

The BOARDER



A Summary Report of the May 13, 2025, CFSD Governing Board Meeting



CFSD Star Awards – Seal of Biliteracy

The Catalina Foothills School District Governing Board proudly recognized 62 seniors in the Class of 2025 for earning the Arizona State Seal of Biliteracy—the district’s largest group to date. The distinction honors students who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one additional language. Students earned seals in languages including Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), French, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish. Six students achieved the Seal in two languages. Both silver and gold distinctions were awarded based on proficiency levels. The Seal will be affixed to their diploma and noted on their official transcript.

Board member Jacquelyn Davoli shared that many recipients began their language studies in CFSD’s immersion programs, while others advanced through the district’s strong World Languages curriculum. Their achievement reflects CFSD’s vision of preparing globally aware, multilingual citizens. The governing board also recognized and thanked CFSD World Languages teachers and staff for their dedication in guiding students to biliteracy. Their work has been instrumental in this achievement.

Chantall Aguirre-Minjarez	Gabrielle Matty
Sebastian Arizpuru	Esteban Matzkin
Kassidy Bator	Siena Mayfield
Ava Becker	Carlos McKenna-Casarrubias
Tanner Bell	Sophia Mercea
Ingrid Benito	Adarie Negrete
Amanda Biava	Nilay Patel
Luke Bowsher	John Pierson
Renan Brum	Cole Pritz
Romina Castaneda Urquidi	Nina Raju
Liliana Clevenger	Lily Rhodes
Vivianna Colson	William Richardson
Sebastian Cross	Mirandah Rivera
Samantha Danker	Leonardo Rocha
Heloise Declercq	Sebastian Rogers
Olivia DeConcini	Thomas Scott
Caitlin Dessent	Raiden Smith
Dian Fan	Tahlia Szoke
Samantha Farbarik	Louie Taylor
Skyler Finical	Lauren Thompson
Alexa Fischer	Tyler Tosca
Myah Herrera	Javier Villarreal
Brady Jeong	Ivanna Viloria Enciso
Nicolas Lawrence	Peter Wells
Yi-Lun Lee	Logan White
Caleb Leonard	Ella Wiegand
Lilian Li	Aiden Wilt
Yuan Li	Iliana Wisniewski
Xiaoyi Lu	Zoe Wung
Xiaoyun Lu	Zacarias Young
Valeria Luzania	Bryan Zhang



World Language Teachers (pictured left to right): Suzette Rosenblatt, Eriza Somoza, Maricarmen Lopez Garcia, Graciela Kumar, Ning He, and Patty Dorado Lawrence

Outstanding Achievements

Superintendent Denise Bartlett shared the following student and staff achievements:

Orange Grove Middle School Economics & Personal Finance Teams

We are proud to recognize a group of 8th grade students from Orange Grove Middle School whose dedication and hard work have led to a remarkable achievement. Since January, these students have been coming to school on Sundays to deepen their understanding of economics and personal finance—and their efforts paid off!

OGMS students earned an impressive three state championships, along with three second-place and one third-place finishes in this year's state competitions.

1st Place – Economics Quiz Bowl

Trey Keenen, Daniel Lu, James Jacobsen, and Ainsley Johnson

2nd Place – Economics Quiz Bowl

Rafael Calderon Sada, Oliver Peng, Alexander Lu, and Michael Rogers

1st Place – Personal Finance Quiz Bowl

Ethan Fraker, Nathan Denoyer, Zen Shah, and Axel Schocker-Kron

2nd Place – Personal Finance Quiz Bowl

Rafael Calderon Sada, Oliver Peng, Alexander Lu, and Michael Rogers

1st Place – Personal Finance Case Study

Victoria Farney, Sofia Marra, Liliana Ruiz, and Gwyneth Carmichael

2nd Place – Personal Finance Case Study

Leah Ghotmi, Isabel Perez, Alexandria Harvey, and Nathalia Filgueiras Pinto

3rd Place – Personal Finance Case Study

Cayden Kitz, Taric Bruckner, Reese Morgan, and Alex Yetka

Congratulations to all participating students—and a special thank you to their coaches Dawn Willman and Collin Flynn—for their time and commitment preparing our students. You've made OGMS and CFSD proud!

