



Mingus Union
High School District #4

OCT 2026

MINGUS MATTERS

PAGE 1

Every Student Celebrated | Every Student Prepared

Hello Marauder Families!

As we enter October, we will quickly hit the end of the 1st quarter at Mingus in the 26-27 School Year. As the end of the quarter approaches, there are many deadlines and taking advantage of FLEX periods and class time to get grades where they need to be are essential. It's hard to believe we are already almost 25% done with the school year, not to mention halfway done with the first semester.

October also brings changing weather, Homecoming events and activities, and often the end of the "honeymoon" period as class content typically ramps up. Make sure your Marauder is prepared! Fall Break is the week of 10/12-10/16 this year; there is no school that week.

Check the calendar carefully, as the Homecoming game and dance, our first pep assembly, and other campus events are taking place. Also, "College Knowledge" month is October with the FAFSA opening up for senior students and college awareness and exposure events planned. If things are not going as planned, do not wait any longer! Reach out to allow our teachers, counselors, and administrators to help with finding success for your student(s).

Enjoy the upcoming Fall Break and take time to reflect on the first quarter and set goals for next quarter of the 2026-27 school year with your Mingus Marauder!

October 2, 3 & 4
"TREASURE ISLAND"
presented by Mingus A.T.O.R.T.
(More Information on PG 3)

October 7
Charting Your Journey
Future after High School
5:30 pm
Mingus High School Library
(More information on page 2)

October 8
Governing Board Meeting
6 - 8pm
Mingus High School Library
(More information on page 2)

October 12 - 16
FALL BREAK
No School

October 17
Mingus Wrestling Fundraiser
CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT
12 - 5pm
Riverfront Park
(More information on page 3)

October 20
Site Council Meeting
5 - 6pm
Mingus High School Library
(More information on page 2)

October Dates to Remember

October 19 - 23
Homecoming Spirit Week
(More information on page 6)

October 21
Marauder Homecoming
Community Tailgate Party!
(More information on page 7)

October 23
HOMECOMING PEP ASSEMBLY!
(More information on page 7)

October 23
HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME!
Mingus vs Flagstaff
7:00pm / Bright Field
(More information on page 8)

October 24
HOMECOMING DANCE!
7 - 10pm
MUHS Main Gym
(More information on page 9)

October 29
Balfour on Campus
Purchase Cap & Gown
12:15 - 1:15pm



David D. Beery
Principal
Mingus Union High School



CAMPUS EVENTS & RESOURCES

OCTOBER 8TH @ 6PM



MUHS GOVERNING BOARD

Our governing board is comprised of five locally elected citizens. These individuals ensure the proper allocation of district funds and resources to best serve the needs and interests of our students.

Meetings are open to the community and are held at 6pm in the MUHS Library on the Second Thursday of every month.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
AGENDA &
MINUTES SCAN
THE QR CODE



OR GO TO:
[HTTPS://WWW.MINGUSUNION
DISTRICT.COM/ABOUT-
US/GOVERNING-BOARD](https://www.mingusuniondistrict.com/about-us/governing-board)



MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL

We value your opinion and welcome you to attend and participate in site council meetings

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 20TH
5:00 PM ~ MUHS LIBRARY**

MUHS COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Today's families are busy, and there's always something happening. Sync your family schedule with ours to avoid missing important testing dates and events when planning vacations and doctor appointments.



Charting Your Journey

Wednesday, October 7th
5:30 PM | Mingus Library

Not sure what comes after high school? Come explore the many pathways available to you! Students and families will learn about universities, community colleges, trade and technical schools, and the military.

We'll talk about what it takes to get there, how to prepare, and ways to pay for your next step. Whether you already have a plan or are just starting to explore your options, this event is for you!

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend together.

Hosted by the
Mingus Counseling Team



CAMPUS EVENTS & RESOURCES

MINGUS WRESTLING

CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

& FAMILY FUNDRAISER

SUPPORTING OUR **BOYS, GIRLS & YOUTH** WRESTLING PROGRAMS!

SCAN TO REGISTER

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2026

REGISTRATION: 12:00 PM
TOURNAMENT: 1:00-5:00 PM

RIVER FRONT PARK
1284 E RIVER FRONT RD
COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326

\$25 PER PERSON
\$50 PER TEAM

GOAL: 75 TEAMS

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
GREAT PRIZES
FOOD & MUSIC
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

PLAY HARD. HAVE FUN. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

MINGUS A.T.O.R.T. PROUDLY PRESENTS

TREASURE ISLAND.

BY
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.
Adapted by Bryony Lavery.



