair at one convenient location. As employees, you will have the opportunity to meet district partners and learn about the comprehensive benefits and wellness resources available to you and your family. This year's theme is Disco Dash – get ready to groove, move, and have fun together!

SAVE THE DATE!

DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2025

TIME: 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM

LOCATION: GENE C. REID PARK

Further details will arrive via district email.

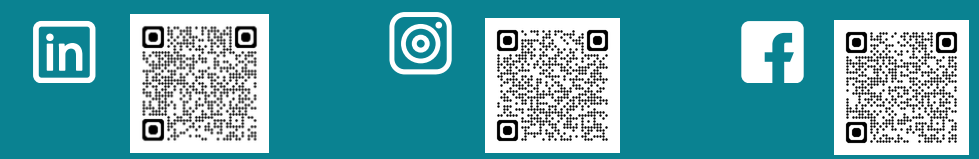


WE'RE MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL DISTRICT

We're a community that supports, inspires, and grows together.

This year, our Human Resources team launched dedicated career and culture-focused pages on Facebook and Instagram, and expanded our presence on LinkedIn. Whether you're job hunting or simply curious about life at Tucson Unified, follow us to see what sets our district apart!

Follow @TucsonUnified_Careers





EMPOWERING SUCCESS

ENHANCED SITE SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Over the past year, we have focused on providing office staff and administrators with resources and training, ensuring that office staff across the district have the tools, resources, and guidance they need to thrive in their roles.

These efforts include making HR more accessible through increased visibility, site visits with schools and departments, relationship-building, and responsive support. By being present, actively listening, and responding with improved customer service, we continue to show our commitment to supporting those who support our students.

We are invested in continuing to deepen partnerships through an open dialogue and streamlined HR systems. Together, these actions contribute to a stronger, more trusted employer brand - one that helps reduce preventable turnover and fosters long-term commitment.

SPOTLIGHT ON TEAMWORK

Each month, the Human Resources team will highlight a TUSD school or department as our HR Partner of the Month - a recognition of exceptional partnership and collaboration. This tradition serves as a reminder that strong teams are the foundation of success for our students, staff, and community.

HR Human Resources Partner of the Month

THANK YOU TO OUR SY2024-25
HR PARTNERS OF THE MONTH!



CAREER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT GROW YOUR OWN & ASPIRING LEADERS

Like many districts nationwide, Tucson Unified School District faces a shortage of qualified applicants. To continue meeting the needs of our schools and community, we've reimaged the way we attract and grow talent. Through creative outreach efforts and encouraging participation in programs such as Grow Your Own Pathways and Aspiring Leader programs - we are supporting both recruitment and retention from within.

GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS

MAKE THE MOVE

Available for Exceptional Education, General Education, and Two-Way Dual Language - *Make the Move* is designed to inspire, support, and reward current TUSD employees interested in becoming a certified teacher in high-need areas at TUSD.

- One-time signing bonus of \$5,000
- \$2,500 paid upon completion of Fall & Spring semester
- Tuition Reimbursement up to \$5,000 over two years for approved classes
- Additional stipends during the 4-year commitment: Year One - \$1,000, Year Two - \$1,000, Year Three - \$2,000, Year Four - \$1,000.

U OF A FELLOWS PROGRAM

This fellowship gives districts the opportunity to select student teachers from within their own schools, offering financial support through stipends and potential tuition coverage - helping future educators launch their careers right where they trained.

U OF A PATHWAYS TO TEACHING

Arizona Alternative Pathways to Teaching programs provide a streamlined route for aspiring educators with a bachelor's degree to earn teacher certification - offering training, mentorship, and support so you can start making an impact in the classroom sooner.

ASPIRING LEADERS

MASTER'S IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (LAST YEAR)

TUSD has an agreement in place with local universities that allows teachers to earn a master's degree at a reduced cost while working full time. Advance your career while gaining real-world experience.

LEADERSHIP PREP ACADEMY

TUSD's Leadership Prep Academy (LPA) is an in-house program that develops leadership and administrative skills in aspiring leaders. Each year 20-30 lucky individuals learn, grow, and network with TUSD, business, and community leaders.