Falcon Musicians Earn Top Honors

On Tuesday, April 22, the CFHS Symphonic Strings class traveled to Chandler, AZ to perform at the ABODA State Festival—and they delivered an outstanding performance! We are thrilled to share that they earned a rating of Superior

with Distinction, the highest possible honor. This was their first time earning a Superior with Distinction rating at the state level of ABODA. Congratulations to Mr. Ryan Watson and our talented and hard-working student musicians for this well-deserved recognition.

Under the direction of Ms. Renee Shane-Boyd, the Symphonic Winds earned a Superior rating, and the Wind Ensemble achieved a Superior with Distinction at the State Concert Festival in Chandler on Thursday, April 24. Congratulations to our outstanding Catalina Foothills musicians!

CFHS Art

Four of our CFHS art students were picked to showcase and exhibit their work alongside artist Hank Willis Thomas in his 'Love Rules' exhibition at the University of Arizona Museum of Art. Senior student Makena Thompson was one of five winners to be selected for Outstanding Emerging High School Artist with a \$1,000 tuition award for *The Long Goodbye*. Additionally, several seniors had their work exhibited in a student show in the Scottsdale Museum of the West in partnership with The Arizona Art Education Association this year: Gwendolyn Alviar, Celeste Bergantino, Steven (Archer) Kelly, Scarlett Perkins, Joselynn Salas, and Makena Thompson.

CFHS Guitar

Three seniors made the first ever Arizona All-State Guitar this year, and one senior won 1st place in a guitar competition! Maximilian Henry, Liam Posey, and Daniel Lizarraga all made the all-state guitar, and Daniel Lizarraga won the guitar competition.

Catalina Foothills Students Shine at State Chess Championship

Congratulations to our students from Ventana Vista Elementary School and Sunrise Drive Elementary School for their outstanding performances at the 2025 Arizona State Chess Competition! For the second year in a row, Ventana Vista's K-1 team earned 2nd place in the state—a tremendous achievement against tough competition. Team members included Nik Jain (5 points), Angelos Kyriacou (4.5 points), Ian Moore (3.5 points), and Marco Wolford Asencio (3 points), with strong contributions also from Thomas Shoua and Evan Harvey. In individual rankings, Nik Jain placed 4th and Angelos Kyriacou placed 10th in the K-1 division!

Adding to the celebration, Sunrise Drive Elementary's K-3 team placed 4th in the state, and Aiden Liu took home 1st place individually for the K-3 division—an incredible accomplishment!

We are proud of all of our players for their hard work, strategic thinking, and teamwork. A special thank you to Coach Ken Larson, whose dedication to growing our district's chess program continues to inspire new generations of champions. Coach Larson also coached some of our current CFSD parents when they were students at Manzanita, OGMS, and CFHS!

Congratulations to all our players, families, and coaches—you make CFSD proud!

Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band Member

CFHS sophomore and Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band member Keenan Sammani performed on International Jazz Day (April 30) at the Hotel Congress Plaza. Keenan will also participate with the Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band in the New York City (NYC) Essentially Ellington High School Big Band Competition May 7-11, 2025.

National Merit – The University of Arizona Scholarship Recipients

We are proud to announce that Tahlia Chang Nian Szoke and Joseph I. Drexler have been selected to receive the prestigious National Merit – The University of Arizona Scholarship. This college-sponsored Merit Scholarship® award is offered through a partnership between the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) and The University of Arizona. It is awarded exclusively for use at the university and recognizes students with exceptional academic achievement, personal excellence, and promise for future success.

Tahlia and Joseph join an elite group of scholars nationwide who have earned this distinguished honor. Congratulations!

2025 Arizona Chinese Speech Contest

We're proud to recognize several students for their exceptional performances in a recent Mandarin language competition. Representing both heritage and non-heritage divisions across multiple levels, these students demonstrated impressive language skills and cultural understanding.

