

Tucson LINKS Letter

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NEWS FLASH

Tucson LINKS is nearing its capacity for schools. The schools that have partnered with LINKS now number 54.

At press time, one slot remained available from the original 55 for which the grant was designed.

That means about one-third of Tucson-area elementary schools are using LINK funds and services to support evidence-based strategies to prevent violence and substance abuse. We're all partners in ensuring safe, drug-free learning environments for our children.

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Firing on all cylinders

Twin Peaks core team is a finely tuned machine

As has been noted in these pages before, a not-so-secret force behind a school's successful participation in Tucson LINKS is the core team.

In collaboration with a school outreach coordinator from LINKS, the core team helps escort its faculty through the action planning process, meets regularly and maintains the lines of communication throughout the school.

At Twin Peaks Elementary School, in the Marana Unified School District, the core team runs smoothly because of shared decision-making and teachers who willingly volunteer for duties. So says teacher Sandy Faulk, who also serves as the school's journey mapper.

"No one's really the leader of the core team. It's a team literally," Faulk says. "I mean the assistant principal and the principal attend the meetings but they don't dominate them. We all have equal roles in the team."

Faulk says the team includes a primary teacher, an intermediate teacher, a counselor, an early education tutor, a reading specialist, along with principal Jane Ballesteros and assistant principal Michelle Poppen.

Non-certified staff members are also involved in the process, she says. "We want to involve all the support staff and different elements of the staff, even the bus drivers."

Delegating duties gives staff members a sense of ownership, she says.

Faulk, who also has a daughter enrolled in the school, praises Twin Peaks' "great school culture" and strong parent

involvement in school activities.

The Twin Peaks core team also ensures that messages about resiliency and student success are consistent.

"It's not like we're reinventing the wheel, but we all have to use the same language if we don't want that progress and learning to stop when the child walks out that door."

Ballesteros, who leads a staff of about 45 people at the 3-year-old school,

obviously thinks highly of her teachers and accords them respect and responsibility.

"It's a community of teachers that shares with each other. They are not competitors," she says.

"They step up when you need somebody to do something. It's not that old situation where 20 percent of the people are doing 80 percent of the work."

As a result of Twin Peaks' implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), the faculty has formed five school committees: student learning; literacy and lifelong learning; community partnership; school safety and environment; and staff development. Every teacher serves on a committee, Ballesteros says.

When it comes to inspiring her teachers and the core team, Ballesteros' finds her most effective tool is an atmosphere of openness.

"Information is power," she says. "I wouldn't hesitate to share a piece of sensitive information with the core team about why we should or shouldn't do something.

"Most of all, we try to have fun."



Spotlight on Resiliency

High, supported expectations essential to teaching whole child

Resiliency Wheel Elements:

- Life skills
- Caring and support
- High, supported expectations
- Opportunities for meaningful participation
- Pro-social bonding
- Clear and consistent boundaries

¹Henderson N. & Milstein, M.M. (1996). *Resiliency in Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press Inc.



Think Time Strategy is a proven classroom method that provides one consistent response for all disruptive behaviors, not multiple solutions for different occasions.

Marana's Butterfield Elementary School recently was recognized by the Arizona Educational Foundation as an A+ school. Butterfield faculty and staff expect a lot of their students, but they also make a point of supporting the students' efforts.

"High, supported expectations" is one of the six important elements of the Resiliency Wheel, developed by Nan Henderson and Mike M. Milstein.¹ These six concepts (see sidebar, at left) have become essential elements in all aspects of Tucson LINKS.

That philosophy has helped Butterfield win recognition, says proud principal Rocco Sugameli.

Among the most significant areas addressed by the A+ application process is a high level of "student focus and support."

"When we wrote out that part of the application, we referred a lot to LINKS specifically, and to the principles of resiliency and how LINKS has helped us to focus on those principles with students," Sugameli said.

He added that said some of the other areas that the A+ application addresses are: school organization and culture; school curriculum and how it conforms to state standards; active teaching; leadership; student achievement; and school-family connections.

