



THE HORNET HYPE

EDITION #42

HIGHLAND PREP WEST'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

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HOME OF THE HORNETS

HISTORY IN THE MAKING: THE CLASS OF 2026 SETS THE BAR

Highland Prep West's first graduating class leaves with a 100% graduation rate, admission to 121 universities, and more than \$17.4 million in scholarships. Every school has a first class. Few have a first class like this one.

Highland Prep West is proud to celebrate the Class of 2026, our very first graduating class, and a group that set a standard the entire Hornet community will measure itself against for years to come. All 134 seniors earned their diplomas, for a graduation rate of 100 percent. Every single one of them crossed the stage, and every single one of them left ready for what comes next.

The numbers tell a remarkable story. The Class of 2026 earned admission to 121 four-year colleges and universities across 40 states, plus Washington, D.C. and an international campus. Their acceptances included some of the most selective institutions in the country, among them Duke, Rice, Vanderbilt, the University of Pennsylvania, UC Berkeley, and New York University. Twelve students earned admission to a university Honors College, a mark of academic distinction that opens doors to enriched coursework and exclusive opportunities.



EDITION #42 / AUGUST 2026

Class of 2026 By the Numbers



12 HONORS COLLEGE ADMITS Admitted to university honors programs	78% FAFSA COMPLETION Seniors who filed for federal aid
134 DIPLOMAS EARNED 134 of 134 seniors graduated	121 UNIVERSITIES Acceptances nationwide

NOTABLE ACCEPTANCES

Among the nation's most selective.

► Duke University

► Rice University

► Vanderbilt University

► University of California, Berkeley

► University of Pennsylvania

► New York University

► Virginia Tech

► Ohio State University

Message from the Principal

Dear Hornet Families,

As summer comes to a close, I couldn't be more excited to welcome everyone back to Highland Prep West! Our campus has been buzzing with activity all summer long as we hosted Future Freshmen Academy and a variety of summer camps. It has been incredible to see so many students learning, exploring, and getting a head start on what promises to be an amazing year.

Now, the countdown is on! We can't wait to welcome all of our families to Student Orientation on Thursday, August 6. Whether you're joining us for the very first time or returning for another incredible year, Orientation is the perfect opportunity to reconnect, meet teachers, pick up schedules, and get ready for a successful start.

Then, on Monday, August 10, our Hornets return to The Hive!

There is nothing quite like the energy of a new school year; the excitement of new opportunities, new friendships, new challenges, and new accomplishments waiting to happen. Our staff has been working hard throughout the summer preparing classrooms, planning engaging learning experiences, and making sure everything is ready for an outstanding year.

To our returning families, thank you for your continued trust and partnership. To our newest Hornets, welcome to the Highland Prep West family! We are excited to watch each of you grow, discover your passions, and achieve great things this year.

Let's make the 2026–2027 school year our best one yet. See you soon at Orientation, and welcome back to The Hive!

Go Hornets!

Sharon Pozzi
Principal



Mark Your Calendars

AUGUST 2026

8/6	Meet the Teacher Night
8/10	First Day of School
8/13	Fall Athletic Try Out's
8/20	Yearbook Picture Day
8/21	Club Rush

Your First-Week Roadmap

Bell Schedule

Highland Prep West runs on a 4x4 schedule: four classes per day across four quarters (about 45 days each).

Core classes run two quarters; electives run one or two.

Attendance matters. Students who miss more than three days in a quarter may receive an 'F' in each affected class.

Exceptions require advance notice and documentation, and are approved by administration. If something comes up, reach out early.

Daily Schedule		Early Release
7:30 – 7:55	Breakfast	7:30 – 7:55 Breakfast
8:00 – 9:28	Period 1	8:00 – 9:14 Period 1
9:31 – 11:00	Period 2	9:17 – 10:30 Period 2
11:00 – 11:30	Lunch	10:30 – 11:00 Lunch
11:30 – 12:58	Period 3	11:00 – 12:14 Period 3
1:01 – 2:30	Period 4	12:17 – 1:30 Period 4

Lunch Information

The HPW cafeteria serves breakfast before school and lunch during the day, with a variety of nutritious options.

Menus are posted on the HPW website.

