

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL COMMUNITY REPORT

FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023



**EXCELLENCE THROUGH LEADERSHIP: ENGAGE, EMPOWER, EXCEL**

Queen Creek Unified School District empowers each student to achieve excellence in all pursuits and lead with integrity.





## STRONG SCHOOLS, STRONG COMMUNITY

Queen Creek Unified School District (QCUSD) is a community of growth and opportunity. The Queen Creek Unified boundary area stretches 48 square miles and includes the Town of Queen Creek and parts of East Mesa. Our schools have a large impact on economic growth, but the largest impact we have is on our students. Queen Creek Unified Schools provide students with opportunities to prepare for colleges and careers, while fostering leadership skills that will strengthen our community. The innovative programs our students experience are made possible by responsible stewardship of district resources.

The Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) is a reflection of our efforts to keep you informed of the District's financial operations and what we are achieving with our financial resources. Within this report, you will find an analysis of where the District's financial resources come from and where the dollars are spent in a format that is easy to understand.

The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) is prepared following the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and includes audited financial statements. As such, the report provides more details as well as full disclosure of material events, both financial and non-financial. The information in the ACFR by nature can be technical and complex and therefore is not as useful to citizens wishing to gain an understanding of the District's finances.

The PAFR has been prepared to simplify the information in the ACFR and better inform the public about the overall financial condition of the District, without the heavy use of technical accounting terms or excessive detail. The PAFR is not intended to provide a complete financial picture of the District per the GAAP. For more in-depth financial information, the District's ACFR is available online at [www.qcUSD.org](http://www.qcUSD.org).

Superintendent Dr. Perry Berry Ed.D.

## REPORT OVERVIEW

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Proud to be the Premier District  
of Choice for the East Valley.



## EDUCATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Queen Creek Unified School District is dedicated to preparing students to be college and career ready. The state adopted summative assessment, AASA, is based on demanding standards that increase the academic rigor expected from our students. Professional learning opportunities to support teachers with the implementation of the standards is a District priority.

Collectively, leaders across the District ensure implementation of rigorous instruction for all students. In addition, the District is preparing to meet the provisions of the Arizona Department of Education Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

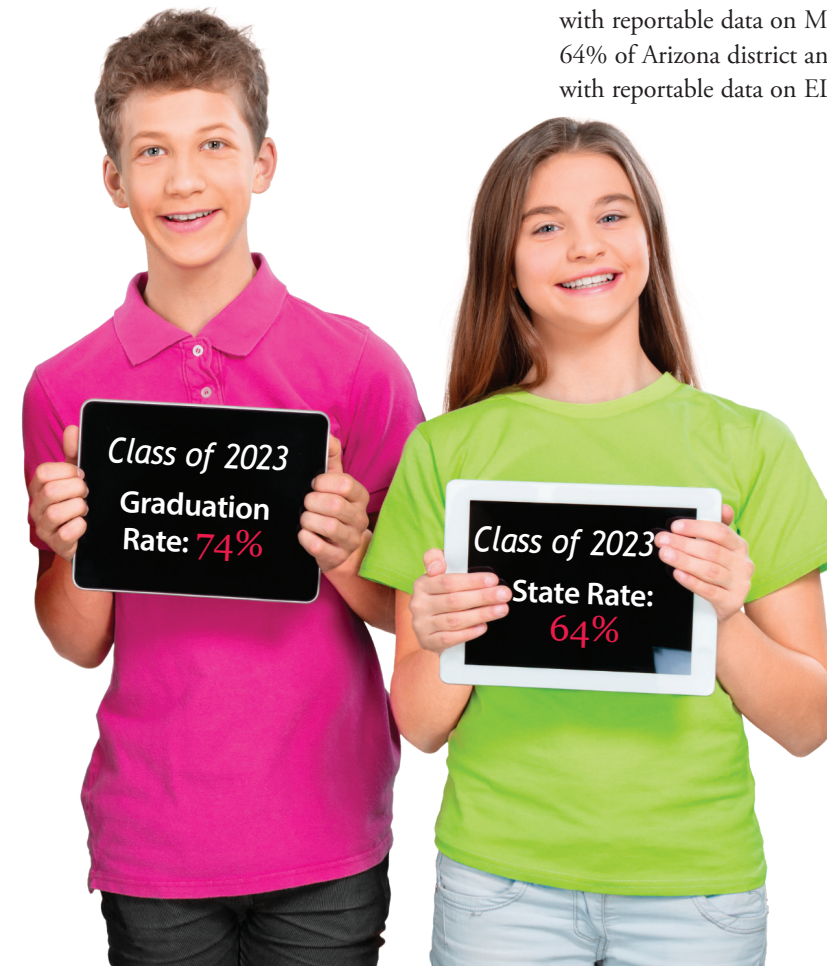
QCUSD's latest School Letter Grades, according to the State Board of Education:

- Desert Mountain Elementary:** Excellent A
- Frances Brandon-Pickett Elementary:** Excellent A
- Gateway Polytechnic Academy:** Highly Performing B
- Jack Barnes Elementary:** Highly Performing B
- Queen Creek Elementary:** Excellent A
- Newell Barney Junior High School:** Excellent A
- Queen Creek Junior High School:** Highly Performing B
- Queen Creek High School:** Excellent A
- Faith Mather Sossaman Elementary:** Excellent A
- Silver Valley Elementary:** Excellent A
- Katherine Mecham Barney Elementary:** Excellent A
- Eastmark High School:** Excellent A
- Queen Virtual Academy:** Performing C
- Schnepf Elementary:** Excellent A

### DID YOU KNOW?

QCUSD students continue to score well above the state average in all areas of Math and English Language Arts.

The district proficiency rate outperformed 74% of Arizona district and charter schools with reportable data on Math proficiency and 64% of Arizona district and charter schools with reportable data on ELA proficiency.



“QCUSD students scored 17 percentage points above the state proficiency in Math and 14 percentage points above the state proficiency in English Language Arts.”

“QCUSD students continue to score well above the state average in all areas of Math and English Language Arts.”



### SCHOOLS

Queen Creek High School: Named a Best High School in America for 2018 & 2019 by U.S. News & World Report

Francis Brandon Pickett Elementary, an A+ School of Excellence

Newell Barney Junior High School: an AVID National Demonstration School

Queen Creek Junior High School

Desert Mountain Elementary School: an A+ School of Excellence

Jack Barnes Elementary School: 2016 National Blue Ribbon School

Queen Creek Elementary

Gateway Polytechnic Academy: STEM-focused

Faith Mather Sossaman Elementary: STEM-focused

Silver Valley Elementary: STEM-focused, Leader In Me

Eastmark High School (grades 7-12): A comprehensive high school featuring Career Path Academics

Katherine Mecham Barney Elementary: An accelerated school of choice with a STEAM-focus, Leader In Me

Schnepf Elementary: A STEM-focused, Leader in Me school

Crismom High School: A comprehensive high school featuring Career Pathways Academics



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



QCUSD Unique Programs

In Queen Creek Unified School District, excellence is achieved through leadership. Our schools offer a rigorous and viable curriculum. Additionally, the District’s growth has led to the construction of new schools. The following are some of the highlights of the programs offered to all students:

Preschool (tuition-based) and Early Childhood Programs

Queen Creek Unified School District is proud to offer a variety of preschool programs (half-day and full-day) for students ages 3 to 5. QCUSD Preschool programs are affordable and flexible. Each preschool classroom has a low student-teacher ratio and is taught by a certified educator. QCUSD Preschool offers leadership opportunities as well as real-world, hands-on experiences preparing students for success in their future educational career. Quality academic learning experiences and skill-development curriculum aligns to AZ Early Learning Standards.

FREE All-Day Kindergarten

QCUSD offers free all-day kindergarten at all of our elementary schools. Students also enjoy the benefits of PE, music, art, library, and technology.

STEM & STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math:

Eastmark High School, Gateway Polytechnic Academy, Faith Mather Sossaman Elementary, Silver Valley Elementary, Katherine Mecham Barney (Science Technology Engineering Arts Math), and Schnepf Elementary offer the comprehensive QCUSD curriculum along with a STEM focus.

AVID - Advancement Via Individual Determination

AVID is a College and Career Readiness System that prepares students for post-secondary success. AVID encompasses instructional best practices embedded into daily lesson plans that facilitate rigorous and engaging learning opportunities to build skills, habits, and dispositions in order to achieve college and career readiness in a safe, college and career atmosphere.