"We also mentioned LINKS in the school-family section, and about how LINKS has been a vital partner in helping the school assess needs and set goals based on those needs."

Sugameli said Butterfield's mini-grant was written for Strategic Tutoring, but the school's philosophy does not emphasize student achievement alone.

"Sure that accountability ax is hanging over everybody's head, but we think there is so much more than that to education.

"Every school has a ways to go, you're never where you want to be, but what Butterfield is really known for is building character through the education process. Teaching the whole kid is a strong belief."

Sugameli said he is proud of the way the neighborhood surrounding the school recently has embraced it.

Although demographics in the area population have changed over the years, Butterfield has been able to main high standards among its students, he said.

"For us, the nature of education goes beyond the students' performance in the classroom. We have a school that that kids want to come to and one that parents what to send their kids to. That translates into success for kids."

Think Time Strategy

Bringing Structure to "time out"

We all know the value of taking a "time out," but without consistent application and a precise structure, this behavioral strategy can sometimes present its own challenges.

Think Time Strategy is a proven classroom method that provides one consistent response for all disruptive behaviors, not multiple solutions for different occasions.

Think Time Strategy is designed to cut short negative social exchanges, provide students with feedback and a plan for future

performance, and increase future opportunities for positive interaction. Think Time Strategy has three elements:

- Reduction or elimination of warnings
- A time-out process
- An objective debriefing process

All it requires is another classroom teacher with whom to partner.

Information: www.air.org/cecp/resources/success/think_time.htm

Tucson LINKS Summer Training Schedule

Attendance is strongly encouraged for schools whose Action Plans include Positive Behavior Supports or Caring School Community

Just because summer approaches doesn't mean your school's opportunities for growth get put on hold during the hot months.

The Tucson LINKS training team has scheduled a full slate of workshops and training events for June and July. (Training is suspended in May to allow for breathing room while the school year concludes.)

This summer's trainings are especially important for school whose Action Plans include such strategies as Positive Behavior Supports or Caring School Community. Those schools are strongly encouraged to send representatives to the workshop to ensure fidelity in the implementation of these strategies.

The June trainings are open to the entire community. Those in July are designed for participants from LINKS schools specifically implementing those programs.

Unless noted, all training events on the following list will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA) Training Center, 2502 N. Dodge Blvd. Call LINKS training, 626-4964, to register for trainings, or with your questions and comments.

- **School-Wide Bullying Prevention**
Strategies for schools, classrooms and individuals
Thursday, June 3 (Open to all schools)
- **Involving Families in Learning**
Strategies to support education in and out of school
Tuesday, June 8 (Open to all schools)

- **Tutoring Strategies and Programs**
Strategic Tutoring, Class-Wide Peer Tutoring and tutor program design
Thursday, June 10 (Open to all schools)
- **Strengthening Family-School Connections**
Strategies for increasing family participation
Wednesday, June 16 (Open to all schools)
- **Managing Difficult Behaviors**
Skills, techniques and strategies
Thursday, June 17 (Open to all schools)
- **PBS: School-Wide Team Planning & Implementation**
Tuesday-Wednesday, July 13-14 (LINKS schools only)
- **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Implementation Workshop**
Thursday, July 15 (Open to all schools)
- **Caring School Community Implementation Workshop**
Tuesday-Wednesday, July 20-21 (Open to all schools)
- **Diversity in the Classroom: Maximizing the Resource of Culture**
Thursday, July 22 (Open to all schools)
- **PBS: Data Collection and Data Entry Training**
Tuesday, Aug. 3, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Lee Instructional Resource Center Computer Lab, 2025 E. Winsett St. (LINKS schools only)
Please note data, time and place

Second-year assessment: PSA² measures a school's progress

Many LINKS schools already have encountered the PSA², an enlightening tool for measuring a school's growth according to 10 factors that contribute to creating a protective school atmosphere.

The first task a school's faculty encounters after becoming a Tucson LINKS partner school is to take the Protective School Assessment (PSA), a brief evaluation that school

staff can use for identifying areas of success and growth in the 10 areas.

