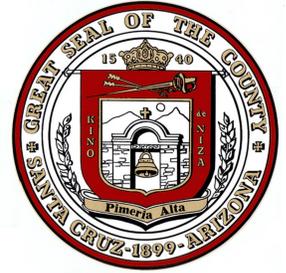




# Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez Newsletter



*“Education must not simply teach work, it must teach life.” -W.E.B. Du Bois*

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[Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent's Office Website](#)

The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and a safe holiday season. During this season our office likes to reflect on the support we have received, as well as the partnerships and relationships we have made throughout the county. The office is indebted to all those that have helped sponsor various events through our office, and continue to support our county's educational community. We would also like to recognize and give thanks to school administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students that make our educational system and community thrive.



Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent  
Alfredo I. Velásquez at the 2018  
Teacher of the Year Event.

### Upcoming Events:

County Spelling Bee | February 8

Read Across America | March 2

Early Childhood Education Awareness Month |  
February

## Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office awarded \$4.5 million Education Grant

Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez announced that the United States Department of Education awarded Santa Cruz County a seven-year GEAR UP grant. GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a federal program funded by the U.S. Department of Education whose mission is to significantly increase the number of middle and high school students who are prepared to enter and succeed in college and technical schools. The Santa Cruz County program was funded to provide seven years of support to the county's 7th grade class beginning this year. Year one funding will total \$638,169. The remaining funds are allocated to the County in years 2 through 7 of the grant.

Mr. Velasquez stated the "*College-Career Readiness and Educational Opportunities (C-CREO)* Project will focus on providing seven years of support to the nearly 800 students who are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade this school year. C-CREO will work with students to identify professional and technical careers that are of interest to them and uses their skills and talents, while academically preparing them for their chosen career, building resilience so they overcome the challenges they will face, and providing college and career planning."

Ms. Maya Donnelly, the Project Director, emphasized "the goal of *C-CREO* is to ensure students master the Arizona Academic Standards and they are prepared for, enroll, and succeed in post-secondary educational programs. We want students to apply their learning both in their studies and to everyday life so they are personally and academically ready for the 21st century."

Special thanks is given to the partners for their dedication to our youth. Planning *C-CREO* was a significant undertaking that involved the commitment and leadership of the schools and leaders from the public and private sectors. *C-CREO* incorporates best practices so all students are provided a high-quality education that meets their unique needs. This will be accomplished by:

Developing Career Identity. Students can participate in mentoring, career awareness presentations, job shadowing, internships, college and industry tours, and college bridge programs.

Improving Student Achievement. Programs will include after school and summer classes, tutoring, enrichment courses and programs, academic assistance and planning. Major attention will focus on monitoring student progress, and providing youth with extended learning and college/career activities. *C-CREO* also supports educational reforms that include professional development, dual credit, and expanding the innovative MetroMatematicas and Six Sigma curriculums.

Improving and increasing college and career planning opportunities. Each student will have a personalized educational college and career academic plan that empowers families and students to plan and choose a high-quality education that meets their student's unique needs.

A key feature of *C-CREO* is to support and expand on the work of the Santa Cruz Community College District. Working together, the project will establish a *C-CREO* Center to focus on creating college opportunities, access, and success for our community and assisting students enroll in college and earn a college and/or technical degree.

## Congratulations Superintendent David Verdugo!



Pictured Above: Santa Cruz Valley  
School District Superintendent,  
David Verdugo

Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District Superintendent David Verdugo has been chosen by the Arizona School Administrators, as the 2018-19 All-Arizona Superintendent of the Year for medium-sized districts. ASA Executive Director Mark Joraanstad, acknowledged numerous accomplishments of Mr. Verdugo's over the past several years, which includes, winning AP Small District of the Year and Cambridge Small District of the Year, earning a five-star rating for its preschool program, and Rio Rico High School's title in 2017 as an A+ School of Excellence by the Arizona Educational Foundation. Superintendent Verdugo will attend the Arizona School Board *Association*/Arizona School Administrators Winter Conference on December 13 to be recognized for his accomplishments in the community.

## Introducing our Parent Educators

Los Padres son Los Primeros Profesores (“Los Padres”) Home Visitation Grant, was awarded to the Santa Cruz County School’s Superintendent’s Office by the First Things First Regional Partnership Council in July 2018. “Los Padres” Home Visitation Grant Provides a hands on approach to learning through parent-child interaction and teaches the importance of learning through play. All families with children ages 0-48 months are eligible to participate in the program in addition to teen parents, first time parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and court appointed legal guardians. The team is comprised of the Program Director, Clair Danielson, and 5 Parent Educators: Georgina Romero-Parra, Gabriela Cervantes, Melissa Gallegos, and Alma Feria. There is one open position remaining.