All QCUSD elementary schools implement AVID in a school-wide K-6 fashion with teachers using AVID best practices to deliver curriculum throughout the day. Both junior high schools and high schools implement AVID school-wide as well as offer the AVID

elective class to seventh through twelfth grade students. The AVID elective supports our rigorous curriculum while teaching students transferable skills that can be used in college and the workplace. Newell Barney Junior High School was named an AVID National Demonstration School by exemplifying the implementation of AVID, thus joining the elite group of six middle schools in Arizona to earn that title.

Education Career Action Plan (ECAP)

ECAP is an on-going process that empowers students to create a meaningful and individualized plan for post-high school success. With support and guidance from their families, school personnel and other advisors, students undergo a process of self-exploration, career exploration, career planning, and management.

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

Career and Technical Education classes are offered at Queen Creek High School, Crismon High School, and Eastmark High School. In these high school programs, students have the opportunity to earn industry certificates and participate in internships and/or job shadowing. These programs, along with a partnership with the East Valley Institute of Technology, allow our students to experience hands-on, real-world opportunities in the career field of their choice.

PBIS - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

PBIS is a multi-tiered decision-making framework for behavior that is culturally responsive for students, staff, and the community. In QCUSD, the PBIS expectations for all students are as follows: be kind, be respectful, show integrity.

Community Education

The QCUSD Community Education Department offers an award-winning before and after school program, enrichment classes and clinics, as well as a Youth Athletic Program (YAP) taught by District coaches. YAP opportunities include but are not limited to: running club, cheer, wrestling, volleyball, baseball, basketball, and soccer.

Athletics

Athletic programs are offered at the middle school and high school level. QCUSD is home to state and national champion athletes and teams.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL FUNDING - DISTRICT BUDGETS

HOW ARE SCHOOLS FUNDED?

School district budgets can be very complex. A budget is not just a document full of numbers prepared by the business office. It is a working tool central to the successful operation of a school district. At Queen Creek Unified School District, the budgeting process starts months before the budget year begins. Budgeting allows the district to plan a district’s mission, improve operations, and achieve the district’s educational objectives.

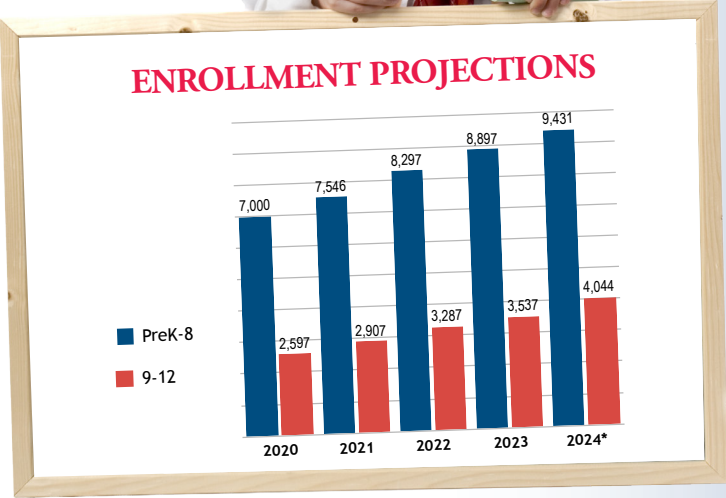
Arizona school districts receive funding based on a formula defined by state statute that is designed to help ensure all children in the state receive an equitable educational experience. The formula applies a rate to the number of enrolled students and then adds amounts for transportation, district additional assistance (capital) and Classroom Site Fund. The portion of the budget that accounts for most of the day-to-day spending is referred to as the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Fund. Comparable to most school districts, nearly 85% of this fund is spent on salaries and benefits.

In November of 2019, the voters in Queen Creek Unified School District approved a 15% budget override to fund increased academic programs that prepare students for post-secondary education and workforce success, increased art and music classes throughout the District, increased school security to maintain a safe and secure learning environment, reduced class sizes at the K-8 level, increased salaries to retain and attract exceptional teachers and staff, and to expand and enhance athletic, ROTC, and gifted programs. Typical budgeted expenditures include: salaries, employee benefits, supplies, utilities, maintenance and repair, and miscellaneous expenditures not of a capital nature.

FINANCIAL REPORT CARD

In the first quarter of 2021, Moody’s upgraded the District’s GO bond ratings to Aa1 from Aa2 which means better interest rates that amount to more savings for taxpayers. Only 4% of school districts throughout the nation received an upgrade from Moody’s in their last credit rating revision.