Once a school determines the areas that present the most opportunities for growth and positive change, its core team creates an action plan with the help of a school outreach coordinator.

One year after its initial PSA, each partner school takes the evaluation again, and the scores are

compared, year to year, with often dramatic results.

The first 22 LINKS partner schools to complete a full year of implementation showed positive change across the board, according to LINKS' independent evaluator. The average PSA score for those first 22 schools increased from 64 to 71, out of a possible 100.

Next year? Get ready for PSA³.

Our Children Thrive in Safe and Drug-free Learning Environments

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Tucson, AZ 85719

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Fax: 520-225-4860

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Check out Tucson LINKS on the Internet:
www.tucsonlinks.org

What We Do: A Tucson LINKS Primer

Tucson LINKS is a three-year, \$8-million federal grant awarded to five Tucson-area school districts and a wide range of community partners, which are listed below.

LINKS focuses on prevention and intervention efforts that address substance abuse and violence. The objective is to create Protective School environments and remove barriers to learning and therefore enhance achievement.

Now in its second year in schools, LINKS boasts a roster of 54 partner schools across Tucson.

LINKS also supports primary-care health clinics, behavioral health services, Community Justice Boards, early childhood education, training for faculty and parents, and

funds for the implementation of prevention and intervention strategies in schools.

Each partner school tailors its participation in LINKS to its unique needs.

LINKS coordinators guide each school through the process of creating an action plan that employs a variety of evidence-based strategies, practices and programs.

LINKS is funded by Safe Schools/Healthy Students, a collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice. Since 1999, Safe Schools/Healthy Students has given grants to more than 150 community initiatives.

Tucson LINKS Partners

- **Amphitheater Public Schools**
www.amphi.com
Dr. Vicki Balentine, Superintendent
- **Flowing Wells School District**
www.flowingwells.k12.az.us
Dr. John Pedicone, Superintendent
- **Marana Unified School District**
www.maranausd.org
Richard Lesko, Superintendent
- **Sunnyside Unified School District**
http://www.sunnysideud.k12.az.us/
Dr. Raúl Bejarano, Superintendent
- **Tucson Unified School District**
www.tusd.k12.az.us
Dr. Estanislado Paz, Superintendent
- **City of Tucson**
www.ci.tucson.az.us
Bob Walkup, Mayor
- **The Community Partnership of Southern Arizona**
www.cpsa-rbha.org
Neal Cash, Chief Executive Officer
- **Family Advocacy Resource & Wellness Centers**
www.tucsonlinks.org/
partners/fwc.cfm
Dr. Brenda Even, Executive Director
- **International Media Broadcasting**
e-mail: nanmontoya@aol.com
Nancy Montoya, Kirt Ijams
- **KGUN-TV, Channel 9 News**
www.kgun9.com
Ray Depa, General Manager
- **Marana Health Center**
www.maranahealthcenter.com
Clarence Vatne, Executive Director
- **Metropolitan Education Commission**
www.cityoftucson.org/mec
Dr. June Webb-Vignery,
Executive Director
- **Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation**
www.pire.org
Robert W. Carpenter,
President & CEO
- **Pima County Attorney's Office**
www.pcao.co.pima.az.us
Barbara LaWall, Pima County Attorney
- **Pima County Board of Supervisors**
www.co.pima.az.us/bos/bos1.html
Sharon Bronson, Chair
- **Pima County Sheriff's Department**
www.pimasheriff.org/
Clarence W. Dupnick, Sheriff
- **St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic**
www.ccs-soaz.org/saint_e.htm
Sister Barbara Anne Stowasser,
Executive Director
- **Tucson Police Department**
www.ci.tucson.az.us/police/
Richard Miranda, Chief of Police
- **Tucson Resiliency Initiative**
www.tucsonresiliency.org
Dr. Katie Frey
- **University of Arizona College of Education**
www.ed.arizona.edu
Dr. Ronald W. Marx, Dean

Contact Tucson LINKS

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Early Childhood Outreach Coordinator Gail Bornfield, Ph.D.	225-4751
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Tucson LINKS is a Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative funded by the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice



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