AZALAS

OCTOBER 2026
NEWSLETTER

ASPRA

STRONGER STORIES
STRONGER SCHOOLS
STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Celebrating the Arizona School Public Relations Association

A season of Collaboration



Dr. Marvene Lobato

The Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (AZALAS) is proud to dedicate our October newsletter to introducing our members and sponsors to the **Arizona School Public Relations Association (ASPRA).** We are excited to spotlight this outstanding organization, share its mission, and introduce some of the dedicated professionals who contribute to its impact across Arizona.

AZALAS is honored to partner with ASPRA in advancing our shared commitment to educational excellence, equity, and meaningful connections throughout our schools and communities. Through this collaboration, we look forward to amplifying the incredible work happening in Arizona's schools, elevating the voices and contributions of Latino educational leaders, and sharing the inspiring stories that celebrate our students, educators, and communities. At the heart of this partnership is a shared belief in the power of connection, collaboration, and communication to make a lasting difference in education. By working together, we can strengthen relationship create new opportunities, and ensure that the stories that matter most are heard and celebrated.

As renowned educator Jaime Escalante demonstrated throughout his career, when educators work together and believe in the potential of every student, extraordinary achievements are possible. His legacy reminds us that education is not just about academic success it is about inspiring others, opening doors, and creating opportunities for future generations. Together, **AZALAS** and **ASPRA** are building stronger connections, amplifying voices, and celebrating the power of education across Arizona. By uniting our voices, sharing our stories, and working toward a common purpose, we can make a lasting difference for our schools, our students, and our communities. Together, we are stronger!

> "Stronger Connections . Amplified Voices. Brighter Futures."

A Message from the ASPRA PRESIDENT



Adriana Alvarado Parsons

President, Arizona School Public Relations Association (ASPRA)

On behalf of the ASPRA Executive Board and our members across Arizona, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (AZALAS) for your continued partnership with the Arizona School Public Relations Association (ASPRA). Our collaboration reflects a shared commitment to elevating voices and strengthening connections that honor the rich diversity of Arizona's school communities.

As the daughter of educators, I grew up understanding that education is rooted in people, purpose, and potential. My parents encouraged me to embrace our biracial heritage and use my passion and skills to support others. Those lessons shaped my journey from journalism to educational communications, where I found a home within our ASPRA community. Our ASPRA members use the power of storytelling to bring communities together and highlight the opportunities public education makes possible.

This newsletter edition features ASPRA members who support AZALAS. As you read their stories, you will meet dedicated individuals whose backgrounds and passions reflect our shared purpose and whose work makes a meaningful difference in their schools and communities.

Through our partnership, ASPRA is proud to support AZALAS with public relations and marketing efforts that amplify the stories of students, educators, families, and communities. Sharing these stories can help others see themselves in leadership and recognize the value of their own voices and experiences. ASPRA looks forward to strengthening our AZALAS partnership and continuing to learn from one another, grow professionally, and share stories that connect and inspire.

With Gratitude,

Adriana Alvarado Parsons

President, Arizona School Public Relations Association

Director of Communications, Glendale Elementary School District

AZALAS × ASPRA

Spotlight

Elevating Communication,
Connection & Community

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Ramiro Alvarez

Chief Community Impact Officer

Pendergast Elementary School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

Throughout my career, I admired the incredible impact AZALAS was making in supporting Latino leaders across Arizona. After attending my first conference, I immediately felt connected to the AZALAS Familia. Since then, I've made it a priority to give back to an organization that continues to open doors for so many. As a communicator and leader, I believe representation matters, but creating opportunities for others matters even more. My involvement with AZALAS allows me to combine my passion for storytelling, leadership, and community engagement to amplify voices, celebrate accomplishments, and inspire future leaders.