For the past several years, Queen Creek Unified School District received a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Arizona Association of School Business Officials (ASBO).



\*Projected Enrollment Completed by 3rd Party: Applied Economics

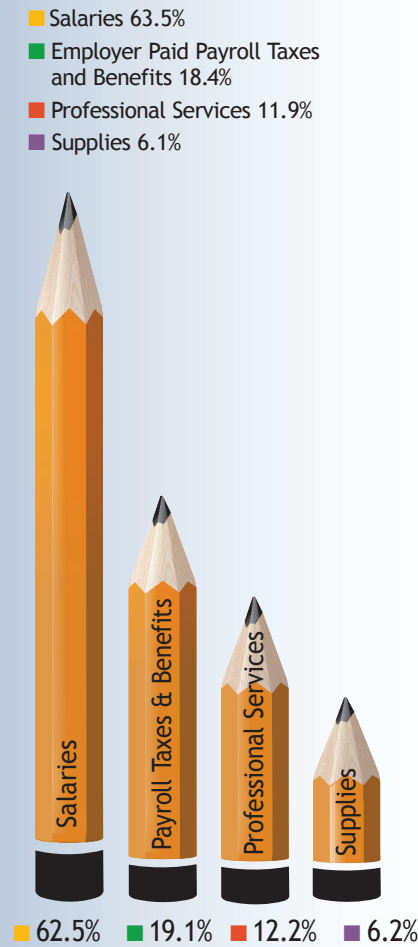
“The district proficiency rate outperformed 74% of Arizona district and charter schools with reportable data on math proficiency, and; 64% of Arizona district and charter schools with reportable data on ELA proficiency.”



UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL FUNDING



Queen Creek Unified School District spends 68.5 cents of each dollar in the classroom.



WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

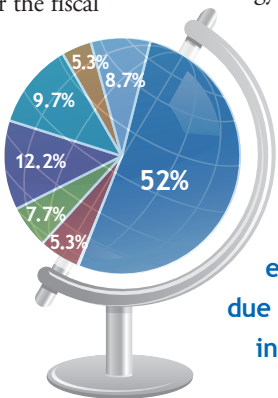
The district’s funding can be broadly classified as coming from three revenue sources: local, state, and federal. The largest revenue source is the state, followed by local revenue (which includes property taxes), and federal revenue (made up of several grants of various sizes). Arizona property taxes are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. The primary tax rate is one of the resources for the M&O Fund (see page 5) and capital funds. The secondary tax rate provides the resources for debt payments and the M&O fund’s override.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

The Arizona Auditor General’s Office issues a report each year that compares individual school districts to state and national spending levels as well as spending trends in instruction and six non-classroom categories. Below is a summary of the general operating fund, capital projects fund, and grants funds expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

Instruction and Nonclassroom Spending Categories:

- 52% - Instruction
- 9.7% - Student Support
- 8.7% - Administration
- 12.2% - Plant Operations
- 5.3% - Transportation
- 7.7% - Non-Instructional
- 5.3% - Interest/Debt



HOW THE MONEY WAS SPENT

**Instruction:** salaries, payroll taxes and benefits for teachers and instructional aides, classroom supplies

**Administration:** expenses associated with the superintendent’s office, principal’s office, business office, human resources, and administrative technology

**Plant Operations:** utilities, equipment repair, groundskeeping, security

**Food Service:** costs of preparing and serving student meals

**Transportation:** costs of transporting students to and from school and school activities

**Student Support:** salaries, payroll taxes and benefits of counselors, speech pathologists, nurses, attendance staff, and social workers

**Instructional Support:** expenses associated with school libraries, teacher training, curriculum development, and instructional technology

The District increased its expenses in FY23 from FY22 due to the new school opening and increased student enrollment.