Division A – Heritage

- Aiden Liu – 3rd Place
- Kaylee Xu – 3rd Place
- Ezri Jensen – 3rd Place

Division A – Non-Heritage

- Merritt Johnson – 3rd Place

Division B – Heritage

- Kennedy Kay – 1st Place

- Ace Chou – 3rd Place
- Alan Liu – 3rd Place
- Jonathan Parsons – 3rd Place
- Ming Hsiu Reid – 3rd Place

Division B – Non-Heritage

- Ishwari Dube Bandopadhyay – 3rd Place
- Theo Thome – 3rd Place

Congratulations to all of these students for their dedication and achievement in Mandarin language learning! Your hard work and passion for language and culture shine brightly!

Manzanita and Sunrise Drive Math Teams to US Nationals

We are proud to share the outstanding results from the Math League State Competition held on May 2, 2025, in Queen Creek, AZ. Students from Manzanita Elementary and Sunrise Drive Elementary represented CFSD with excellence in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade divisions and many are now heading to Nationals in June!

Competing in the 3rd and 4th grade divisions, the Manzanita team earned top placements, and six students qualified for the Math League National Competition in Houston, TX!

3rd Grade Awards:

- Rooz Caire – 1st Place
- Owen Chu – 3rd Place

4th Grade Awards:

- Marc Surdeanu – 2nd Place
- Cyrus Caire – 3rd Place
- Nachiket Nadig – 7th Place
- Elizabeth Sipe – 10th Place
- Leo Skirko – 13th Place

The Manzanita team coaches are Laura Surdeanu and Kelly Taylor.

Representing the 5th grade division, the Sunrise Drive team took home the Division 5 Championship title and all four students qualified for Nationals!

5th Grade Awards:

- Max Hao – 1st Place
- Andrew Wang – 2nd Place
- Melody Yu – 3rd Place
- Daniel Li – 5th Place

The Sunrise Drive team coach is Ning Hao.

We are incredibly proud of all our Math League participants and their coaches. Thank you for representing CFSD with such excellence and teamwork. Good luck at Nationals this June!

CFHS Boys Tennis Division II State Champions

The Catalina Foothills High School Boys Tennis team has earned the title of Division II State Champions for the 2024-2025 season. The Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) has recognized CFHS student-athletes Santiago Astengo Jaime and Parker Servoss as the Division II Players of the Year in Doubles and Austin Cohen as the Division II Player of the Year in Singles. Additionally, AIA has recognized CFHS Boys Tennis Coach Ben Loeb as the Division II Coach of the Year.

The CFHS Boys Tennis Team members include Santiago Astengo Jaime, Ahmed Bozdogan, Austin Cohen, Rajen Fadia, Finn Griffis, Jason Jia, Kai Sadalla, Parker Servoss, Zachary Wagenheim, and Aaron Zeldin.

Congratulations to the team and coach Ben Loeb on an exciting season.

CFSD Foundation Semi-Annual Gift to the District

Foundation President Amy Morales-Baum presented the semi-annual gift in the amount of \$45,000 to the district—bringing total contributions this year to \$105,000. President Morales-Baum reaffirmed the CFSD Foundation’s mission to invest in educators by funding initiatives that promote teacher excellence and student success and expressed enthusiasm for continuing the Foundation’s partnership in the coming school year. Board members thanked Ms. Morales-Baum for the donation and expressed gratitude for the Foundation’s ongoing generosity and support of the district and our students. Information about the CFSD Foundation is available at: www.cfsdfoundation.org

Public Hearing on Revisions to Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Revision #3)

President Amy Krauss opened the public hearing. No comments were expressed, and the public hearing was closed.

Approval of Revisions to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Revision #3)

Director of Finance Lisa Taetle presented updates to the fiscal year 2025 budget to reflect actual enrollment, expenditures, and strategic adjustments. Key changes include a slight decrease in revenue due to ADM, reclassified capital expenses, additional funding for security software, and new allocations for facility projects. Total bond funds from the April 2025 sale were added at \$12.94 million. The governing board approved the final expenditure budget revision for fiscal year 2025, as presented.

Approval of the Longevity Addenda for the Second Round of Certified Contracts for School Year 2025-2026

Associate Superintendent Mindy Westover presented a list of staff included in the second round of certified contracts

who qualify for the longevity addenda in the amount of \$1,000. Staff members were previously issued a contract on April 22. The governing board approved the longevity addenda in the amount of \$1,000 for the list of staff included in the second round of certified contracts for school year 2025-2026, as presented, and directed that they be issued to the staff members listed, as presented.

