



Western Alliance  
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## CLIENT STORY

**Company:**

Sonoran Schools

**Industry:**

Education

# Multiplying Opportunities for Success at Sonoran Schools

Title I schools that keep winning impressive titles. That's Sonoran Schools. Last spring, the high school robotics team from Sonoran Science Academy Tucson took first place at the super-competitive International FIRST World Championships – the first Arizona team ever to win these top honors.

This achievement is part of a larger pattern of sustained excellence for the six-school network of public charter schools in and around Phoenix and Tucson that serve a significant number of students from economically challenged families. The mission: To provide a rigorous, college prep, STEM-focused education that inspires students to become the leaders of tomorrow. Founded in 1999, Sonoran Schools continues to produce award winners not only in technology, math and science, but also in creative writing, visual arts, history and even athletics.

This year, when Sonoran Schools wanted to build new gymnasiums at two schools, purchase a property and refinance existing debt, the organization turned to a committed community partner that shares its dedication to excellence – Western Alliance Bank.

Public charter schools in Arizona can only count on per-pupil funding from the state rather than the broader array of financing support available to district schools. Finding outside funding to underwrite capital plans is an essential element in their success.

"At Sonoran Schools, although we are focused on the 21st century basic skills of science, technology, engineering, and math, we also

believe it's fundamentally important to educate the whole child," Fatih Karatas, CEO of Sonoran Schools, said. "Our new gymnasiums at SSA Tucson and Paragon Science Academy will be used for physical education classes, as auditoria for performances, and as lunchrooms, as well as offering a meeting space for the local community. Plans also include the first, dedicated science lab for students at the elementary campus. Thanks to our partnership with Western Alliance, these are great additions that will benefit so many of our students."

Other advantages, according to Karatas, include more space for more students to benefit from the A-rated public education opportunities. "One of the really great things about our loan is that the resulting ability to move our Broadway campus to a larger facility will also allow us to expand our student population, enabling more students to enroll in one of our world-class schools."

For Karatas, Western Alliance gets an A+ for not only being approachable and committed to partnerships that benefit the community, but for making the financial process easy and a positive experience. "The team at Western Alliance was so helpful and the loan process was smooth and moved very quickly. We were very happy not only in terms of the pricing, but also with the overall positive experience. I would absolutely recommend Western Alliance to other organizations."