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

Effective communication is about more than sharing information. It's about building relationships, creating belonging, and ensuring everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. ASPRA plays an important role by empowering communicators to share stories that reflect the diverse communities we serve. As a Latino leader, I understand firsthand the power of seeing someone who shares your background succeed in spaces you once thought were out of reach. Through authentic storytelling, mentorship, and professional development, we can strengthen community trust, amplify underrepresented voices, and help future leaders recognize what's possible.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

I've had the privilege of co-leading the AZALAS Conference Marketing Committee for several years, working alongside incredible professionals to strengthen the conference's visibility, branding, and storytelling. Through our partnership with ASPRA, we've brought together talented communicators who generously share their creativity, expertise, and passion to elevate the AZALAS experience. What's most rewarding is seeing two organizations I care deeply about come together with a shared purpose. Each year, we build on our successes, find new ways to celebrate Latino leadership, and demonstrate what's possible when we combine our talents and work together.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

My advice is simple: What are you waiting for? Get involved! Both ASPRA and AZALAS have played meaningful roles in my leadership journey, providing invaluable relationships, mentorship, and opportunities. These organizations complement each other beautifully, sharing a commitment to leadership, representation, and student success. You don't need a title to make a difference. Bring your talents, share your experiences, build relationships, and be willing to serve. You never know whose life you might impact or what doors you might open for someone else. **The greatest impact happens when we work TOGETHER!**

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Gabriel Gamiño Guerrero

Executive Director of Community Relations

Glendale Union High School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

I've always believed that strong communication is about more than sharing information. It's about building relationships, creating opportunities for people to feel seen and heard, and strengthening trust. That is what drew me to collaborate with AZALAS. As a Latino leader and school communicator, I value the opportunity to help elevate an organization focused on developing and supporting Latino educational leaders across Arizona. This partnership reflects much of what drives my work: connecting people, strengthening communities, and using communication strategically to help ensure every student and family feels represented in public education.

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

ASPRA brings together an incredible network of communicators who understand the power of storytelling and the importance of amplifying the great work happening across Arizona's public schools. Through our collaboration with AZALAS, we've been able to use those skills and networks to broaden the conference's reach and highlight its mission and the leaders behind it. For me, the most rewarding part has been seeing two organizations I care deeply about come together around a shared purpose. It demonstrates what is possible when educational leaders and communicators work collaboratively to elevate voices and strengthen our profession.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

Effective communication helps ensure that families and communities not only receive information, but also understand it, trust it, and see themselves reflected in it. That is especially important in communities that have historically faced language, cultural, or institutional barriers. School communicators have a responsibility to make communication accessible, authentic, and representative of the people we serve. ASPRA helps advance that work by giving communicators a network to learn from one another, share best practices, and elevate stories and perspectives that may otherwise go untold, including the voices and experiences of Latino students, families, educators, and leaders.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

Get involved and bring your skills to the table. You don't need a communications title to be a storyteller, and you don't need to hold the highest leadership position to make an impact. Our schools are filled with students, educators, families, and leaders doing remarkable things, but those stories need people willing to recognize and share them. Organizations like ASPRA and AZALAS create opportunities to learn, build relationships, and contribute beyond your own organization. Whether your strength is writing, photography, strategy, relationship-building, or simply connecting people, use it to help elevate others and strengthen public education.

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Karla Escamilla

Director Communications & Media Relations

Tucson Unified School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

My motivation to join the AZALAS Annual Conference Marketing Committee stems from my passion for recognizing exceptional educational leadership across Arizona. Our state is home to incredible administrators and superintendents whose innovative work deserves to be celebrated and shared. Through this partnership, I have the opportunity to use my communications expertise to highlight their accomplishments and expand the reach of their stories. For me, it's about ensuring that the dedication, innovation, and impact of Arizona's educational leaders receive the recognition they deserve.

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

ASPRA has played an instrumental role in strengthening the AZALAS Conference's marketing and visibility. By bringing together professionals with expertise in storytelling, graphic design, video production, and digital marketing, we've developed a more strategic and engaging approach to promoting the conference. This collaboration has allowed us to expand our reach, enhance the conference's brand, and showcase the remarkable leadership represented within AZALAS. It's exciting to see how combining our professional talents can elevate an event and bring greater attention to the incredible work happening in Arizona education.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

Effective communication ensures that important information reaches the people who need it, regardless of language, background, or circumstances. It's also essential for building credibility and creating opportunities for meaningful engagement. ASPRA helps school communicators strengthen these efforts through professional development, collaboration, and access to valuable resources. By equipping communications professionals with the skills to reach diverse audiences and highlight the accomplishments of Latino educational leaders, ASPRA helps schools build stronger connections with the communities they serve.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

My advice is simple: Don't hesitate! Your skills and talents can contribute more than you might realize. Both ASPRA and AZALAS offer incredible professional networks and opportunities to learn from others. Volunteering allows you to contribute your expertise while gaining new perspectives, developing professionally, and building valuable relationships. Through ASPRA, you can collaborate with talented school communicators, while AZALAS provides insight into the experiences and challenges facing educational leaders. It's an opportunity to grow your network, strengthen your skills, and make a meaningful contribution to Arizona education.