Pictured Above: Clair Danielson, Grant Director

“My passion has always been in working with young children and families by encouraging parents to be their child’s greatest advocate and building our future with the youngest members of society.”



Pictured Above: Georgina Parra, Parent Educator

“ I love working with children and families. The strength of a community comes from the strength of its families.”



Pictured Above: Gabriela Cervantez, Parent Educator

“First Things First, the name says everything.

I’m very excited to be part of the program and I will do my best to serve our families.”



Pictured Above: Alma Feria, Parent Educator

“I love working with families and being a partner in helping to raise successful and happy children. I, as well enjoy meeting new people and collaborating for a better community .”



FIRST THINGS FIRST



Parents as Teachers®



Pictured Above: Melissa Gallegos, Parent Educator

“In these 8 years as an educator my greatest joy is to realize that when you teach with your heart, you leave a very big mark on people.”

## Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week was held October 23-31 to honor DEA Special Agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, who was tortured and killed fighting the war on drugs. During this eventful week, students throughout the nation pledge to lead a drug-free life. This year’s theme for Red Ribbon Week was “Life Is Your Journey, Travel



Pictured Above: Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez with Santa Cruz County Sheriff Tony Estrada

Drug Free.” The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent’s Office partnered with the Santa Cruz County Attorney’s Office to provide Red Ribbon bracelets for every student in Santa Cruz County School Districts. The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office Staff also attended a luncheon, on October 24th, held at the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Cruz County to show our support. The event was held by Santa Cruz County Sheriff, Tony Estrada. The guest speakers at the luncheon included Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Ramon Almaraz, DEA, and Justice of the Peace Honorable Judge, Emilio Velasquez. Also in attendance was the Lincoln Elementary School Choir who sang the National Anthem, and Lincoln Elementary School Student Council President, Nayeli Lopez, who led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## 2018 Halloween

On October 31st, the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent’s Office took part in the annual County Halloween Office Decoration Contest. This year there was a total of eleven offices that participated throughout the County, including the County Attorney’s Office who themed Netflix’s Stranger Things complete with the staff members dressed as characters from the show. Departments who took part in this competition included the Board of Supervisors, The Finance Department, and the County Treasurer’s Office. The County School Superintendent’s Office were proud to win for the second time in a row. The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent’s Office theme for this year’s Halloween contest was Disney’s Alice in Wonderland. The Superintendent’s staff dressed up as characters from the fairytale. Clair Danielson, First Things First Grant Director, won the county’s costume competition for most creative costume as the Queen of Hearts.



Pictured above: The Santa Cruz County School Superintendents Office wearing their Alice in Wonderland costumes on Halloween day



Pictured above: First Things First Grant Director Clair Danielson stands with Parent Educators as well as Healthy Students Grant Director Terri Sprigg.

## Welcome to Santa Cruz County Superintendent Mary Faley



Pictured above: Sonoita Elementary School Superintendent Mary Faley

Sonoita Elementary School Superintendent Mary Faley began her new role as School Superintendent for the Sonoita Elementary School District late in July and was very excited to meet the new students and staff members of the small school. She brings 23 years of experience in public education and five and a half years as an Assistant Superintendent. In her previous role as an Assistant Superintendent in St. Clair Shores, Michigan, there were 220 teachers. That made it difficult to get to know them all, more so the students. Superintendent Faley says she chose this profession because she enjoys working with children and because it gives her the opportunity to expand her skill set and be able to interact with students. In addition to interacting with students, being the Sonoita Superintendent gives her the ability to be closer to her family as her oldest son lives in Rio Rico and her granddaughter who currently studies at the University of Arizona. One of Faley's goals as

Superintendent is to focus on funding, as it is a major challenge that faces small schools districts. The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office would like to welcome Superintendent Mary Faley; we are sending you the warmest welcome and look forward to working with you.

## Thank You Sonoita Governing Board

Thank you for your years of service Mr. Mike Sweedo and Ms. Sharon McCully. Thank you for serving on the Sonoita Governing Board. Your commitment & dedication to this educational community, students, & staff is greatly appreciated.

Pictured right: Governing Board Member Ms. Sharon McCully, Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez, Governing Board Member Mr. Mike Sweedo, and Sonoita Elementary School Superintendent Mary Faley.



## Arizona Association of County School Superintendent's Meeting

Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez hosted an Arizona Association of County School Superintendent's meeting at the Quality Hotel Americana on November 1st. Nine of the fifteen County School Superintendents from around Arizona were in attendance to discuss various topics. Such topics included the funding of juvenile detention centers, legislative topics, implementing TEAM Kids Statewide,



Pictured above: Arizona County School Superintendents

Arizona public education, and updates on CTE Dual Pathway. In addition, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) students from Rio Rico High School provided information on Santa Cruz County. The meeting was Harvest themed, with a fresh produce market for the guests to enjoy. This year's meeting included local entertainment provided by the NHS Mariachi and an Aztec dance performance by the Mexicayotl Academy.

## Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman Visits Santa Cruz County

On December 3, 2018, recently elected Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman came to visit Patagonia Public Schools. Superintendent Hoffman was able to visit classrooms to meet students, talk to teachers, administration, and Patagonia's Governing Board. Superintendent Hoffman spoke to the students in Japanese and talked to them about what their Christmas wishes were. Hoffman was also joined by Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velasquez, Chief Deputy Chris Young, Santa Cruz Center Director Dr. Stella Perez, Patagonia School Teacher Mike Young, along with the Superintendent of Patagonia School Districts Rachell Hochheim.



Pictured above:  
Superintendent of Public  
Instruction,  
Kathy Hoffman



Pictured left: Superintendent of  
Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman  
stands with County School  
Superintendent Alfredo I. Velázquez,  
Superintendent of Patagonia School  
Districts Rachell Hochheim,  
Patagonia Governing Board mem-  
bers, and special guests.

## Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office Chief Deputy Chris Young dresses as Santa Claus



On December 13, 2018, Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office Chief Deputy Christopher Young flew over Santa Cruz County and arrived to Holy Cross Hospital via helicopter dressed as Santa Claus. At the annual event held by Holy Cross Hospital, Chief Deputy Young surprised the children from Mary L. Welty Elementary School and asked the children what they wanted for Christmas. Mr. Young mentioned, "I would like to thank Dina Rojas-Sanchez the Director of Support Services from Holy Cross Hospital for giving me the opportunity to be Santa Claus at her hospital. It was an honor to spend time with the wonderful kids from Mary Welty and the community, along with the Holy Cross Staff. I also want to express my gratitude to the Air Methods Lifenet 6 crew who flew me in."

## Staff Member Spotlight: Grant Consultant Mike Hughes



My name is Mike Hughes. I am under contract as the grants writer for the County School Superintendent's Office and to support and evaluate special projects. There are two adages I live by. The first is "Little things matter". The second was first said by Pat Summitt, a legendary college basketball coach, "It is what it is; but it will be what you make it". Let me explain.

Little things matter. I was born at 12:01 AM in Chicago Illinois, the oldest of six and in a very close knit family. My brothers and sisters and most of my extended family still live in the Chicago area. If I had been born at 11:59 PM I would have never have lived in Arizona, met and married my wife, had the wonderful professional life I have enjoyed, or known Santa Cruz County.

Years ago, birthdays of young men were listed on ping pong balls, tossed in a barrel and rotated. One by one the balls were picked on national TV. The first ball picked meant that guys with that birthday were to be drafted into the military first; second ball picked meant that you were drafted second and so on.

Because I was born on June 27, I was drafted (my number was 64). If I was born on June 26, my draft lottery number would have been in the high 200's and I never would have served in the military. I then received orders to report to Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix.

I am fortunate to be a father to two beautiful daughters, Becky and Jennifer. For a while I was a single dad. The girls were seven and five respectively, when I met Gloria whose son, Philippe, was six. Gloria and I both served on the Board of Directors for the YMCA and commiserated about the woes of being a single parent. We began to date, married, and thirty-three years later she and I remain together. Gloria is amazing. She was born in East Los Angeles. She was always at the top of her class, the first in her family to graduate from high school and college and then earn her Master's. She serves as Assistant City Manager for the City of Santa Rosa California. Prior to that she was Deputy City Manager for San Antonio and before that was Director of Human Services for Phoenix. She has received international acclaim for her work in mentoring others.

Jennifer has traveled and studied throughout the world. She now lives in Chicago where she uses her language skills (she is fluent in several languages) in her job with Chubbs Insurance. Becky taught self-contained Special Education for a number of years in Phoenix and San Francisco area schools. She now works with me; although I think she wants to return to working with youth. She also is fluent in Spanish. By the way, neither of the girls acquired their language skills from me. We lost Philippe two years ago. It was sudden and unexpected. Philippe was an amazing young man who was bright, inquisitive, and sociable who many of you knew from his work on several county projects. He is missed every day. His passing has caused me to treasure friends and family even more.