Resources Taken In (in thousands)	2021	2022	2023
Property Taxes	49,997,074	44,755,012	50,377,004
Investment Income	641,576	609,529	1,127,145
County Aid	4,104,582	5,035,297	0
State Aid	45,865,050	66,186,776	89,145,324
Federal Aid	370,492	609,283	553,750
Program Revenue	25,458,580	88,391,371	33,127,821
Total Revenue & Resources	126,437,354	205,587,268	174,331,044
Services Provided (in thousands)	2021	2022	2023
Instruction	64,010,721	70,511,992	83,864,755
Student Support Services	12,098,273	13,281,333	15,691,907
Administration	9,908,569	10,892,824	14,087,857
Plant Operations	12,659,919	16,072,618	19,714,189
Transportation	5,495,111	6,910,170	8,568,949
Non-Instructional	6,291,219	10,784,295	12,402,825
Interest/Debt	5,836,111	7,156,684	6,850,778
Total Expenses & Services	116,299,923	135,609,916	161,181,260

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL FUNDING

STATE CAPITAL FUNDING

The Unrestricted Capital Outlay portion of the budget covers long-term capital items such as major building renovation or improvement projects as well as instructional capital needs including technology, textbooks, library books, science equipment, and school buses.

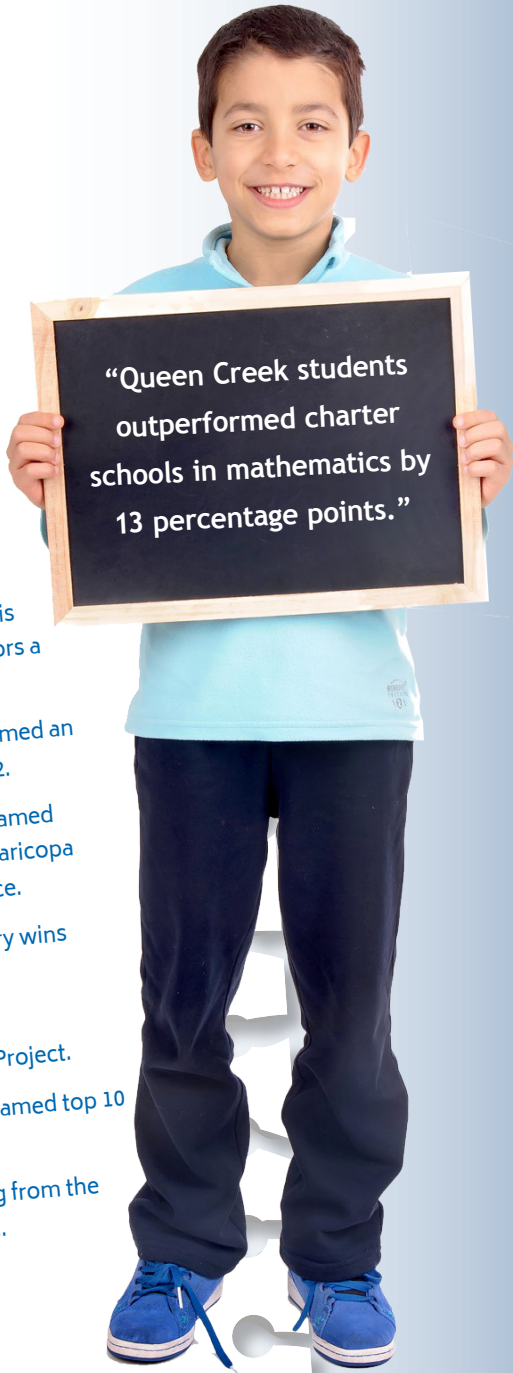
In the past, districts received Building Renewal money from the School Facilities Board based on the district’s square footage. The money was used for major renovation and repairs of buildings, upgrading systems, and areas that extended the buildings useful lives and infrastructure costs. Districts across the state have been underfunded based on the State legislative formula.

CAPITAL FUNDING NEEDS

The District currently has \$142.8 million in outstanding debt, with \$5.6 million due in 2023. These bonds were issued for the construction of a new high school, an elementary school, and various capital improvement projects for a growing enrollment.

Current capital funding needs include:

- Safety and Security – Security system improvements
- Transportation – Student buses and vehicles
- Building and Grounds – Plumbing, utility infrastructure, roofing repairs and replacements, and fire alarm upgrades
- Infrastructure for Technology – Classroom learning systems and hardware
- Parking upgrades – Parking lot expansions and improvements
- Curriculum – Educational software and textbooks
- Construction Expansion – Additional student space at the K-12 level



QCUSD AWARDS

- Jack Barnes Elementary was recognized as a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School.
- Newell Barney Middle School was named a 2018 National AVID Demonstration School and Revalidated in 2023.
- The Arizona School Administrators Association named Superintendent Berry the 2018-19 All-Arizona Superintendent of the Year for large school districts.
- SRP nominated QCUSD as a 2019 Champion of Energy Efficiency.
- Desert Mountain Elementary was named an A+ School of Excellence from 2020 through 2024.
- The Arizona School Boards Association named the QCUSD Governing Board as the 2019 Lou Ella Kleinz Excellence in

