

Guest List

--Natasha Waddell and family (8) (needs a table for her board and awards)

--Irma Ruth Guerrero Weber (with Safford principal and staff)

-- Maria Bicknell

--Educational Enrichment Foundation (Pam Francis)

--Citibank staff (2 people)

--DirectTV (3 people)

--Wells Fargo (2 people)

--Drachman Principal, staff, families

--Attendance Awareness schools and families

- Erickson (confirmed 2)
- Hudlow (confirmed 1)
- Ford (confirmed 1)
- Lawrence (confirmed 1)
- McCorkle (confirmed 1)
- Dietz (confirmed 2)
- Mansfeld (confirmed 1)
- Pistor (confirmed 1)
- Dodge (confirmed 1)
- Rincon (confirmed 1)
- Sahuaro (?)
- Palo Verde (?)

First up: A big congratulations to **Natasha Waddell**, a seventh-grader at Dodge Traditional Magnet Middle School. Natasha's sixth-grade science project "Nuts for Energy" was not only a winner at school, she came in first-place citywide and second place at the state level!

Natasha recently found out she was a semi-finalist in a national competition---the Broadcom MASTERS, the premier middle school science and engineering fair competition! The competition is for the top ten percent winning Science Fair Projects nationally for sixth, seventh and eighth grade.

Natasha's mom tells us Natasha completed her entry over the summer at the urging of Principal Schulter. The entry consisted of 15 essay questions. There were just 300 semi-finalists selected nationwide.

Great work Natasha!

NEXT PAGE

Next, I'd like to recognize **Irma Ruth Guerrero Weber**, sixth-grade design teacher at Safford K-8 Magnet School.

Ms. Guerrero Weber received the AZIBS Outstanding Teacher Award in September, recognizing her for outstanding service in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme.

Ms. Guerrero Weber's principal says she exemplifies many of the IB learner profile traits: She is a caring, knowledgeable, well-balanced individual who reflects regularly on her teaching practices. Ruth is also principled and does not hesitate to take on something new. Lastly, this exemplary teacher models for her students exactly what it is to be an inquirer who asks questions in order to grow as a person and an educator. We are extremely proud of her.

Congratulations Ms. Guerrero Weber! (she may want to speak)

NEXT PAGE

Our next honoree is Pueblo teacher Maria Bicknell, who was named Junior Achievement of Arizona-Southern District's Teacher of the Year!

The organization honored her for her "dedication to partner in providing JA's 21st Century work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy programs to the students at Pueblo High School."

Dr. Bicknell has been working with Junior Achievement since the late 1980s.

JA says, "Maria has played an integral part in the successful implementation of the partnership between Junior Achievement and Pueblo Magnet High School, year after year. More than 1,000 students have participated in Junior Achievement through CTE classrooms at Pueblo High School. With Dr. Bicknell's support and leadership, JA and Pueblo were able to successfully partner with Intuit this year to provide the first **JA You're Hired** employability skills workshops in Tucson to over 200 Pueblo CTE students. JA expresses our sincerest gratitude to Dr. Maria Bicknell for her partnership, leadership and continued support in educating the young people at Pueblo high school to think beyond the classroom and into their futures!"

Come on up, Dr. Bicknell. Thank you for the amazing support you have given our students in Junior Achievement at Pueblo Magnet High School!

NEXT PAGE

Next we would like to thank several people and organizations for their support of our Wakefield and Duffy family centers and the students and families they serve. I'd like to invite up our friends from the Educational Enrichment Foundation, Citibank Direct TV, Wells Fargo and Scripps Media 106.3FM.

These hardworking and generous folks have donated items such as shoes, clothing and backpacks for our students. It's wonderful to see the community support our families. Thank you for your donations.

Our centers are always in need of donations---just last month the Wakefield Family Center Clothing Bank served more than 200 families! If you'd like more information about how to donate items or time, please check our website TUSD1.org

NEXT PAGE

Next, I would like to congratulate Drachman Montessori Magnet Elementary School, which was named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Drachman is the only school in Tucson to earn the designation this year. Only four schools in Arizona earned the designation this year, and there were only 335 across the nation.

We are proud of Drachman—it's students, leadership and school community. They are a great example of how elevating standards and working together can help school's reach the highest levels of achievement.

I'd like to invite principal Jesus Celaya and the Drachman team to come up. Congratulations on this great achievement!

NEXT PAGE

(this has a video)

Next, we have some great news to share about National Attendance Awareness month. Here are some stats for our Tucson Unified schools:

- 80 percent of TUSD Schools improved their September attendance over last year
- We had 5,353 fewer absences during the month
- We had 255 fewer absences per day
- 64 percent of Kindergarten classes improved

We also held a special competition for our kindergarten classes called “Bee at School,” and 95 percent participated! I’m happy to announce that Ford Elementary School won the contest! Here’s a [video](#) that shows the surprise celebration at Ford.

Additionally, we are awarding schools for improving their attendance this year over last. Here are the winners for September:

Elementary Schools

- First Place – Erickson with a 2.77 percent increase
- Second Place – Hudlow with a 2.46 percent increase
- Third Place – Ford with a 1.99 percent increase

K-8 Schools

- First Place – Lawrence with a 2.08 percent increase
- Second Place – McCorkle with a 1.66 percent increase
- Third Place – Dietz with a 1.61 percent increase

Middle Schools

- First Place – Mansfeld with a 1.75 percent increase
- Second Place – Pistor with a 1.22 percent increase
- Third Place – Dodge with a .88 percent increase

High Schools

- First Place – Rincon for a 1.5 percent increase
- Second Place – Sahuaro with a 1.30 percent increase
- Third Place – Palo Verde with a 1.11 percent increase

Congratulations to these schools. Attendance is directly linked to achievement, and it is imperative that we encourage students and families to make it to school. Thank you to our Attendance Awareness team, our principals and our families for their efforts in this initiative.

NEXT PAGE

Lastly, I wanted to be sure to answer a question that was left unanswered in a local media report last week. In an on-camera interview, Dr. Stegeman questioned whether we would be over budget if we filled all of our unfilled teaching positions.

I wanted to take this opportunity to answer Dr. Stegeman's question and assure the community that we budget for every teaching and staffing position every year. In fact, it's a process that is already underway for next year's budget.

We value our teachers and are working year-round to recruit and fill these positions. We would like nothing more than to fill every last one.

The reality is---our state faces a crisis in teacher shortages. To say we're balancing our budgets by turning teachers away is discounting the work our finance and HR teams are doing.

Our students deserve the very best---and we are working hard to give it to them. I encourage anyone with further questions to take a look at our budget report at TUSD1.org or contact us.