SHOWING IN THE MINGUS HS AUDITORIUM

Saturday, September 26th at 6:30pm

Sunday, September 27th at 3:00pm

Friday, October 2nd at 6:30pm

Saturday, October 3rd at 6:30pm

Sunday, October 4th at 3:00pm

Tickets at ATORT.LUDUS.COM

Adults - \$13

Seniors - \$12

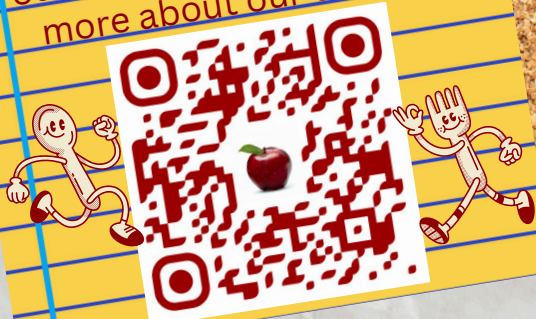
Students/Children - \$8

All Tickets \$3 more at the door

TREASURE ISLAND (LAVERY) is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Dramatic Play Service www.concordtheatricals.com

**Mingus Union High School
Nutrition Department**

Scan the QR code to see
our monthly menu and learn
more about our cafeteria.



FALL BREAK

October 13 - 17

no school

school resumes
Oct. 20





SAFETY

SCOOP

Anonymous Alerts

What is the

Anonymous Alerts app?

The Anonymous Alerts anti-bullying and safety app reporting system helps combat bullying and other negative activity in schools by empowering students to speak up. Social and peer pressure are some of the hardest obstacles for students to overcome.

The system allows for 1-way or 2-way anonymous encrypted communications between submitters (students, parents or community members) and district administration and/or school staff. Users of the system have the option to remain anonymous or reveal their identity when submitting a report.



For Android OS



Website



For Apple OS

How does it work?

To use this revolutionary new app, students, parents or other school personnel can simply visit the Mingus Union High School website and click on the "Anonymous Alerts" button or text link to submit a report expressing their concern. Anonymous Alerts® mobile applications can be downloaded directly from the Apple, Google Play or the Chrome stores.

Mingus Union High School supplies student an activation code, making the app remarkably easy to use and students select which school the message should go to. In addition, informational posters explaining how to use the app will be displayed throughout schools and offices in the district.

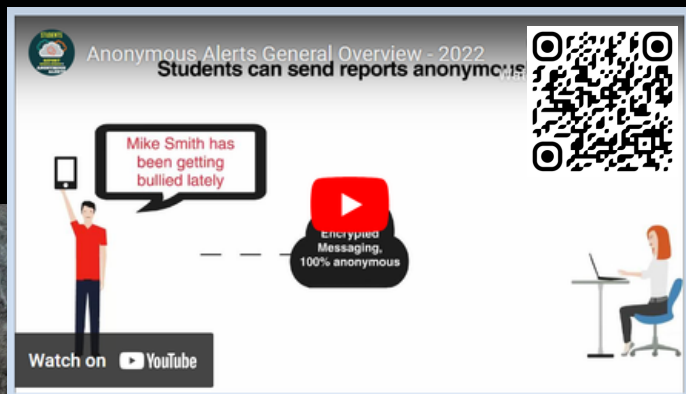
To send reports from the Web/Internet go to:
<https://tips.anonymousalerts.com/mingusunionhs>

To send a report from your phone:

Download the Anonymous Alerts® app for free from the Apple Store, Google Play store, or the Chrome store. Start the App, enter activation code: **mingusunionhs**. Send important reports to school officials. Add a screenshot, photo or video about the incident.

Anonymous Alerts Overview Video

<https://youtu.be/sT-wOKRfXZO>



In an emergency, always call 9-1-1!

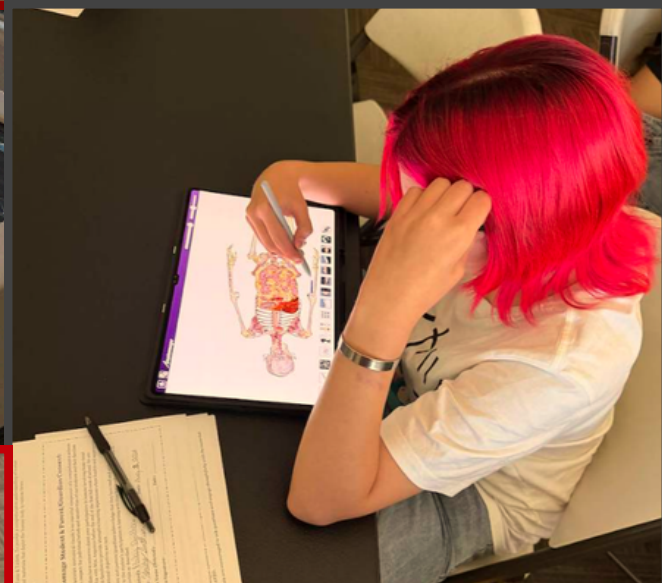
Keep up to date with Anonymous Alerts by following them on their social media platforms:
[Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)





Learning in Action: MUHS Sports Medicine

Utilizing the Anatomage Table transforms our High School Sports Medicine classroom from traditional textbook study into an immersive, hands-on clinical lab. By providing life-sized, 3D interactive visualizations of real human cadavers, the table allows students to virtually examine and break down the body's musculoskeletal, nervous, and cardiovascular systems in many ways.