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Victor Hugo

Executive Director of Public Relations

Cartwright Elementary School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

My connection to AZALAS is deeply personal. Growing up in South Central Los Angeles after immigrating from Mexico, education became my pathway to opportunity. Mentors who believed in me helped me overcome challenges, pursue journalism, and eventually become a two-time Emmy Award winner. AZALAS represents that same spirit of mentorship and empowerment. Through my leadership and storytelling at Cartwright, I strive to inspire others, especially first-generation Latinos, to overcome self-doubt and pursue their dreams. Partnering with AZALAS allows me to honor those who lifted me up while helping create opportunities for the next generation of Latino leaders.

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

ASPRA has been instrumental in elevating the AZALAS Conference through powerful storytelling, engaging videos, and meaningful collaboration. Working alongside talented school PR professionals across Arizona has allowed us to highlight exceptional educational leaders and celebrate their contributions. Last year, I had the privilege of visiting districts, interviewing award recipients, and producing videos that brought their stories to life. By shifting from traditional speeches to dynamic visuals and storytelling, we've created a more engaging experience. The most rewarding part has been witnessing how our collective talents amplify voices, strengthen connections, and inspire the next generation of educational leaders.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

Effective communication is essential to creating equitable educational environments where every voice is heard, valued, and respected. Transparency builds trust, strengthens relationships, and empowers families, educators, and communities to advocate for student success. It also provides a platform for historically underrepresented voices to share their experiences and influence meaningful change. ASPRA plays a vital role by equipping school communicators with the resources, skills, and connections to tell these important stories. By amplifying Latino voices and celebrating diverse perspectives, ASPRA helps strengthen community trust, inspire future leaders, and ensure every student and family feels represented.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

Your story has the power to inspire change. I encourage anyone considering ASPRA or AZALAS to get involved, share their experiences, and use their talents to uplift others. Being part of AZALAS is especially meaningful because ALAS means "wings," symbolizing our mission to help educators soar beyond limitations and achieve their dreams. Through storytelling, collaboration, and mentorship, we can amplify diverse voices, celebrate our communities, and inspire future leaders. Together, ASPRA and AZALAS provide opportunities to lift one another, strengthen educational leadership, and create a future filled with hope, opportunity, and possibility.

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Magali Rivera

Director of Community Relations

Roosevelt Elementary School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

My motivation to collaborate with AZALAS comes from a deep belief in the power of representation and voice. As a communicator and leader, I've always been driven by the idea that every story matters—especially those of our Latino students, educators, and families. Partnering with AZALAS allows me to help elevate those voices, build bridges between communities, and highlight the incredible leadership emerging across Arizona's schools.

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

ASPRA has played a vital role in elevating the visibility of the AZALAS Conference by amplifying its message across districts, media networks, and professional communities. Through thoughtful storytelling, strategic communication, and authentic collaboration, ASPRA has helped showcase the conference as not just an event—but a movement that celebrates Latino leadership and the future of education in Arizona.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

Effective communication is essential in advancing leadership in education because it builds understanding, trust, and shared purpose. When communication is intentional and inclusive, it ensures that every voice—especially those from underrepresented communities—is heard and valued in the decision-making process. Clear, compassionate communication helps bridge differences, align goals, and create environments where both students and educators can thrive.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

My advice for anyone interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS is to get involved and use your voice. Whether you're a communicator, educator, or community advocate, your skills can make a meaningful difference in how we tell the stories of our schools. Every student success, every family partnership, and every innovative idea deserves to be shared—and that's where your talents come in.

You don't need to have all the answers; you just need the heart to listen, the courage to share authentic stories, and the commitment to lift others up. By contributing your creativity and perspective, you help shape a stronger narrative for public education—one that celebrates leadership, builds pride in our communities, and inspires the next generation to dream bigger.

