



Evidence of Excellence

## Glendale Elementary School District

**GLENDALE, ARIZONA**

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**Solution Tree**

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### ► DEMOGRAPHICS

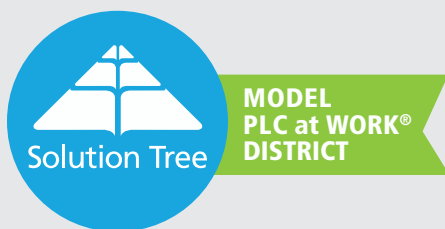
- 14 schools
- 8,858 students
- 69% free or reduced lunch
- 31.1% English learners
- 11.8% students with special needs

### ► RACIAL/ETHNIC PERCENTAGES

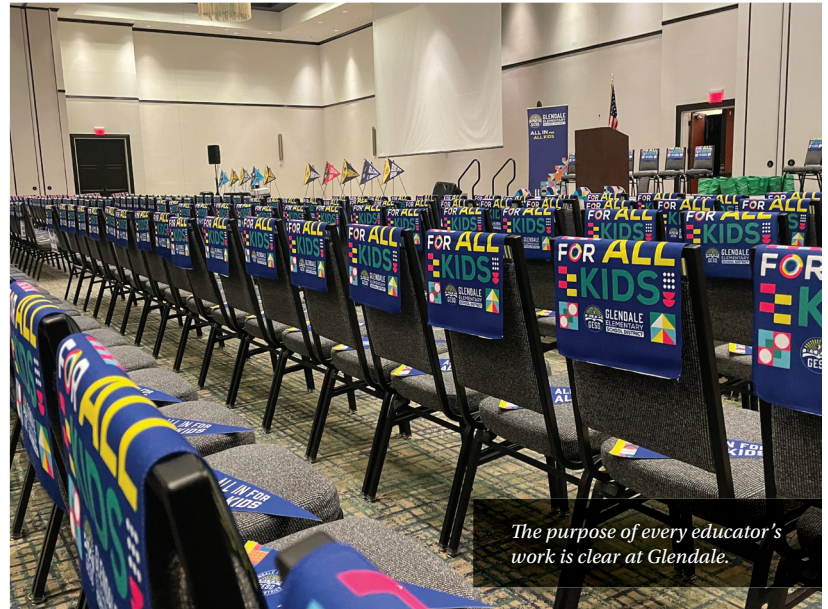
- 73.9% Hispanic
- 9.7% Black
- 9.2% White
- 3.2% Asian
- 2.3% Multiracial
- 1.5% American Indian
- 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

*Glendale Elementary School District in Glendale, Arizona, serves over 8,500 students across 13 schools and 1 preschool in a large suburban setting. The community surrounding the district exhibits significant socioeconomic diversity, with a high percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch programs. According to the district website, the school's mission is to foster an environment of academic excellence through innovative learning and build tomorrow's socially responsible leaders.*

[www.gesd40.org](http://www.gesd40.org)



Please note that all data and people mentioned in this story represent solely the time frame in which Solution Tree actively worked with the school or district and the time frame in which the school or district committed to implementing processes and practices set forth by Solution Tree. Building and district leaders and staff featured in Evidence of Excellence stories may have changed since the stories were published.



*The purpose of every educator's work is clear at Glendale.*

### ► CHALLENGE

Glendale faced a series of significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. As in virtually every district during this time, the pandemic severely disrupted student learning, leaving gaps in achievement and making it difficult for educators to bring their students to the next level. Additionally, teacher shortages posed an obstacle with a decline in certified staff. These issues led to inconsistent instruction and a lack of structured support for both educators and students.

In response to these challenges, Superintendent Cindy Segotta-Jones and district leaders sought a way to ensure that every student had access to high-quality instruction, regardless of their starting point. The key was creating a culture where teachers could collaborate effectively and use data-driven strategies to support student learning.

### ► IMPLEMENTATION

As assistant superintendent, Cindy supported early efforts to implement PLC at Work®. After becoming superintendent, she partnered with Solution Tree to strengthen the work, ensuring greater fidelity and allowing the professional learning community to thrive. She and her leadership team guided teachers and leaders within the district to attend institutes, summits, and professional development events focused on assessment, collaborative teams, and ELL instruction. Through these experiences, the district became



“We are here to educate children regardless of what we are dealt with. It’s our responsibility, we owe that to our students.”