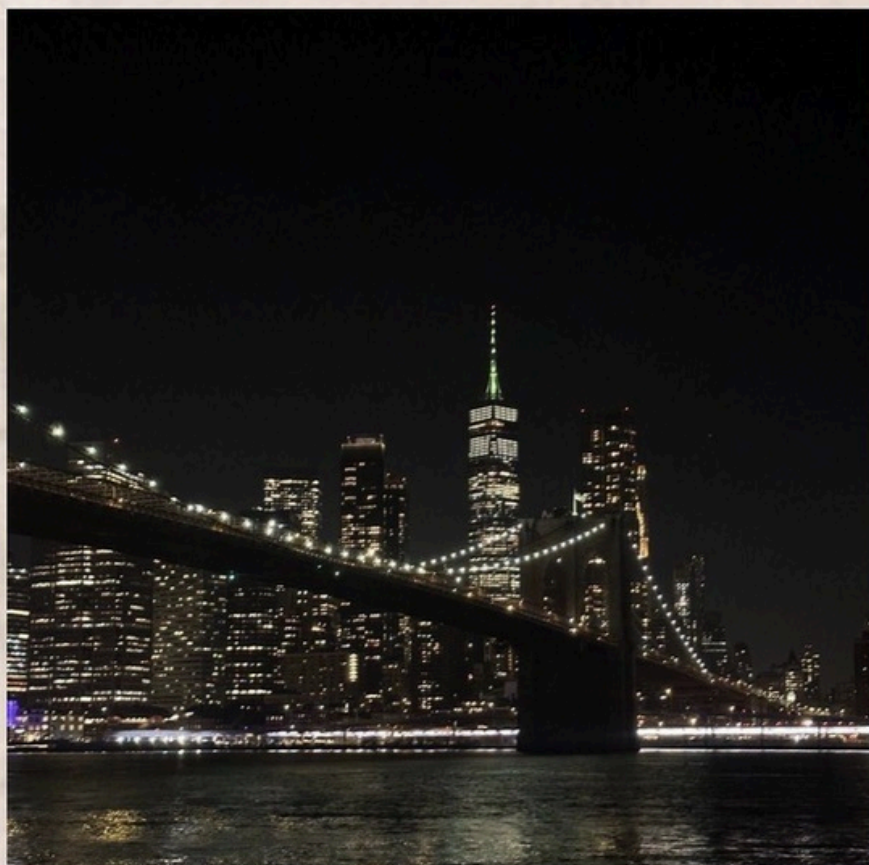
Highlights would be:

- **Interactive dissection**-Moves students away from static diagrams to dynamic 3D spatial learning.
- **Real world application**-Directly ties anatomical structures to sports injury mechanics and rehab concepts.
- **Career Readiness**-Simulates collegiate and medical school technology to prepare high schoolers for allied health pathways.



Homecoming Edition

CITY UNDER THE STARS



SPIRTWEEK THEMES

Monday-Hollywood glamour! Dress in your best Adam Sandler outfit.

Tuesday-Twin day! Match with your twins!

Wednesday-Student Teacher swap! Dress like your favorite teacher!

Thursday-Starry Night! Dress in your PJs!

Friday- Class colors! Dress in your class color! Freshman and Soph wear red, Juniors wear bronze and Seniors wear silver!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR STUCO INSTA
@MUHS_STUCO**

OCTOBER 19 - 23



NUHS HOMEcoming *Tailgate*

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21ST
6-8 PM**

FOOD TRUCKS, GAMES, BOUNCE HOUSE, COMMUNITY BOOTHS

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME — YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A
MUHS STUDENT OR FAMILY TO JOIN THE FUN!**

**GAMES/BOUNCE HOUSE WRISTBAND- \$10 CASH ONLY!
POWDERPUFF FOOTBALL 7PM**

HOMEcoming PEP ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

SENIORS ~ Wear Silver JUNIORS ~ Wear Bronze
SOPHMORES & FRESHMAN ~ Wear Red

8:00am-8:50am - 1st hour

8:55am-9:45am - 2nd hour

9:50am-10:40am - 3rd hour

10:45am-11:35am - 4th hour

11:40am-12:20pm - Assembly

12:20pm-12:55pm - Lunch

1:00pm-1:50pm - 5th hour

1:55pm-2:45pm - 6th hour

**F
R
I
D
A
Y**

OCT. 23RD





MARAUDERS V EAGLES

Friday, October 23rd

7am – 9pm

Bright Field

For Tickets to this game, Click

GO FAN



Wear camo to the game to show your support of our Marauder Football team!



