

5. SCHOOL DISTRICTS

schools.pima.gov

Students in Pima County attend traditional public schools in 18 school districts, charter schools, private schools and home schooling. Pima County is also home to Pima Community College with a number of campuses and the University of Arizona.

State Board of Education *azsbe.az.gov*

School districts in Pima County operate under the direction of the Arizona State Board of Education. The State Board of Education has eleven members, including the superintendent of public instruction, the president of a state university or a state college, four lay members, a president or chancellor of a community college district, a person who is an owner or administrator of a charter school, a superintendent of a high school district, a classroom teacher, and a county school superintendent. Members serve four years. They are appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate. The state board's function is to oversee and implement education requirements throughout the State of Arizona.

State Board for Charter Schools *asbcs.az.gov*

Charter schools are public, state-funded, profit or non-profit schools. They may be "chartered" by the State Board for Charter Schools or a school district governing board or university under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Board of Regents or a community college with more than 15,000 students, or a group of community colleges with more than 15,000 students combined. The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools provides general supervision over the charter schools it sponsors. It also studies issues concerning charter schools generally and recommends legislation pertaining to them to the Arizona Legislature. The board has fourteen members including the Arizona superintendent of Public Instruction, six members from the general public with at least one from an Indian reservation, two members from the business community, one charter school operator, one charter school teacher, and advisory members from the legislature who are advisory only. Board members are appointed by the governor and serve four year, staggered terms.

Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction *azed.gov*

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is an elected state official whose term of office is four years. Official duties include the following:

- Directs work of all employees of the Arizona Department of Education implementing the policies of the State Board of Education;
- Executes policies as directed by the State Board of Education; and,
- Appoints to the counties the state school monies to which each is entitled.

Arizona Department of Education *azed.gov*

Headed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, it exists to implement the policies of the Board of Education.

Pima County School Superintendent ***schools.pima.gov***

Elected by voters in Pima County, the County School Superintendent's duties include the following:

- Distribute all laws and pertinent instructions to school officials;
- Appoints school board or governing board members of school districts to fill vacancies;
- Establishes local advisory committees;
- Conducts school board elections;
- Maintains teacher certification records;
- Oversees expenditures of most local school districts;
- Helps in the formation, dissolution, annexation, or consolidation of school districts;
- Apportions funds to each school district;
- Provides discretionary programs to school districts as an educational service agency; and,
- Provides educational services to an accommodation school (such as virtual schools).

Pima County District School Boards

Each public school district within Pima County (as in all Arizona counties) has a school board to govern the district's schools. School board members are elected by the public for four-year terms. School board elections are held in the same years as general elections. Those who are registered voters in Arizona, have been residents of the school district for at least a year prior to election day, and who are neither employees of the district, nor married to a school employee, may run for the school board. School boards must meet at least once a month during the school year, most meet twice a month year-round.

District or governing boards are responsible for such matters as:

- Setting goals and establishing policies for education;
- Acting as a link between school and the public;
- Acting as an advocate for school students;
- Purchasing school sites and constructing buildings when authorized by a vote;
- Deciding about opening new schools and closing old ones;
- Maintaining schools in good conditions;
- Prescribing promotion and graduation criteria and curricula;
- Overseeing teaching materials to assure they are not sectarian, partisan, or denominational;
- Tracking school attendance;
- Proving students with adequate supervision;
- Providing special education for children with disabilities;
- Maintaining school discipline;
- Overseeing school financial affairs;
- Providing annual reports to the county superintendent of schools or to the superintendent of public education;
- Overseeing professional staff; and,
- Providing emergency response plans.

School District Superintendents in Pima County

Each school district governing board is responsible for hiring a school superintendent whose duties include:

- Administration of schools;
- Overall supervision of district educational programs; and,
- Implementation of school board or governing board policies.

Kinds of Schooling in Pima County

Early Childhood Education is available in several districts as pre-kindergarten or pre-first grade and in some private facilities in Pima County.

Traditional District Schools ***schools.pima.gov***:

Kindergarten – in all elementary schools

Elementary School – generally grades 1-5

Middle School – grades 6-8 or 7-9

High School – grades 9-12.

