



Ganado Unified School District No. 20

Post Office Box 1757 • Ganado, Arizona 86505

Telephone: 928.755.1000 • Fax: 928.755.1012

District Website: www.ganado.k12.az.us

April 17, 2023

Dear Staff and Community Members,

It is my pleasure to officially introduce myself to the greater Ganado Unified School District community. I am Naakai Dine (Mexican Clan) born for Tsi'naajini (Black Streak People). My maternal grandparents are Kiiyaa'aanii (Towering House) while my paternal grandparents are Honaa'ghanii (Ones-Who Walk Around). I am originally from Steamboat Canyon, Arizona. It is an honored and privilege to have been selected your new Superintendent and to serve this great School District for school year 2023-2024.

Most recently, I served as the Acting and Interim Superintendent for the District. I have been an educator since 2015, serving as an elementary teacher before moving to an administrator position. Additionally, I was involved as a Cross-Country Middle and High School Head Coach for 7 years. My education background started at Central Arizona College with an Associate's degree before making my way to Northern Arizona University where I conducted majority of my studies. I received my Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education with a Minor in Navajo. Then, followed with a Master's Degree in Multicultural Education. In 2020, I earned my Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership K-12 by successfully defending my dissertation.

As a lifelong community member of Steamboat, I know the strengths of Ganado Unified School District and the opportunities offered beyond the classroom setting. The District has provided an enriched learning experience for many Hornet Alumni at all levels and from diverse backgrounds. I will forward to building this academic excellence and bondless opportunities for our current and future students. As an educator over the years, I whole-heartily value the programs and services in place. I am committed to building upon past practices to ensure that current and future students have the opportunities to explore their interest and find their passion.

In addition, the challenges our District faces, I am optimistic we can continue to build an enriched and academic program. As teachers, you bring to the table your passion to be lifelong learners along with what it takes to succeed and instill into the mindset of our students'. I asked all, our students, employees, parents, and stakeholders, let's continue to rebuild our school District by coming together for our children.

As I continue my time in the District, I intend to focus on several areas including, but not limited to:

- Implementations of Professional Development and the District Framework for staff.
- Continuing to expand equity initiatives that support the needs of students, staff members, and parents.
- Evaluating the efficiency of all District operations to ensure that all resources are used effectively.
- Identifying opportunities to ensure that our staff and students have access to excellent educational and extra-curricular facilities.

This is an exciting time for Ganado Unified School District, and I am looking forward to the years ahead. Let's embrace this change, as our grandparents say, "Taa'hwi'ijit'eeho"-It's a choice to seek positive growth within ourselves.

Respectfully,

Dr.  Leandra Thomas

*"Our Mission is to Ensure All Students a Quality Education and Strengthen Diné Cultural Values for Life-long Learning"
"Our Vision is to be a Professional Learning Community that Focuses on All Students Exceeding Educational Expectations"*