HOMECOMING DANCE 2026

**MINGUS UNION
HOMECOMING
2026**



City of Stars

SATURDAY
24 OCTOBER 2026
7:00 - 10:00 PM

MINGUS UNION HIGH
LOCATED AT THE BIG GYM

TICKETS ON SALE IN THE BOOKSTORE
SEPT. 30TH - OCT. 6TH: \$45
OCT. 7 - 9TH: \$50
OCT 19 - 21ST: \$60





featured on:



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Jazmin Hunt



After graduating from Mingus this May, Jazmin would like to try college with the \$5,000 scholarship that she won for getting second place in the congressional art show. She also has plans to be working in a bakery. In five years, she hopes to be engaged or married, and to have a bakery shop of her own, and to also sell her art.

Her best memory of high school so far was her first homecoming dance that she went to freshman year. For fun, Jazmin likes to create art and hang out with friends. If she could go back in time and talk to herself as a freshman, she would encourage herself to try to make more friends.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Josh Saranita
Math Teacher



Mr. Saranita has been with Mingus teaching Algebra for 8 years. His favorite part of teaching is when he sees a student grasp a difficult concept. Working with our students keeps him motivated. If he finds a student who needs some motivation, he lets them know that no matter what others say or do, he will believe in them and will do everything in his power to help them.

Mr. Saranita was born and raised in San Diego. He has been married since 2010 and has three amazing kids; ages 13, 12, 11. He has a master's degree in educational and counseling psychology from Washington State University. During his free time he loves coaching soccer for his son and his friends.

Mr. Saranita was overwhelmingly voted as Staff Spotlight by his peers because he has been single-handedly teaching every single freshman Algebra 1 this first quarter. This is due to Mingus being understaffed and the community not having qualified math subs. He has been building lasting relationships with students and providing a safe space in his room for students to learn. His fellow co-workers see and appreciate all of his efforts. We are grateful for and proud of you. Thank you for stepping up to the task. We're glad you're on our team!





MARAUDER of the MONTH

TEACHERS AND COACHES ARE ASKED TO NOMINATE STUDENTS IN ALL ACADEMICS AND ATHLETICS DEPARTMENTS. THESE STUDENTS ARE THEN VOTED ON AMONGST THOSE TEACHERS & COACHES TO CHOOSE FINALISTS TO RECOGNIZE EACH MONTH. THESE STUDENTS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN OUR NEWSLETTER AND INVITED TO RECEIVE RECOGNITION IN FRONT OF OUR COMMUNITY AT THE FOLLOWING MONTH'S BOARD MEETING.

Jack Murphree

ENGLISH & LITERATURE

Lucas Escalera

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Jeremiah Dyer

MATHEMATICS

Marissa Jaines

SCIENCE

Kyanha Richardson

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Dylan Midkiff

SOCIAL STUDIES



MARAUDER of the MONTH

Desiree Larezma



CAREER & TECHNICAL
EDUCATION



Sabine Briggs



PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS



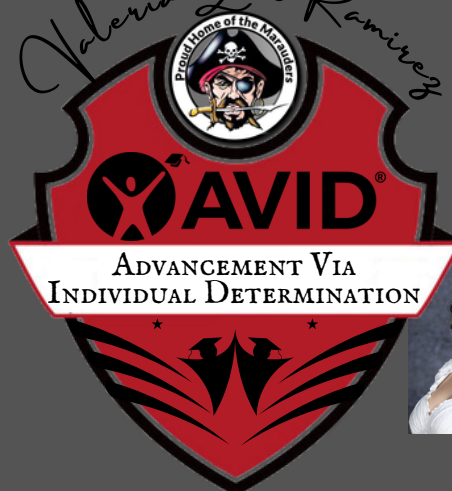
Gyulianna Estrada



MINGUS ACADEMICS



Valeria Zul Ramirez



ADVANCEMENT VIA
INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION



MALE ATHLETE



FEMALE ATHLETE

*our sports season has just
kicked off...stay tuned!*

PURSING VICTORY
WITH HONOR



Athletics Program - Mingus Union High School District

All current athletic events, team schedules and coaching information are posted to the athletics page for quick viewing. You can also subscribe to the calendar and receive daily emails by scanning the QR code below, then subscribe by clicking the RSS link (📡) in the top right corner.

**Schedules are subject to change, so check often or call the athletic department for more info!*



COME OUT TO OUR SPORTING EVENTS & SHOW YOUR MARAUDER PRIDE!

MINGUS



MINGUS

FALL SPORTS

- Football
- Girls Flag Football
- Cheer
- Gross Country
- Volleyball
- Boys Golf
- Girls Golf
- Swim
- * UNIFIED Swim
- * UNIFIED Flag Football
- * UNIFIED Volleyball

\$\$ TICKET PRICES \$\$

- ADULTS: \$6.00
- CHILDREN (Ages 7-12): \$4.00
- CHILDREN (6 & under): FREE
- MINGUS STUDENTS W/ID: \$4.00
- SENIORS (Ages 55+) & VETERANS: \$4.00

*GoFan collects a service fee (\$1/ticket) to support & grow a platform for schools. This covers the cost of the technology & credit card processing. Above prices include this fee.

use the QR code
here 
or visit [GOFAN.CO](https://gofan.co)
and search for
Mingus Union
High School



BUY YOUR EVENT TICKETS AT [GOFAN.CO](https://gofan.co)

NO ENTRY CHARGE FOR OUR UNIFIED SPORTS EVENTS



**SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR A FOLDER WITH
ALL OF OUR FALL
SPORTS SCHEDULES**





VALLEY
ACADEMY FOR
CAREER AND
TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION



Who is VACTE?

