Welcome to District 1: The Podcast. Your host is Leslie Lenhart. She is joined by Superintendent Gabriel Trujillo.

Leslie Lenhart: Thank you. That was Devron Yarbrough, 8th grader at Valencia Middle School. Hi, Dr. Trujillo, how are you today?

Gabriel Trujillo: It’s another great week. We’ve got some beautiful weather going on this week, almost feels like spring, but I do know that I think we have a few more weeks of cold weather in front of us, so it’s another great week.

Leslie Lenhart: Yeah, no, and there’s a ton going on. I know you’ve been out and about in the community at a lot of different events. You want to talk a little bit about some of them that you’ve been participating in lately?

Gabriel Trujillo: It’s been very, very busy but a good busy. Thank you to Safford principal Kendra Tate and Social Studies teacher Diane Dean for hosting Citizenship Day over there at Safford, 77 brand new American citizens sworn in. It just was such an inspirational event and I think for me, what made it most meaningful was seeing so many young people, so many of the Safford middle schoolers in the balcony of that historic auditorium watching those new Americans take the Pledge of Allegiance for the first time.

Leslie Lenhart: Yeah, it was, I saw the video that came out and it will be on our website here in the next day or so, and it is beautiful and looks like it was a fabulous event.

We also just recently had a board meeting and we talked a little bit about the new high school that will be opening this fall. You want to talk a little bit about what happened?

Gabriel Trujillo: Exciting partnership with JTED, Pima County JTED. We will be opening a new high school together! Right now, the high school is known as The Bridges, that’s sort of just a generic name, but the spirit of the high school is a partnership between Tucson Unified and Pima County JTED to offer a small school environment, probably a capacity of 400 students. And students that opt to go to this high school will be able to enroll in career and technical education programs in all kinds of exciting fields like robotics, 3D animation, cybersecurity, culinary arts, while at the same time taking core academic classes with TUSD teachers. Tentatively, we were hoping that the board will be supportive of the name that we proposed: Innovation Tech High School. That’s what we’re looking to get through. If you haven’t seen our artwork, you can go online, you can go to the last board meeting and look up the item under “Study Action” and you’ll be able to see our logo, our artwork. We’ve got some shirts, some example logos. We’re actually going to be putting the logo, the name, out for public comment. If you have any thoughts on the matter, we’d love to hear from you.
Leslie Lenhart: So we’re looking for your comments on the name of the high school: Innovation Technical High School. So feel free to find the link on the district website homepage and provide your feedback of if you like the name or if you have another suggestion.

There was also a UHS debate that you helped with this morning. You want to talk a little bit about that?

Gabriel Trujillo: This is probably one of the great events in Tucson Unified. I know that it’s the hallmark event for University High School students. I talked to several of them at the event. They wait four years to be able to participate in this event. The senior debate is where the senior class divides up into political parties and they start putting together agendas for foreign policy and domestic policy. They spend the better part of the latter part of the fall semester, the early part of the spring semester, conducting town halls, talking to UHS students grade 9-11, trying to get support for their different ideas. They put up political posters and political propaganda around the school trying to convince potential voters to support their party and it all culminates in the UHS senior-wide debate, a four-hour extravaganza where the auditorium basically is converted into a political convention scene, and I can’t think of a better example of our American democracy at work in public schools, as I can with this particular event. So I want to thank Mr. Paul Karlowicz, he puts this all together. It’s very much a labor of love for him. And of course, the UHS administration under the leadership of Ms. Cislak Her and her team do a great job of putting all this together, as well.

Leslie Lenhart: That’s great and we did live stream it so I know it is available on the UHS website if anybody would like to go back and see some of the great conversations and debates that went on.

We also, speaking of high schools, had this weekend our high school expo. I know you attended. You want to give a little thought about what you thought of the event?

Gabriel Trujillo: Great turnout! I wish I could’ve been there a little bit longer, but we also had the Math Educator Appreciation Day Conference in Tucson High that day, so I was double-booked, but able to get out there and boy, we had a great turnout! We had significantly more families come through than our inaugural year last year. Thank you to all the great high school teams that came out there with their CTE programs, and their performance arts programs, and their staff. Had a very wonderful experience with Sahuaro’s culinary arts students. They treated me to some blueberry crepes.

Leslie Lenhart: Oh, yum!

Gabriel Trujillo: I’m very proud to see our CTE students at work like that.
Leslie Lenhart: Yeah, it was really a great day and the weather was beautiful, so we were so excited and look forward to doing it again next year.

Then we have some hiring events coming up, some job fairs. You want to talk about the two different ones that we have coming over the next two weeks?

Gabriel Trujillo: The big one for us is going to be the Job Fair, February 8th at Cholla. This is where probably the bulk of our hiring will be done for the school year. All of our schools will be represented. We convert the Cholla auditorium and – actually the gym – both of the gymnasiums, they become, basically, expo centers for our schools to set up exhibitions. Our principals are going to be there. We’re going to have hiring teams. On-the-spot hiring. If you’re interested in transferring to another Tucson Unified school, here’s your chance. There is a place for you in Tucson Unified. If you’re a counselor or a teacher and you’re concerned about next year, come on out, check us out at Cholla on February 8th.

And then we have another hiring event for exceptional education. Those of you in the listening audience not familiar with term “exceptional education,” that’s our term for “special education” that we use internally here in the district. Stop on by the governing board, the old governing board room here at 1010 East 10th Street. We’re having a hiring event this weekend, so if you’re a special education educator, either a Para Pro or a teacher-of-record, come and check us out. Check the particulars out for both events on any of the district social media platforms or our website.

Leslie Lenhart: Yes, and the one this weekend is this Saturday morning from 9:00 to noon, and then the one on the 8th is from 9:00 to 1:00 at Cholla High School.

Gabriel Trujillo: And where can we check this out on social media?

Leslie Lenhart: It will be on our Facebook pages, it’s under the events. It’s also on our Twitter and Instagram pages.

Gabriel Trujillo: Perfect.

Leslie Lenhart: As well as on our district website.

We also have upcoming some of our kindergarten events and online registration. So, you can find that information on our district website. If you haven’t received them, you will be receiving more messages and emails from me reminding you to go ahead and get yourself registered.

Any other things before we close today?

Gabriel Trujillo: Thank you, Alma Carmona-Alday and Ms. Megan Bailey, the administrative team over at CE Rose. I got a wonderful last-minute invitation to attend their Leadership Day
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where their K-8th graders actually demonstrate their professional portfolios that shows all of the different activities that they’ve been involved in with leadership. CE Rose is a Leader-In-Me school that focuses on the seven habits of highly effective kids and teens. And each presenter is able to talk very clearly about how they live and how they practice one of the seven habits. Had another great focus group conversation at CE Rose with some 8th graders as we were having lunch, talking to me about their thoughts on food service in the cafeteria. So I want to thank CE Rose admin for that wonderful invitation and experience.

**Leslie Lenhart:** Great, well Leader-In-Me is certainly a great program and we’re very appreciative to have it some of our schools.

Well, thank you so much for joining us this week and we’ll look forward to talking again soon. And now Devron will take us out.

*One thing I like about this school is P.E. and theater. This is Devron Yarbrough, signing off.*