PRINCIPAL BOOST

Principal Boost is a 4-month leadership program that equips 15 nominated TUSD Assistant Principals with the skills and experience needed to step into principal roles - building a strong pipeline of future leaders from within.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR CAREER?

TUSD offers a variety of programs to help you grow. Explore your options and connect with us to learn how you can get started.

Email Monica.Sanchez@tusd1.org today!



RETAINING A DEDICATED WORKFORCE

TOP-RATED WORKPLACES

Human Resources reviewed the SY2024–25 School Quality Survey results to identify schools with the highest workplace satisfaction. By focusing on 17 key questions related to training, leadership, and support, we identified the **Top 10 TUSD Workplaces** as rated by employees. These schools exemplify a strong workplace culture and positive staff experiences. We’re excited to celebrate their commitment to fostering such a supportive and engaging environment!

CREATING A STRONGER WORKPLACE

As we examine our FY2024-25 data, we see an overall attrition rate of 15.9%, with retirements accounting for just 2.3% of departures. This means most attrition stems from other factors, highlighting the critical need to strengthen retention efforts across all employee groups.

To deepen our understanding, and with support from the Assessment and Evaluation Department, we will gather similar data from non-school-based employees next year. This will help us capture staff sentiment districtwide and guide our ongoing retention strategies.



CONGRATULATIONS TO 2024-2025 TOP 10 TUSD WORKPLACES!

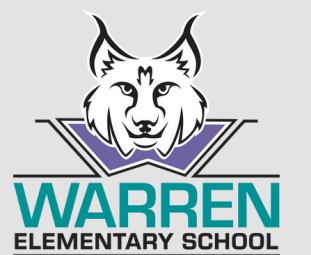
**MARSHALL
ELEMENTARY**

**CARRILLO K-5
MAGNET SCHOOL**

**Ochoa
Community School**

**LYNN-URQUIDES
Elementary School**

**Peter Howell
Elementary School**

**WARREN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**BLENMAN
Elementary School**

**Steele
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**TUCSON
UNIFIED
VIRTUAL
ACADEMY
K-12**

**Johnson
Primary School**



A SPECIAL THANKS

TUSD HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM

We are committed to cultivating a safe, diverse, and equitable workplace that attracts, develops, and retains qualified talent. We provide opportunities for growth and development, ensuring that each employee, from newly hired to seasoned professional, contributes to and benefits from an inclusive community. We aim to build a dynamic team that thrives on a wide array of skills and ideas, reinforcing our commitment to student success and continuous improvement.



CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS SY2024-25

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Bakari Nash | Diane Soza | Keri Wiley | Michelle Garcia | Tatiana Pizarro |
| Cammy Kempton | Emily Johnson | Kris Kiefer | Monica Sanchez | Trish Freeman |
| Casey Norman | Frances Contreras | Kylie Beeson | Monique Brito | Valeria Washington |
| Christina Chapa | Goran Spiric | Laura Fennema | Rachel Brena | Vanhella Collier |
| Crystle Hubbart | Heidi Wright | Leonila Paredes | Ricki Turak | Vivian Chavez |
| Cynthia Griego | Jenny Aranda | Lisa Gagnon | Rosie Ledesma | Vivian Frias |
| Dalila Durazo | Jesus Cordova Corimaya | Lorena Tellez | Sarah Haber | Wayne Chin-Duncan |
| Denisse Chu | Jon Fernandez | Marla Alcoverde | Shaun Asbury | |
| Diana Reyes | Karin Ochoa | Melissa Dunn | Sonia Arzola-Pantoja | |



DR. GABRIEL TRUJILLO SUPERINTENDENT	JENNIFER ECKSTROM BOARD PRESIDENT	DR. RAVI SHAH BOARD CLERK	SADIE SHAW BOARD MEMBER	VAL ROMERO BOARD MEMBER	NATALIE LUNA ROSE BOARD MEMBER
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TUCSON UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

DESIGN BY: DIANA REYES



WE ARE

TUCSON UNIFIED

#PROUD2BTUSD

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INTERESTED IN OPPORTUNITIES AT TUSD?



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