The Valley Academy for Career and Technology Education (VACTE) was established in 2001 by approval of the citizens of the Verde Valley and Sedona areas. VACTE is one of fourteen Career and Technical Education Districts (CTEDs) in Arizona.

Our school district members are Camp Verde – Ed Mezulis, Clarkdale/Jerome – Kathleen Fleenor, Cottonwood/Oak Creek – Jill Myers, Mingus Union – Dave Leckington, and Sedona Red/Rock – Jeff Wassell.

Career and Technical Education Districts (CTEDs) are specialized school districts designed to deliver career and technical education (CTE) to high school students in cooperation with their member districts by providing a pathway for students to earn industry certification and college credit, as well as experience career-based learning, hands-on instruction, and leadership development through such organizations as FBLA, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, and SkillsUSA. VACTE supports the CTE programs, CTE instructors, and more than 1,500 CTE students at the three local high schools. These programs include agriculture, automotive, business, coding, culinary arts, digital photography, drafting, film and TV, graphic design, sports medicine, stagecraft, and welding.

VACTE has additionally established 8 CTE programs offered at locations throughout the Verde Valley which provide career training to students from the three high schools, area charter schools, and home schools. These programs include: certified nursing assistant, construction, cosmetology, culinary arts, fire science, law enforcement, phlebotomy, and teacher training.

A strong partnership with Yavapai College has been developed in providing dual or concurrent enrollment courses, whereby, high school students are able to earn both high school and college credits for the courses in which they are enrolled. VACTE pays for the college tuition, textbooks, and uniforms for many of these programs. VACTE courses also support several industry recognized licenses and certifications which the students may earn upon exit from the programs such as Arizona Board of Nursing Certified Nursing Assistant Licensure, Arizona Board of Barbering/Cosmetology Licensure, and Arizona Firefighter I and II certification.

Mission

Provide an engaging learning environment resulting in the development of hireable and productive individuals in a competitive workforce. Students are offered quality instruction and technical skill foundations through on-the-job training in specific areas of career development. Our instructors share their extensive real-world knowledge for students to experience and achieve workplace success. Our development activities are use-inspired and include workplace soft skills, team building and industry standard skills.

We expect our students to be leaders in supporting the ideas behind this vision and mission.

Vision Statement

Skills for Today, Careers for a Lifetime

We envision a future where our students attain the skills to build professional careers that will last a lifetime.

Our focus is on creating an educational experience that supports everyone's desire to learn.

We seek to produce a skilled workforce, one student at a time.

MEET OUR STAFF

Bob Weir - Superintendent

Bob Weir serves as the Superintendent of Valley Academy for Career & Technology Education (VACTE), a position he has held since 2016. With a strong commitment to career and technical education, Bob provides leadership and vision for the district while working to ensure students have access to meaningful, hands-on educational opportunities that prepare them for college, careers, and life beyond high school.

Throughout his career, Bob has been a dedicated advocate for Career and Technical Education (CTE), supporting programs that allow students to develop valuable technical skills, industry knowledge, and real-world experience. Under his leadership, VACTE continues to strengthen partnerships with local schools, businesses, community organizations, and post-secondary institutions to expand opportunities for students throughout the Verde Valley.

Bob's leadership and dedication to CTE have earned him recognition at both the state and national levels. He was honored as the ACTE Administrator of the Year for 2017–2018 and has received the ACTE Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his longstanding service and contributions to career and technical education. He has also been recognized as a CTSO Champion for his support of student organizations and leadership opportunities.

Bob believes strongly in developing students through hands-on learning, strong industry partnerships, and opportunities that connect classroom instruction to the workforce. He is passionate about supporting VACTE's instructors and staff and creating an environment where students can discover their strengths, develop confidence, and build a foundation for successful futures.

Outside of his professional responsibilities, Bob enjoys being a rodeo clown and spending time with his wife, children, and grandchildren. He takes great pride in his family, the VACTE community, and the students and staff he has the privilege of serving.



MEET OUR STAFF...continued

Shawna Patton - Business Manager/Board Secretary

Shawna Patton serves as the School Business Manager for Valley Academy for Career & Technology Education (VACTE). With many years of experience serving VACTE, Shawna plays an essential role in the day-to-day operations of the district and works closely with staff, students, families, administration, and community partners. Her responsibilities include overseeing business and financial operations, payroll and employee support, student program funding, compliance, records, purchasing, and a wide variety of administrative functions that help keep VACTE running smoothly. She is known for being organized, dependable, resourceful, and always willing to jump in wherever she is needed. Shawna is passionate about supporting VACTE's staff and students and takes pride in being part of an organization that prepares students with real-world career and technical skills. She especially values the relationships she has built with the VACTE community and the opportunity to contribute to the continued success and growth of the district. Outside of work, Shawna enjoys spending time with her husband and family, supporting her children in their activities, and staying involved in the local community. She is proud to be part of the VACTE family and looks forward to continuing to serve the district and its students.