Magnet Schools ***schools.pima.gov***: Public schools are any level with a strong emphasis in one particular subject area, such as science, music, or drama. Students are usually selected through an application process instead of being assigned to a school based on their place of residence.

Charter Schools ***schools.pima.gov***: Alternatives to traditional public schools for kindergarten through grade twelve, which are created and organized by various private groups such as teachers, parents, and/or community leaders or businesses and which operate independently, but in accord with a pre-approved charter, and may be non-profit or profit making.

Accommodation Schools ***schools.pima.gov***: Provide educational services for students who live in the unorganized area of Pima County, for juveniles in the Pima County Juvenile Detention Center and Pima County Jail, and for individuals 18-21 who are identified as special education students in the Pima County Jail.

Virtual Schools ***schools.pima.gov***: Schooling by computer. There is only one in Pima County which operates under the auspices of Tucson District One.

Alternative Schools ***schools.pima.gov***: Offer options to non-traditional students who may not be able to have their educational needs met in a traditional school setting.

Joint Technological Education District (JTED) ***pimajted***: A public high school vocational and technical district for all sophomore, junior, and senior level high school students in Pima County. Subjects are offered by different schools and by Pima Community College and may be taken by students of any high school. Students who enroll in JTED programs earn high school credit, and in some cases, may earn college credit, industry certifications, and/or state licenses. While JTED is a district with an elected board, it does not offer core curriculum, nor award high school diplomas. There are 14 school districts associated with JTED.

Homeschooling schools.pima.gov: Students are taught at home by parents. Homeschooled students are not granted diplomas by the schools for their work, and are not required to take the AIMS test, but may do so. These students may qualify to take the GED (General Equivalency Diploma) to obtain a diploma. Or they may work through a correspondence school. School districts have no mandated responsibilities for these students but may use district funds to help them.

Private Schools: A large number of private parochial and non-parochial schools exist in Pima County for all levels of schooling.

Public School Districts in Pima County

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| District 00 | Pima Accommodation School District | schools.pima.org |
| | Serves the educational needs of the Pima County Jail and Pima County Juvenile Detention Center. | |
| District 1 | Tucson Unified School District | tusd1.org |
| | Covers central Tucson and is the largest school district in Pima County. There are sixty-three K-5 elementary schools, fifteen K-8 schools, twenty-seven 6-8 middle schools and fourteen high schools. Tucson Unified School District has magnet schools at all levels and one online school for homebound students. | |
| District 6 | Marana Unified School District | maranausd.org |
| | Covers Marana and north central Pima County with twelve elementary schools, two middle schools, three high schools, one alternative high school, and one on line learning school. | |
| District 8 | Flowing Wells Unified School District | flowingwellsschools.org |
| | Covers west Tucson and has six elementary schools, one junior high school, two high schools, and one online school. | |
| District 10 | Amphitheater Unified School District | amphi.com |
| | Covers northwest Tucson and has two K-8 grade schools, one K- 5 th grade school, eleven elementary schools, three middle schools and three high schools and one special education school. | |
| District 11 | Joint Technological Education District (JTED) | pimajted.org |
| | There are 14 affiliated school districts. | |
| District 12 | Sunnyside Unified School District | susd12.org |
| | Covers south Tucson with twelve elementary schools, three middle schools, two intermediate schools, and one high school. | |
| District 13 | Tanque Verde Unified School District | tanqueverdeschools.org |

Covers east and northeast Tucson and has two elementary schools, one junior high school, and one high school.