- Governance Award recipient. This award is one of the highest honors a Governing Board can receive.
- Francis Brandon Pickett was named an A+ School of Excellence in 2022.
- Two QCUSD principals were named Exemplary Principals by the Maricopa County Superintendent’s Office.
- Superintendent Dr. Perry Berry wins Changemaker Award.
- QCUSD name “Champion of Sustainability” by Salt River Project.
- Katherine Mecham Barney named top 10 schools in the state.
- QCUSD received an A rating from the state accountability system.





## QUEEN CREEK SCHOOLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Queen Creek Schools Education Foundation (QCSEF) partners with the community and businesses to promote excellence through leadership in education. We encourage responsible citizenship by supplementing financial support for growth and learning opportunities to engage and empower our teachers and students to excel academically through grants and scholarships. [www.qcUSD.org/Education\\_Foundation](http://www.qcUSD.org/Education_Foundation)

### CONNECT

Facebook, Instagram, (X) Twitter, and YouTube  
Website: [www.qcUSD.org](http://www.qcUSD.org)  
20217 East Chandler Heights Road  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
Phone: 480-987-5935

## BOARD MEMBERS

School board members are everyday people in our community, elected to this position by public vote. These five elected members of Queen Creek Unified School District's Governing Board play a critical role in the formulation and approval of policies which guide the operations of the District. Each member of the Governing Board is elected to serve a four-year term. Governing Board members are unpaid elected volunteers. The Board serves as the policy-making body of the District and also has broad financial responsibilities, including the approval of the annual budget, and the establishment of a system of accounting and budgetary controls.

We thank our Governing Board members for their countless hours of support and dedication to ensuring Queen Creek schools are the best in the state.

### Governing Board Members:

Jennifer Revolt, President  
Samantha Davis, Vice President  
Patty Campbell, Member  
Matthew Riffey, Member  
James Knox, Member

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

**Desert Mountain Elementary**  
22301 South Hawes Road  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142-8987  
(480) 987-5912

**Frances Brandon-Pickett Elementary**  
22076 East Village Loop  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 987-7420

**Jack Barnes Elementary**  
20750 South 214th Street  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 987-7400

**Katherine Mecham Barney Elementary**  
19684 South 225th Place  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 474-6725

**Queen Creek Elementary**  
23636 South 204th Street  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142-9677  
(480) 987-5920

**Gateway Polytechnic Academy**  
5149 South Signal Butte  
Mesa, AZ 85212  
(480) 987-7440

**Faith Mather Sossaman Elementary**  
22801 Via Del Jardin  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 474-6900

### Schnepf Elementary

23161 East Grange Parkway  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 655-6224

### Silver Valley Elementary

9737 East Toledo Avenue  
Mesa, AZ 85212  
(480) 474-6920

## JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOLS

### Newell Barney Junior High

24937 South Sossaman Road  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 474-6700

### Queen Creek Junior High

20435 South Old Ellsworth Road  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(480) 987-5940

### Queen Creek High School

22149 East Ocotillo Road  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142-7750  
(480) 987-5973

### Eastmark High School

9560 East Ray Road  
Mesa, AZ 85212  
(480) 474-6950

### Crismon High School

21942 East Riggs Road  
Queen Creek AZ 85142  
(480) 987-5583

## DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The Queen Creek Unified School District spans the town of Queen Creek as well as south Mesa. Our District is located approximately 16 miles southeast of Chandler, AZ, near the junction of Chandler Heights and Hawes Roads.

### VISION:

Queen Creek Unified School District supports the development of the whole child by modeling positive academic, social, and emotional learning through an innovative and challenging curriculum. Learning is maximized by empowering the community, and its members, to partner with us to create safe and secure learning environments for all students.

Queen Creek Unified School District expects their students to be successful, compassionate, and productive in their learning so that the next generation of ethical citizens can lead our community both locally and globally.

### MISSION:

Queen Creek Unified School District empowers each student to achieve excellence in all pursuits and lead with integrity.



Queen Creek Unified School District empowers each student to achieve excellence in all pursuits and lead with integrity.

**At QCUSD, Excellence is Achieved Through Leadership!**