



# PRESS RELEASE

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **District Reveals the Identity of Arts-Focused High School**

**(Avondale, Ariz. – March 6, 2025)** – The Agua Fria High School District has announced that its highly anticipated arts high school will be called *The Hilltop School for the Arts*. Opening in August 2026, this premier campus will serve as a destination for young artists, offering an immersive educational experience that fosters creativity and excellence. Complementing the school, a state-of-the-art, 700-seat theater will showcase student performances and professional productions, enriching the cultural landscape of the region.

The Hilltop School for the Arts was created in response to a community-driven strategic plan, reflecting the voices of students, alumni, families, businesses, municipalities, faith-based leaders, and retirees who called for more educational choices and stronger community connections.

“This visionary project delivers on that promise, providing an immersive learning environment where students refine their artistic skills while engaging with the broader community,” said Superintendent Mark Yslas.

Breaking ground in May 2025, the school is part of a major revitalization project in Litchfield Park at Litchfield and Camelback roads, alongside a new county library, restored historic homes, and event spaces.

“We are deeply grateful to the community for supporting the 2023 no-tax-rate increase bond, which is bringing the vision of an arts-focused high school into reality,” said Kristen Acton, Governing Board President. “Their investment in education and the arts will have a lasting impact, providing students with unparalleled opportunities to pursue their passions while strengthening our community as a whole.”

The school’s name and identity pay tribute to Rancho La Loma, the hilltop estate founded by Paul Litchfield, the city’s namesake. Once a desert oasis, the site is now being transformed while preserving its historic significance. The peacock, chosen as the school’s emblem, symbolizes both the magnificent birds that once roamed the hilltop and the bold artistic expression of its students. Its colors, teal and burgundy, represent creativity, passion, and artistic excellence—fitting for what will be the crown jewel of the hill.

Welcoming 450 students in grades 9-12, The Hilltop School for the Arts will provide a tuition-free arts education with pathways in theater, music, dance, visual arts, and production. Admission is

based on an audition and application process, and with no geographic boundary, students from across the region are encouraged to apply.

The school's grand theater will host a year-round calendar of performances, blending student productions with professional shows to bring world-class entertainment to the area. This unique approach will offer students unparalleled industry exposure, mentorship, and hands-on learning opportunities.

"This is a historic moment for our district and community," said Acton. "The Hilltop School for the Arts will inspire students to reach their full artistic potential while honoring the site's legacy. Our Governing Board proudly made this decision together, recognizing the profound impact it will have on generations of students. This high school reflects our commitment to expanding academic choice and fostering educational excellence. We are building a lasting legacy that will elevate arts education and enrich our community for decades to come."

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*Agua Fria Union High School District was established in 1955. Today, the district serves the communities of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, with six high schools: Agua Fria, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Millennium, Verrado and Agua Fria Online. Plus the District offers two alternative programs: Coldwater Academy and New Directions. More information can be found at [aguafria.org](http://aguafria.org)*



## Comunicado de Prensa

**Para Publicación Inmediata**

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**Title**

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*El Distrito de Escuelas Secundarias Agua Fria Union se estableció en 1955. Hoy en día, el distrito sirve a las comunidades de Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, con seis escuelas secundarias: Agua Fria, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Millennium, Verrado y Agua Fria Online. Además, el distrito ofrece dos programas alternativos: Coldwater Academy y New Directions. Más información se puede encontrar en [aguafria.org](http://aguafria.org)*