Laura Carbonaro - Attendance Secretary

Laura Carbonaro serves as the Registrar for the Valley Academy for Career & Technology Education (VACTE). In her role, Laura is an important part of the district's student support team, helping ensure that student records, enrollment, attendance, and other essential student information are accurate, organized, and maintained according to district and state requirements. Laura holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a major in Earth Science and minors in Mathematics and Geology, bringing a strong educational background, attention to detail, and analytical skills to her work at VACTE. She works closely with students, families, school counselors, instructors, and district staff to help make the enrollment and student records process as smooth as possible. Laura is dedicated to providing dependable support to students and staff while helping maintain the accuracy and integrity of VACTE's student records. She takes pride in being part of a team that helps students navigate their educational journey and prepare for their futures.

Outside of work, Laura enjoys traveling, exploring new places, experiencing different cultures, and creating lasting memories with family and friends. Fun Fact: Before joining the education field, Laura had an impressive career working on nuclear submarines. Her unique professional background, combined with her education in Earth Science, Mathematics and Geology, brings a unique perspective and a wealth of experience to her role at VACTE.

Daria Weir - Counselor

Daria Weir serves as a Counselor at Valley Academy for Career & Technology Education (VACTE), where she is dedicated to helping students make the most of their career and technical education experience. Daria works closely with students, families, instructors, and school partners to provide guidance and support as students navigate their educational and career goals. In her role, Daria helps students explore their interests, identify opportunities, and develop plans for success. She is committed to making sure students feel supported, encouraged, and confident as they work toward their futures. Daria understands that every student has different goals and strengths and enjoys helping them discover pathways that fit their individual interests and aspirations. Daria is known for being approachable, supportive, and willing to go the extra mile for students. She takes pride in building relationships with students and being a trusted resource throughout their time at VACTE.

Outside of work, Daria's favorite role is being a grandma. She treasures spending time with her grandchildren, making memories, and watching them grow. Family is an important part of Daria's life, and she enjoys every opportunity to spend time with the people she loves. She is proud to be part of the VACTE team and passionate about helping students recognize their potential and build a strong foundation for their future.

Travis Black - Construction Instructor

Mr. Travis Black discovered his passion for the construction trades in his early 20s when he began working as a carpenter. After spending several years gaining experience in the field, he took the next step in his career by starting his own construction company, Pitch Black Construction. For 20 years, Travis built and remodeled homes, developing a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience that he continues to put to use through remodeling projects today. In 2018, Travis joined VACTE and created a brand-new Construction Trades Program. Through his dedication and leadership, the program has grown into a highly successful program that prepares students for careers in the construction industry. Travis has also shared his expertise with other construction programs throughout Arizona, helping educators and students build strong, successful programs of their own. Throughout his teaching career, Travis has been recognized for his dedication to his students and the construction trades. His honors include being named Yavapai County Teacher of the Year twice, SkillsUSA Advisor of the Year twice, and VFW Teacher of the Year. His program has also earned Arizona and National SkillsUSA Models of Excellence honors, recognizing it as a top chapter. Under his leadership, the program has reached the Top 8 in the nation for eight consecutive years.

Outside of teaching and construction, Travis enjoys traveling and making memories with his wife. He is also a proud father of adult twins and values the time he gets to spend with his family. Whether he is building in the classroom, on a job site, or helping others succeed, Travis is passionate about sharing his knowledge and inspiring the next generation of skilled trades professionals.



MEET OUR STAFF...continued

Sabrina Conway - Certified Nursing Assistant Instructor

Mrs. Sabrina Conway brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in the healthcare field. She began her career as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), working at The Haven for eight years and gaining valuable hands-on experience caring for patients and supporting their needs. In 2018, Mrs. Conway earned her Nursing Degree and continued her career with The Haven, further expanding her knowledge and experience within the healthcare system. Her passion for healthcare and her desire to share her knowledge with others led her to VACTE, where she has proudly served as the CNA instructor for the past four years. Mrs. Conway is passionate about preparing her students for successful careers in healthcare. She enjoys sharing her real-world experiences and helping students develop the skills, confidence, and compassion needed to provide quality patient care. Outside of teaching, Mrs. Conway enjoys spending quality time with her husband and their three adult children. When she has time to relax, she enjoys crocheting and getting lost in a good book. Family, learning, and helping others are all important parts of what makes Mrs. Conway a valued member of the VACTE community.