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Dan Buzdhan

Chief Communication and Strategic Partnerships Officer

Littleton Elementary School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

Because of the time, support and commitment AZALAS dedicates to our school communities, it made collaborating with AZALAS an easy choice. As a former educator and current school communicator, I value the impact each one of us has on each child's education and understand that the growth and success of education isn't based on the work of one, but the contributions of many. So by taking this opportunity to work with this great organization, I feel like I'm helping to foster that growth and success we all value!

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

ASPRA's goal is to help elevate education through communicating each educational community's unique story and the partners that support us. The AZALAS Conference is a reflection of our community and by showcasing the efforts of AZALAS we are helping to shine a light on those positive efforts happening within. The most rewarding part is having the opportunity to work together with other ASPRA colleagues to continue to forge relationships and grow our communication community.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

Being an effective communicator, as a person or an organization, provides the communities and the world around us to have a clearer understanding of what is needed and how it impacts others in a positive light. It also provides a stronger level of trust that is needed to advance equity and leadership in education. ASPRA's work has amplified Latino voices by finding valuable ways to engage families and community members to also have a voice in the educational community. This could be through forums, surveys or community events. When you elevate any voice, you empower that group or individual to believe that they matter and create even more ownership and trust within community decisions.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

As the educational community continues to evolve, my advice is that it will be even more important for everyone within our communities to get involved in effectively communicating the needs of our communities and the value of public education. Joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS are two great avenues to accomplish this. As we all know, everyone has a story, and each story provides valuable insight into the importance of a strong educational system. It's important to find ways to tell those stories as they can directly impact the future of the current children in our classrooms and those that have yet to start. If stories are left untold, they become lost treasures that could have unlocked the doors to future possibilities.

AZALAS X ASPRA

Meet the *Spotlight*



Gloria McDowell

Director of Communications & Community Engagement

Buckeye Elementary School District

Elevating Communication, Connection & Community

In Thier Own Words

1 What motivated you to collaborate with AZALAS, and how does this partnership reflect your work as a communicator and leader?

With 30 years of experience in the public sector, serving in community and social services, education, and engagement roles, I've learned that the most meaningful change happens when people come together for a shared purpose. Collaborating with AZALAS was a natural fit because our missions align: elevating Latino leadership, empowering families, and strengthening community voices. This partnership reflects my lifelong commitment to creating spaces where people feel seen, valued, informed, and inspired to lead.

2 How has ASPRA helped elevate the visibility of the AZALAS Conference? What has been most rewarding about working together to promote this year's event and its message?

ASPRA has been an incredible partner in amplifying the reach and visibility of the AZALAS Conference. Through creative storytelling, strategic communication, and a deep understanding of education's impact on communities, ASPRA helps ensure that the message of leadership and equity resonates across Arizona. The most rewarding part has been witnessing both organizations blend their strengths and work toward a shared vision. Together, we're not only promoting an event but also elevating a message of unity, purpose, and shared progress for Arizona's Latino educators and allies.

3 Why is effective communication essential to advancing equity and leadership in education? How does ASPRA's work amplify Latino voices and strengthen community trust?

Effective communication is the cornerstone of equity. It ensures that every student, family, and community member has access to information, opportunities, and representation. ASPRA's work amplifies Latino voices by celebrating authenticity and telling meaningful stories that reflect our culture, honor our history, and uplift our leadership. When communication is inclusive, transparent, and rooted in empathy, it becomes a bridge between schools and the communities they serve, strengthening relationships and building lasting trust.

4 What advice would you share with others interested in joining ASPRA or supporting AZALAS? How can they use their skills to help elevate storytelling and leadership in our schools?

My advice is simple: step forward and get involved! Whether you're a communicator, educator, or community advocate, there's a place for your voice. Use your skills to tell stories that strengthen trust, inspire leadership, and celebrate diversity. Having earned my Master's in Public Administration with an emphasis in Government and Public Policy from Grand Canyon University in 2023, I believe deeply in lifelong learning and service. Both ASPRA and AZALAS offer opportunities to grow, collaborate, volunteer, and make a lasting difference in education, not just through words, but through meaningful action.

ASPRA
Arizona School Public Relations Association

ARIZONA SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

STRENGTHEN YOUR DISTRICT'S VOICE

INVEST IN LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION BY JOINING ARIZONA'S PREMIER SCHOOL PR PROFESSIONALS NETWORK













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