—Cindy Segotta-Jones, superintendent, Glendale Elementary District

## ► IMPLEMENTATION (CONTINUED)

even more aware of the power of PLCs and how they could transform schools.

“When you look at collaborative teams at grade levels, no one is left isolated. When you function with collaboration, it strengthens everyone,” Cindy shared.

Glendale Elementary School District ensured that professional learning was not a one-time event, but an ongoing, embedded practice through professional development. This allowed teachers to engage in meaningful training that directly impacted their daily instruction.

The district embraced best practices to build a strong professional learning community by establishing collaborative teams, utilizing Solution Tree resources, and engaging school leaders in meaningful learning experiences. Teachers participated in book clubs centered around *Learning by Doing* and *School Improvement for All*, while school leaders received expert guidance and support from Solution Tree associates. At each grade level, collaborative teams worked together to share best practices, analyze student data, and develop targeted improvement strategies.

Implementation extended beyond teachers, school leaders, and Solution Tree associates. Students also played a vital role in their own success. With a focus on student

ownership of learning, data tracking became part of daily routines, helping students track their progress and see growth. Accessible data created a mindset shift in students where success was measured daily, not just at the end of the year.

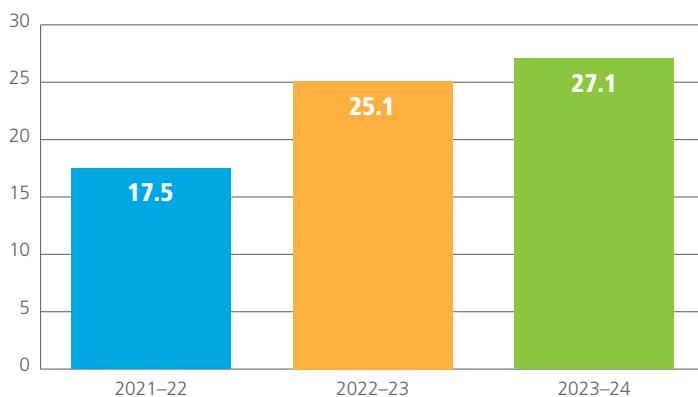
## ► RESULTS

Cindy does not shy away from this fundamental belief: “We are here to educate children regardless of what we are dealt with,” she says. “It’s our responsibility—we owe that to our students.”

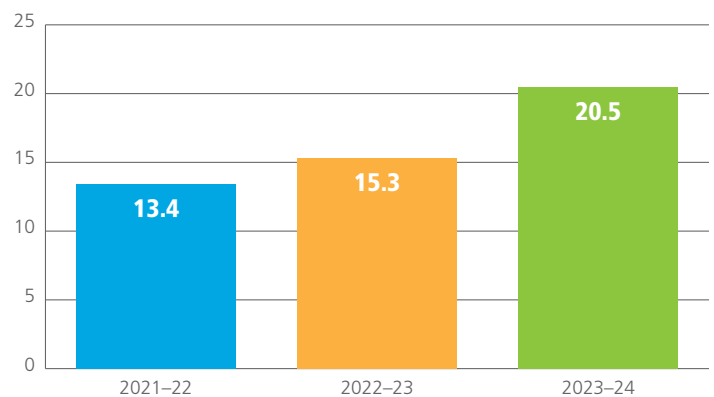
Backed by a dedicated staff, Cindy is making good on this promise. Over the past three years, Glendale Elementary School District has made impressive strides in third- and fifth-grade mathematics proficiency. The percentage of third-grade students meeting or exceeding proficiency rose significantly from 17.5% in the 2021–22 school year to 27.1% in 2023–24. During the same period, fifth-grade mathematics students showed notable improvement, with proficiency rates climbing from 13.4% to 20.5%.

These gains reflect the district’s dedicated focus on strengthening foundational math skills and providing targeted interventions to support all learners, helping more students not only meet standards but excel beyond them.

**3rd Grade Mathematics  
AASA Percent Passing**



**5th Grade Mathematics  
AASA Percent Passing**





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