PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Agua Fria High School District Announces Julie Jones as Principal for the Arts Academy and Performing Arts Center

(Litchfield Park, AZ – January 22, 2025) – The Agua Fria High School District announces the appointment of Julie Jones as the principal of the newly approved Arts Academy and Performing Arts Center. This state-of-the-art high school and performance venue, located at Litchfield and Camelback Road, on the historic La Loma hilltop, is set to open in August 2026. The Governing Board's approval this winter marks an exciting milestone for arts education and academic choice in the West Valley.

The Arts Academy will serve as a hub for creativity, collaboration, and high-quality learning. Students will have the opportunity to select one of six specialized academies, including the Academy of Cinematography & Film, the Academy of Dance Performance, the Academy of Music (Instrumental or Music Production & Recording), the Academy of Theater (Acting or Set Design & Production), the Academy of Visual Arts, and the Academy of Vocal Performance. These programs will provide an immersive arts education for students dedicated to pursuing the arts as their life's work, blending hands-on learning with mentorship from industry professionals.

Jones' appointment to lead the Arts Academy reflects her proven track record of creating dynamic, student-focused programs. Jones previously spearheaded the development of the Arts Conservatory at Desert Edge High School, a program that flourished under her leadership. Her passion for fostering student talent and her commitment to building spaces where academics and the arts thrive make her the ideal choice for this new endeavor.

"Julie is the right leader to bring this academy to life," said Superintendent Mark Yslas. "Her vision, experience, and unwavering dedication to the arts will set the stage for an inspiring and transformative educational experience, empowering students to reach their full creative potential."

Jones' leadership reflects her deep passion for supporting students who are serious about pursuing the arts as a professional career. She is particularly excited about the custom-designed classrooms that will reflect industry standards, giving students a firsthand look at what it takes to be behind the scenes of professional performances. Jones emphasizes the program's collaborative nature, where students will learn across all disciplines to build a well-rounded portfolio. With only 400 students being accepted, this program is designed for those who believe the arts are their life's work.

“This program will allow students to experience and learn across multiple disciplines, helping them build a strong portfolio and emerge well-versed in multiple artistic areas, not just one, preparing them to pursue careers in the arts straight out of high school,” said Jones.

The Arts Academy and Performing Arts Center was made possible through the community’s support of the 2023 bond and the District’s partnership with the City of Litchfield Park. This collaboration ensures a lasting investment in education, culture, and community vibrancy.

For student enrollment or artist inquiries please contact mgriego@aguafria.org.

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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

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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 Fría, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Millennium,Verrado y Agua Fría Online. Además, el distrito ofrece dos programas alternativos: Coldwater Academy y New Directions. Más información se puede encontrar en aguafria.org