

Jeffrey Neff

Tanque Verde Unified School District No. 13



I've lived in the Tanque Verde Valley for over 25 years. Our family moved here when my children were preschoolers because of the great school system.

I recognized the value of education in my own life. I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. My father – a machinist - emphasized the importance of education. His hard work raised our family to a solid middle-class lifestyle from the poverty of rural southeastern Ohio where he was born. I feel honored to have been able to serve the Tanque Verde Unified School District by providing the foundation for a high-quality education for its students.

My wife and I wanted our children to have those better opportunities. My children are grown with families of their own, but they greatly benefited from the excellent education they received at Tanque Verde.

I am committed to supporting the excellence of the Tanque Verde School District. For instance, over the past four years, according to the Arizona Department of Education, our High School has risen to be the highest-ranking traditional High School in Southern Arizona. I have supported starting Professional Learning Communities at our schools. These PLCs allow teachers to easily share best practices and brainstorm innovative ways to improve learning and drive student achievement.

All Tanque Verde schools have been rated as "A" Schools. We have also emphasized experienced teachers. We have less than half the number of inexperienced teachers statewide. We have a 97% high school graduation rate, while the statewide graduation rate is 20% lower.

Our schools prepare students not only for college but also for career readiness, with courses in precision engineering, coding, and agriculture. The State Department of Education awarded us a score of 20 out of 20 in career education.

Recently, we approved an initiative by our High School Principal to allow our students to enroll in University of Arizona Honors College courses. We offer Art and Band, Choir, Music, Orchestra, Photography, and Theater. We were able to secure \$20,000,000 from the State of Arizona School Facilities Board to improve our school facilities without the use of our Tanque Verde taxpayer dollars.

According to NICHE, Best Schools, the Tanque Verde School District is in the top School Districts in Arizona. Now we have the following challenges in the coming years:

- Making sure our schools continue to improve their performance
- Increasing teacher compensation so we can continue to hire excellent teachers
- Enhancing career and technical education like STEAM and STEM programs
- Continue implementing PLC programs to improve student performance
- Making sure our schools focus education of students and not other issues
- Making sure that the taxpayers value and accountability in our District

My bottom line is that I support excellence in education in the Tanque Verde School District.