Valentina Gonzales - Cosmetology Instructor

Ms. Gonzales discovered her passion for cosmetology at the age of 15, when she began styling hair and doing nails for family and friends. What started as a creative passion quickly grew into a lifelong career. At 19, she pursued her dream by enrolling in cosmetology school, where she developed the skills and knowledge needed to turn her passion into a profession. By the age of 25, Ms. Gonzales reached a significant milestone when she purchased her own hair salon. She continues to successfully operate her salon today, combining her creativity, business experience, and dedication to helping others feel confident and beautiful. Her passion for working with and mentoring teenagers eventually inspired her to bring her experience into the classroom. Ms. Gonzales is now in her fourth year as a cosmetology instructor with VACTE, where she enjoys sharing her knowledge, encouraging creativity, and helping students build the skills and confidence they need to pursue careers in the beauty industry. Outside of her career, Ms. Gonzales enjoys spending quality time with her family and her three children. Family is an important part of her life, and she values making memories and enjoying time together whenever she can. Through her work, teaching, and family life, Ms. Gonzales is passionate about inspiring others to follow their dreams, work hard, and believe in their potential.

Paul Vocca, Jeremy Vargas, and Sal Unale - Fire Science Instructors

- Paul Vocca is joining VACTE for his first year as the Firefighter I & II Instructor. A 2004 graduate of Mingus Union High School and a lifelong resident of the Cottonwood area, Paul brings a strong connection to the Verde Valley and extensive experience in the fire service. Paul has more than seven years of professional firefighting experience, including six years with the Cottonwood Fire Department and a year and a half with the Peoria Fire Department. He also holds an Associate of Applied Science in Paramedicine. In addition to his fire service career, Paul has more than eight years of experience coaching youth sports throughout the Verde Valley and previously coached baseball at Mingus Union High School. Through both coaching and firefighting, he has developed a passion for helping young people build the work ethic, discipline, teamwork, communication, and leadership skills needed to succeed. Paul and his wife are raising their four children in the Cottonwood area. He is excited to return to his community in a new role and share his professional experience with VACTE students as he helps prepare the next generation of firefighters.
- Jeremy Vargas was born and raised in Flagstaff. He moved to Cottonwood about 5 years ago when he married his wife, and wanted to set roots. Mr. Vargas and his wife have a beautiful daughter and are currently expecting her baby sister. He has worked for Sedona Fire for the past 9 years and enjoys every day of it. Mr. Vargas has worked in the past for Flagstaff Fire Department and the Flagstaff Airport Fire. He has taught Fire science for many years at Coconino Community College in Flagstaff. In his spare time Mr. Vargas enjoys getting outside, staying active, and spending time with family and friends. He enjoys making the most of Arizona's outdoors and staying connected to the people and community around him.
- Mr. Salvador Unale has been a Fire Fighter for over 17 years. Currently Mr. Unale is working at Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District. He started off his career at the Doney Park fire, then went to work as a Detention officer, he spent 5 years with Ponderosa Fire, worked at Palominas Fire and finally was hired at the Copper Canyon Fire Department. He is married with 2 little boys.

Jennifer Choate - Law Enforcement Instructor

Ms. Choate retired after serving her community for 20 years with the Salt Lake City Police Department in Utah. Ms. Choate will begin her next career path as the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Advisor for VACTE and has been with us for 4 years. Ms. Choate has been awarded Yavapai County teacher of the year and has had several students' place on a regional and national level through their SkillsUSA student club over the last four years. As a certified ASP Defensive Tactics Instructor, the students in the Law Enforcement Program will be certified with basic defense tactic skills upon completion of their first year and may be certified with advanced skills if they choose to take the program a second year. Students also accumulate 9 credit hours per hours as they are dual enrolled at Yavapai College.

We have been blessed to build a strong partnership with Cottonwood Police Department and Dispatch. This has provided opportunities for our senior students to participate in a 911 Internship Program as well as experiencing the day in the life of a law enforcement officer by participating in the ride-a-long program.



VACTE

MEET OUR STAFF...continued

Kylee Randall - Ed Professions/Teacher Training Instructor

Kylee Randall is the Education Professions Instructor at VACTE, where she helps high school students explore careers in education and discover the kind of educator they hope to become. She holds a Master's degree in Learning and Technology and brings experience in early childhood education, curriculum development, tutoring, and creating meaningful learning experiences for learners of all ages.

Kaylee is passionate about creating hands-on, real-world learning opportunities that allow students to experience education beyond the classroom. She loves helping future educators build confidence, discover their strengths, and understand the lasting impact they can have on children, families, and their communities. The Verde Valley is home, and Kaylee is grateful for the opportunity to give back to the community that helped shape her. She is passionate about helping "grow our own"—encouraging students to see themselves as future educators and empowering them to make a difference right here in their own communities. Outside of VACTE, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two young children, being outdoors, baking, and creating special moments with family and friends.