My career has been personally and professionally rewarding. I have taught, served in the military, functioned as a youth minister, directed educational programs and systems at the local and state level, and served on local, state, and national commissions. I began working at the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) as an Administrative Assistant following my discharge from the Air Force. During the initial years I worked in every division at the Department. I was then selected for a position in Title I initially serving as assistant to the director. I was then promoted to an education specialist position working directly with Arizona schools and eventually Director of Title I and Compensatory Education Programs. I was then tasked with establishing the ADE Grants Management Office and following that assignment was appointed Associate Superintendent for General Education overseeing all of the education programs administered by the State Department of Education. I retired from that position and began my educational consulting business in 2004 working with local governments, Indian Tribes, and schools in Arizona and Utah.

My work in Santa Cruz County has been exceptionally rewarding. Although I came to know the County and its educators when employed at the State, it was not until the County received its first Gear Up grant that I began working with the Superintendent's Office. I was the evaluator of the program. Since then and following Alfredo's election to the Superintendent's Office, I have succeeded in obtaining additional funding for Santa Cruz County that has supported several initiatives. Working with the Superintendent's team and the schools we have secured over \$20 million to expand and enhance opportunities for Santa Cruz children, youth, and their families. What is most rewarding is the impact the programs have had. For example, establishment of the MetroMatematicas and Six Sigma programs is impressive. These two programs, which illustrate the outstanding work by Superintendent's Office and Santa Cruz County schools and teachers, are the first of their kind in K-12 education in the United States and were deservedly acknowledged by the Arizona Association of Counties when the Association awarded the Superintendent's Office its *Summit Award in Youth & Education* and the *Innovation of the Year Merit Award* for the cutting edge and cost-effective approach in providing STEM Career Pathways with their College & Career Readiness Educational Opportunities Project.

Finally, regarding the second credo (It is what it is; but it will be what you make it). My parents taught me resilience and always to always "get back into the ring". I was a Title I student, struggled in school, graduated almost last in my class, was turned down by every college I first applied to. Since then, I have had my fair share of setbacks. However, I learned early on that it is important to stay focused on the future. Our children and their children will have tremendous opportunities if we remember that the future is what we make it. Santa Cruz County has incredible possibilities and I am fortunate to be a member of the Superintendent's Office.

## Gear Up Grant College Center Liason Sandra Davila



Pictured above: C-CREO Gear-up College Center Liaison Sandra C. Davila

Sandra C. Davila, C-CREO Gear-up College Center Liaison. I am an Apache (NHS), an Aztec (Pima), and a Wildcat (UofA) graduate, but most importantly, I am a Nogalian. I have a wonderful family, my husband and daughter are my life. Painting and drawing are my favorite hobbies and I teach these skills to kids. I take pride when it comes to my community and the people that work hard to keep it growing. As a believer of pay-it-forward, I am committed to you, and to those in need. The Nogales Lions Club, the Rotary Club, and the Cultural Arts Committee have served as platforms to transfer my passion to our community. As the C-CREO Gear-up College Center Liaison, I plan on investing all my knowledge and efforts to provide Santa Cruz County with resources for post-secondary education. A special thank you to Mr. Alfredo I. Velásquez and his team for the great opportunity. I could not be luckier to now be part of this team.

## Nogales Rotary Student of the Quarter

On December 6, 2018, the Nogales Rotary Club in Partnership with the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office hosted its Student of the Quarter Event at the American Quality Inn Hotel. The honor award goes to the student that best demonstrates the Principles of the 4-Way-Test. The 4-Way-Test includes the following questions: 1. Is it the TRUTH? 2. Is it FAIR to all concerned? 3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? 4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned? Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez and staff would like to congratulate the students for their achievement.



Pictured above: Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez stands with Educators, Student of the Quarter Winners, and Nogales Rotary Club President Edmundo Gamillo.

## College and Career Fairs



Pictured above: Students from Pierson High School gather to fill out survey on college career paths.

The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office attended four College and Career Fairs during the months of November and December. The events were held at Rio Rico High School, Calabasas School, Pierson High School, and Nogales High School. At the event, the office promoted educational careers, discussed the duties and responsibilities of our office, and promoted the various grants which our office oversees.

## Meet the Staff



Alfredo I. Velásquez  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent



Christopher Young  
Chief Deputy  
Santa Cruz County School  
Superintendent's Office



Maya Donnelly  
CREO Program Director  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent's Office



Teresa A. Sprigg  
Governor's Healthy  
Families/Healthy Youth  
and Healthy Students  
Program Director  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent's  
Office



Danna Gallardo  
Education Director  
Santa Cruz County  
Juvenile Detention  
Education Program



Marisol Chiquete-Bolaina  
Bookkeeper  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent's Office



Patricia Barraza-  
Preciado  
Accounting Specialist  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent's



Adrian Chamberlain  
Secretary  
Santa Cruz County  
School  
Superintendent's Office



Sergio Delgado  
Office Clerk  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent's  
Office