A few things to know:

- Students must show their ID to purchase meals. No ID means going to the end of the line.
- Payments are made in the Front Office before 8:00 a.m. Payments cannot be made during lunch, and missing the morning window may mean no lunch purchase that day.
- Free and reduced meal applications are available in the front office at the start of the year. Household applications and account payments are submitted online through Infinite Campus.

Dress Code Reminders

Highland Prep West students, please remember that appropriate attire is required during the school day and at all school-sponsored events.

Key guidelines:

- Clothing with inappropriate language, images, or references to illegal substances is not allowed.
- Sleepwear, blankets, and revealing clothing are prohibited.
- Footwear must be secure—Crocs in sports mode; no flip-flops, Birkenstocks, or slides.
- Hats, hoods, and head coverings cannot be worn inside buildings.

Thanks for representing Highland Prep with pride!

New Programs

AVIATION ACADEMY

This year Highland Prep West is proud to launch the Aviation Academy, a new pathway that puts our students in the pilot's seat, sometimes literally. Built in partnership with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the program blends hands-on flight training concepts, aerospace coursework, and real exposure to careers in aviation. With ten seats reserved for HPW students, the Academy gives our Hornets an early runway into one of the most exciting and fast-growing fields out there. Interest has already taken off, and we can't wait to watch our first cohort take flight.



AP BUSINESS

The AP Business program offers students an exciting opportunity to explore the principles of business through challenging, college level coursework. Students will develop practical skills in leadership, decision making, and strategic thinking while gaining a deeper understanding of today's business world. This new program provides a strong foundation for future academic and professional success.

FABRICATION AND WELDING

Our Fabrication and Welding program provides students with hands on experience in advanced manufacturing using industry grade equipment and a curriculum developed by Lincoln Electric. Students learn essential skills in welding, cutting, machining, and metal fabrication while completing real world projects from design to finished product. The program prepares students with in demand skills that align with today's manufacturing and skilled trades industries. Whether pursuing certifications, apprenticeships, or careers after graduation, students leave with a strong foundation for future success.



PRINCIPLES OF AI

Our new Principles of AI course introduces students to the fundamentals of artificial intelligence through hands on, real world learning. Students will explore prompt engineering, data literacy, model training, privacy and security, and ethical decision making while building future ready technology skills. Designed to bridge the gap between using AI tools and understanding how they work, this course prepares students for college and careers in a rapidly evolving digital world.

Summer Camp Recap

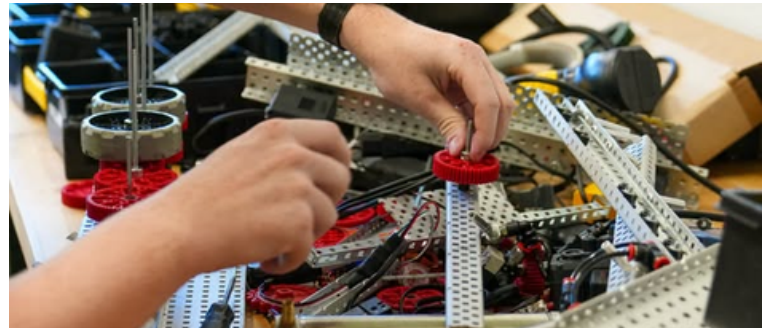
CUE THE APPLAUSE!

Our Musical Theatre campers took on an exciting challenge by learning and performing a complete song and choreography in just three days. Through teamwork, dedication, and plenty of rehearsals, they delivered an outstanding performance for family and friends.



LEARNING BEYOND THE GAME

This summer, our athletics programs gave students the chance to stay active while growing as athletes and teammates. Through a variety of sports, campers sharpened their skills, embraced new challenges, and celebrated each other's successes. Every practice encouraged hard work, resilience, and a positive attitude. The passion and dedication shown throughout camp made for an unforgettable summer.



SUMMER INNOVATION

Innovation was on full display during our VEX Robotics Summer Camp. Students collaborated to design and build robots while learning the fundamentals of engineering and programming. Through testing, troubleshooting, and teamwork, campers gained valuable STEM experience in an engaging environment. We can't wait to see how these young innovators continue to build, create, and solve problems in upcoming year!



MEET YOUR TEAM



ANDRE HARB *DUAL ENROLLMENT MATHEMATICS*

Mr. Harb brings more than thirty two years of teaching experience to Highland Prep West, having taught mathematics across community colleges and high schools throughout his career. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Toledo and a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering, with a minor in Computer Science, from McNeese State University.