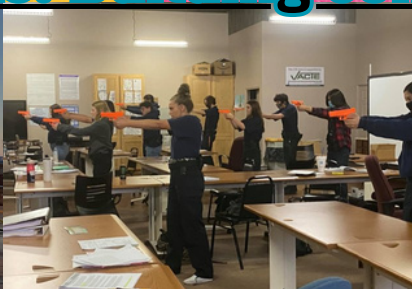
Deana De Witt - Ed Professions/Teacher Training Instructor

Deana DeWitt is an instructor for the Education Professions Program, teaching college-level courses for our second-year students. Mrs. DeWitt is a retired educator with more than 25 years of experience working in several Verde Valley School Districts. She has taught everything from early childhood to adult education, served as a Mentor Teacher, Director of Student Services, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and as Assistant Superintendent. Mrs. DeWitt holds a Master's Degree in Education: Curriculum & Instruction as well as a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. She and her husband raised their children in the Verde Valley and now have five grandchildren who will attend local schools. She is passionate about helping to prepare future educators who will one day make a positive impact on the children they work with and their communities.

Yavapai College Instructors:

- **Electrical:** Tim Peterson is our Professor of Electrical at Yavapai College. He is a fourth-generation electrician with over 30 years of hands-on experience in the electrical trade. He has worked on everything from residential homes to large commercial projects and solar installations. He is passionate about sharing what I've learned and helping others build the skills they need to succeed in this field. His goal in teaching is to make electrical concepts clear, practical, and connected to real-world work—so you can leave this class confident and ready for the next step in your journey.
- **HVAC:** James Morales is our Professor of HVAC at Yavapai College, where he teaches students the technical and hands-on skills needed for careers in the HVAC industry. I hold several industry credentials and serve as a NATE and EPA 608 proctor and a Certified NCCER instructor.
- **Phlebotomy:** Jayson Taddei is an Associate Professor for Yavapai College and teaches our Phlebotomy program. He has over 10 years of experience in phlebotomy, including supervising the Phoenix VA labs as a phlebotomist, where he gained valuable hands-on experience, leadership skills, and a strong understanding of patient care. His goal is to share his knowledge and experience with students while introducing them to the world of healthcare and specifically phlebotomy. He wants to help students build confidence in their skills, understand the importance of professionalism and compassion in healthcare, and to feel prepared to begin their own future in any career.

Building skills. Building confidence. Building futures!





Community Resources

There's no doubt that our Verde Valley community knows how to come together to support those who live here! This page will list some of those amazing Community Resources and let you know some of the events and happenings they have planned this month.



Inspiring
CHANGE

Providing
HOPE

OLD TOWN MISSION & THRIFT STORE

Old Town Mission
116 E. Pinal Street
Cottonwood
928-634-7869

Mission Thrift Store
810 W Mingus Ave
Cottonwood
928-634-1644

Sharing God's LOVE

FOOD PANTRY
Wednesday: 9 am - 2 pm & 4 pm - 6 pm
Thursday: 9 am - 2 pm

COMMUNITY MEALS
Monday, Tuesday & Friday: 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Monday: 5 pm - 6 pm
Wednesday: 4 pm - 6 pm (**Served to-go only**)

RESOURCE CENTER
* Available for those without residence:
Showers, breakfast, clothes, hygiene & resources
Monday, Tuesday & Friday 9 am - 11 am

THE KIDS SHOP
Monday - Thursday 9 am - 2 pm
Monday 5 pm - 6 pm
or call for an appointment 928-634-7869

HAIR SALON
Monday 4 pm to 5: 30 pm
Tuesday: 9 am - 12:30 pm pm

VISION
1st Tuesday/month
10 am - 11 am

LEGAL
Call: 928-634-7869

MISSION THRIFT STORE
Clothing vouchers can be used Tuesday - Friday 9am to 4pm
Tuesday - Saturday: 9 am to 5 pm
810 W. Mingus Ave. in Cottonwood

The Mission is a SNAP Community Partner

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the USDA.
This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

LISA
Low Income Student Aid

Supporting Student Success
Through Community Compassion

Some ways LISA can assist your student:

- Medical bills, prescriptions, therapy, etc
- Clothing, shoes, coats
- Hair cuts & personal hygiene items
- Outstanding cafeteria balances
- Book purchases & class tuition
- Admission to school events
- Graduation Expenses
- School supplies & special needs devices
- Childcare costs & pre-school tuition
- Fees for extracurricular activities
- College deposits & testing fees
- Birthdays & Holidays

QR Code

Qualifying students include those who attend Oak Creek School, Dr. Daniel Bright School, Cottonwood Community School, as well as their graduates currently attending Mingus Union High School or Verde Tech High School. We also assist students attending West Sedona School, Red Rock Jr. High and Sr. High School.

LISA is a 501C(3) charitable organization that provides aid to public school students in the Verde Valley.
Request aid at azlisa.org

Manzanita Outreach

Check the Manzanita Outreach Facebook page for updates on their food share dates and what items could be available.

Our mission is to share the abundance of resources within our communities with dignity and joy.

406 S 6th Street,
Cottonwood
manzanitaoutreach.org

QR Code

Manzanita Outreach

Verde Valley

A Sharing Community

Phone: 928-634-7869