- District 15 Ajo Unified School District *ajoschools.org*
Covers parts of west and north Pima County and has one school, kindergarten through twelve.
- District 16 Catalina Foothills Unified School District *cfsd16.org*
Covers north central Tucson and has one high school, two middle schools, four elementary schools, and one preschool.
- District 20 Vail Unified School District *vailschooldistrict.org*
Covers the Vail area with eight elementary schools, two kindergarten to eight grade, four middle schools and four high schools, and one K-high school.
- District 30 Sahuarita Unified School District *susd30.us*
Covers the Sahuarita area and has one primary school of preschool through second grade, one elementary school, one intermediate school with grades three through five, one middle school and two high schools.
- District 35 San Fernando Elementary District *sanfernando35.org*
Covers south central Pima County and is its smallest district with one school, kindergarten through grade eight.
- District 37 Empire Elementary District *manta.com*
Covers extreme southeast Pima County. There is one elementary school and students are transported to other districts for upper grades.
- District 39 Continental Elementary School District *continentalesd.org*
Covers the Green Valley area with one preschool through grade eight. Grades nine through twelve are transported to Sahuarita high school.
- District 40 Baboquivari Unified School District *busd40.org*
Covers most of extreme southwest Pima County and the Tohono O’odham Nation. It has one intermediate primary school, and one primary elementary school and two middle school and high school combined schools..
- District 44 Redington Elementary District *manta.com*
Covers the extreme northeastern Pima county and students are transported to other districts in the county.
- District 51 Altar Valley Elementary School District *altarvalleyschools.org*
Covers south central Pima County with one middle and one elementary school. High school students are transported to Flowing Wells High School.

Pima Community College (PCC)***pima community college.com***

Pima Community College (PCC) operates under the Pima County Community College District, which is coterminous with the county boundaries. It was founded by citizen vote in 1966. The district and the school operate under the direct supervision of the Pima County Community College District Board of Governors. The board has five members who are elected for staggered six-year terms.

PCC ranks among the 10 largest multi-campus community college in the nation with six campuses and five off-campus sites as well as six adult learning centers located throughout Tucson, Green Valley and Marana. Students may choose classes from a variety of day, evening, weekend, short-term (eight weeks or less) and self-paced formats. There are also televised and internet classes. PCC provides customized degrees and on-site training to business and industry throughout Pima and Santa Cruz counties.

Tohono O'odham Community College (TOCC)***tocc.edu***

TOCC is a two-year college for individuals from all walks of life who to further their education. It primarily serves the residents of the Tohono O'odham Nation, but anyone pursuing a higher education may attend. Classes are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The University of Arizona (UofA)***arizona.edu***

The University of Arizona, the oldest of the three state universities, has its main campus in Tucson with branches in Sierra Vista and Phoenix Biomedical Campus as well as Agriculture Extension in every county. Founded in 1885 as a land-grant college, the UofA is governed by the State Board of Regents whose members are appointed by the governor with the consent of the state senate. It is a world-class public research university offering bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees. Adult education and recreation programs are available to the community and the library, planetarium, museums, sporting events and other facilities are open to the public.

There are also a number of private schools and colleges in Pima County.

Financing Public Education

The primary sources of funding for elementary and secondary schools are the local school district property taxes and state and county equalization funds. Other sources of income are state land trust money, state gaming money, and classroom site fund money through the 0.6 percent added state sales tax voter approved in 2002. There are some state special projects, some federal monies, including Title I, and contributions through school district foundations.

School districts do not determine their level of operating expenditures. Spending is determined ahead of time by the state for each district according to a formula based on:

- A base level of support per student set by the legislature;

- Enrollment in the district; and,
- The inflation factor since the previous year.

State Equalization Assistance

The amount of state aid to local school districts each year is determined by formula. The formula is based on the primary assessed property valuation in a district. If a poorer district has less property value in their district than other districts have, and its allowable tax rate under the annual allowable expenditures does not produce sufficient funds to meet the state expenditure ceiling, the state will make up the difference. This insures every district has the amount it is allowed under state expenditure limits in order to offer equality of educational opportunity.

Bonded Indebtedness

Bonded indebtedness or capital expenditures for schools must be approved by the voters in a district. Capital funding in each district for building or purchase of property is appropriated by the legislature and financed under state law.

Financing Charter Schools (publicly funded, but privately run)

Like traditional public schools, charter schools get an equalization payment per student each year. Charter schools can seek state, federal, and private grants as well. But, Charter schools do not have access to property tax funding that traditional public schools have. Charters do get some added state funding for things such as transportation and programs for special needs students.