From 2021 to 2026, Mr. Harb taught at Highland Prep Surprise, leading courses in Aerospace, Introduction to Engineering Design, and AP Computer Science. After a brief retirement, he has returned to the classroom at Highland Prep West to teach dual enrollment mathematics. He has also taught within the Maricopa Community College system, where he has led Calculus I and II courses.



DR. KENDRIC NELSON *CHEMISTRY*

We're excited to welcome Dr. Kendric Nelson to our team! Dr. Nelson earned his bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and went on to complete his Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Utah. He brings a wealth of teaching experience to our classrooms, having served as an Assistant Professor at the university level before transitioning to middle school science here in Phoenix. Beyond the classroom, Dr. Nelson is passionate about community outreach and has frequently led STEM workshops for local youth. We're thrilled to have him bring his expertise and enthusiasm to our students.



AARON JONES *AVIATION ACADEMY INSTRUCTOR*

Leading the Academy at Highland Prep West is Aaron Jones, and our students could not ask for a better guide. Aaron is a commercial pilot and U.S. Marine Corps veteran whose aviation career spans the cockpit, the control tower, and the classroom. He has flown as a First Officer for American Eagle Airlines and piloted everything from Learjets to business jets, and he has managed airport operations and security at major airports across the country. Just as importantly, Aaron has spent years teaching the next generation, serving as a professor in Embry-Riddle's College of Aviation and previously preparing high school students for aviation careers. He is currently completing his PhD in Aviation and Space Education. With real-world experience at nearly every level of the industry, Aaron brings the expertise and passion to help our students turn a fascination with flight into real skills and a real future.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Q: What are you doing now, and what has your journey looked like since graduating from Highland Prep West?

A: Currently, I am still working for the school I just graduated from, making sure that the classes next year will have the same amazing experiences I had.

Q: How did your experience at Highland Prep help prepare you for college, your career, or life after graduation?

A: HPW had many events and resources that guided me and made my search for a college that suited me best a lot easier.

Q: Was there a teacher, class, or opportunity at Highland Prep that had a lasting impact on you? If so, how?

A: Mainly, all the after school activities like Vex Robotics and Sea Perch had the biggest impact on me. Those clubs not only put me on a ton of unforgettable adventures out of the state, but they also set me up pretty good for college applications and scholarships.

Q: What advice would you give to current Highland Prep students who are working toward their future goals?

A: Make sure you always keep your grades up. I know everyone says that and I know it's annoying but it's so worth it.



Q: Looking back, what is one thing you appreciated most about your time at Highland Prep that you didn't fully realize as a student?

A: There were a lot of things that made me appreciate my time at HPW. In general though, I highly appreciate all the classes, extracurricular activities, and college-related events. All of them set me up amazingly for my time in Embry Riddle by allowing me to skip a couple classes and get a ton of scholarships.

2026-2027 Academic Calendar

 Graduation

Teacher Start/End Dates		
July	03	Teachers Start Date
June	04	Teachers End Date

In-service - No Students	Days
All Staff In-service	5

Early Release Days - 1:30 pm	Days
Professional Learning Community (PLC)	28
Teacher In-service/Work/Grades	4

Student Coursework	Testing Days	Days
Progress Reports		4
*Finals		4
*Finals/Last Day of Quarter		4

Blackout/Mandatory Attendance Dates				
Sep/Oct	28-02	March	01-05	
December	14-18	May	24-28	

See Student Handbook

Special Dates			
40th Student Day -	October	12	2026
100th Student Day -	January	25	2027

HIGHLAND PREP WEST

AVONDALE, AZ



2026-2027

SUPPLY LIST

PERSONAL SUPPLIES (DAILY USE)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
1	TI-84 Calculator
4	College Ruled Spiral Notebook
1 Pack	Pens
1 Pack	Pencils
4	2-Pocket Folder
1 Pack	EXPO, Fine-Tip, Dry Erase Markers
1 Pack	Highlighters
1 Minimum (If Enrolled)	HPW Hornet PE Set

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES (PROVIDED TO 1ST PERIOD TEACHER)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
1	Clorox Wipes Container
1	Box of Tissues
1	Ream of Copy Paper (500 Sheets)



Meet the *Teacher* Night

Thursday August 6th

5-6 PM Freshman
6-7 PM Upperclassmen