# ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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# 'I show up now as part of a community'



#### AZ program reengages disaffected young men

**Hannah Dreyfus** 

Arizona Republic **USA TODAY NETWORK** 

Tyler Dama is not afraid to tell his students he once

"If a student opens up and says, 'Hey, I'm struggling at home,' I'll tell them about what I went through," said Dama, 34, who leads the high school electrical program and the electrical apprenticeship program at the East Valley Institute of Technology.

As a high school student, Dama experienced homelessness and struggled to succeed. When a presenter came to his school to tell students about a part-time trade school option, he decided to give it a try. The consistency and stability the program offered became his lifeline and gave him a clear vision for his future.

Learning a trade also offered a built-in mentorship,

▲ Students clap for a successful assignment in the electricity lab at East Valley Institute of Technology on Nov. 5 in Mesa. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

a system of support he and other young men might not have otherwise pursued.

"Traditional men might think of finding a mentor as 'soft,' but in a trade profession, you naturally have someone more experienced showing you the ropes,"

Dama's trajectory — and the exponential growth of his program, which has gone from 33 students in 2022 to almost 300 today — mirrors a national shift educators, parents and researchers describe: young men feeling increasingly unmoored and seeking structure in new places.

Educators and sociologists warn that when that structure is missing, young men don't stand still, but tend to look elsewhere, often in places that in some cases can lead to dangerous consequences.

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## Superintendent: Low pay led to Arizona teacher shortage

**Erick Trevino** 

Arizona Republic USA TODAY NETWORK

A survey from the Arizona Department of Education shows over 4,200 teacher positions are filled by long-term substitutes, student teachers, third-party vendors, or existing teachers working through their planning period.

This makes up about 7% of all the positions available for the 2025-26 school year. The survey also shows that over 1,000 teachers left their positions after July 2025, or about 1.8% of all teachers in the 2025-26 school year. Last year, that number was 1.1% of all teachers.

Still, the survey showed the overall percentage of unfilled positions decreased from the previous school year. About 2.4% of positions — a total of 1,400 — were unfilled in the 2025-26 school year, lower than the prior year's rate of about 2.8%.

According to Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne, low teacher salaries are partly to blame for the shortage.

"This is an intolerable situation and must be addressed immediately. Teachers have been underpaid for years, and they have also been discouraged by a lack of administrative support for classroom discipline," said Horne.

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#### BEST AZ THANKSGIVING DEALS 4A



Americans are paying less in 2025 for Thanksgiving groceries. Where to find the best deals. GETTY IMAGES

#### Officials ID teen's remains

Human remains discovered Nov. 3 near the community of Knots Landing in Whiteriver have been identified as those of 16-year-old White Mountain Apache teen Challistia Lulani Colelay. Authorities have ruled the case a homicide. 3A

#### How to handle data breach

Columnist Ken Colburn offers step-by-step guidance on what to do if you get a notification saying your information was exposed in a data breach. 11A

### Two AZ GOP congressmen plan yes vote on Epstein

#### Measure could bring mass GOP defections

**Laura Gersony** 

Arizona Republic USA TODAY NETWORK

After declining to take up the issue for months, several of Arizona's Republican congressmen have indicated they will vote in support of a highlywatched bill to compel President Donald Trump's administration to release federal investigative files on Jeffrey Epstein.

It's the latest sign that the bill could see mass GOP defections when it comes to a vote next week, marking a rare point of friction between congressional Republicans and Trump.

"I'm going to vote yes on that legislation," Rep. Andy Biggs, who is running for governor of Arizona with Trump's en-



**Biggs** 

dorsement, told reporters Nov. 13. "What I'm in favor of is releasing, and being transparent with, all the

documentation that they have that they can release." The bill pits the Congress mem-

bers between the GOP's voter base -

which has clamored for more transparency around the disgraced financier and the circumstances of his death in 2019 — and Trump himself, who has strenuously lobbied against the bill. The president's own past association with Epstein has shadowed over his administration and come under a steady drumbeat of media scrutiny.

So far, two of Arizona's six Republican congressmen have said they will support the measure. The other four have kept conspicuously quiet.

A vote is expected the week of Nov. 17.

If it passes the House, the bill would still need approval from the GOP-controlled Senate, and a signature from Trump, which is widely seen as un-

The bill's lead sponsors, Reps. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, and Ro Khanna, D-California, say they are hoping to get support from a supermajority of U.S. House members, which would put political pressure on the Senate and would, if needed, be

enough to override a presidential ve-

Rep. Eli Crane, a Republican who represents much of northeastern Arizona in Congress, told CNN he

measure. Crane distinguished himself as one of the few Republicans who signed onto the petition when it was first

plans to vote in favor of the Epstein

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