Consideration of Revisions to CFSD Performance Award Plan (first reading)

Associate Superintendent Westover presented one recommended change to the performance award plan for the 2025-2026 school year involving the Professional Learning requirement, specifically participation in Collaborative Inquiry Teams (CIT). Staff must attend at least twelve (12) CIT meetings to be eligible for the performance award. The change reinstates a previous standard to ensure consistent participation and to strengthen district-wide improvement efforts. With CITs now fully established within the professional learning system, it is appropriate to reintroduce a defined participation threshold. The board asked about how many meetings were held at each school. They requested that the total number of meetings be reflected in the plan. The CFSD Performance Award Plan will be presented to the board for a second reading at its regular meeting on May 27.

Fiscal Year 2026 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Budget Discussion

Superintendent Bartlett shared updates to the fiscal year 2026 budget, including changes to the revenue and expenditure budgets, the Classroom Site Fund (CSF), and the Instructional Improvement Fund (IIF). The revenue budget was adjusted to reduce the transfer from District Additional Assistance (DAA) to M&O, and carryforward amounts were revised due to changes in CSF and IIF expenses. Within the expenditure budget, a reduction to outsourced substitute services and prepaid legal services was reflected, and an increase for district-wide insurance coverage rates, insurance deductibles, athletic coaching stipends, and non-athletic teacher stipends was included. The CSF reflected an increase for performance pay and employee benefits from FY25, while the IIF showed a reduction due to the move of FY25 salary costs to the Title I grant. For FY26, salary expenditures and fixed costs estimates in the IIF were increased as the district has not received its total FY26 Title I grant allocation. The updated [M&O budget](#) is available for viewing on the CFSD website as part of the May 13, governing board agenda item 7.1.

2025 Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity

Board members discussed the state legislature’s recess due to disagreements over Proposition 123 and school vouchers, noting the passing of bills including laws on wireless communication and mandatory reporting.

Executive Session

The governing board held an executive session for personnel, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.) §38-431.03 (A)(1) – Discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, demotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining or resignation of a public officer, appointee or employee of any public body – Annual Performance Review of the Superintendent.

Consent Agenda Items

The governing board approved the following consent agenda items:

- April 22, 2025, regular governing board meeting minutes
- Expense voucher memorandum
- Field trip request memorandum
- Fundraising memorandum
- Personnel memorandum
- Gifts and donation memorandum
- Administrative contracts for 2025-2026
- Intergovernmental agreement between Pima County Joint Technical Education District (JTED) and CFSD
- Amendment to the intergovernmental agreement for dual enrollment between Pima County Community College District and CFSD
- Updated estimates to the cooperative purchase list for fiscal year 2024-2025
- Terms and conditions for the acceptance of monies from the School Facilities Division Building Renewal Grant (BRG) Fund for BRG Project Number BRG-007031 for the replacement of the egress lighting at Catalina Foothills High School in the amount of \$60,000
- Cooperative purchase list for fiscal year 2025-2026
- Sole source vendor list for fiscal year 2025-2026
- School Facilities Division change order to Core Construction to replace twenty-two (22) doors at Manzanita Elementary School in the amount of \$39,576
- Award to Canyon State Bus Sales for the purchase of three new Micro Bird special education buses in the amount of \$494,559.56
- Award to Roadrunner Paving & Asphalt Maintenance for parking lot and fire lane milling, repaving, resealing, and restriping at Esperero Canyon Middle School in the amount of \$423,667.80
- Award to Roadrunner Paving & Asphalt Maintenance for milling, repaving, resealing, and restriping the parking lot at Ventana Vista Elementary School in the amount of \$199,243.91
- Award to Kappcon for the replacement of acoustical ceiling tiles at Canyon View Elementary School in the amount of \$286,882

Upcoming Board Meeting

The next regularly scheduled governing board meeting is ***Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., at the Carole Siegler Boardroom at Valley View Early Learning Center. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.*** Topics on the May 27 agenda include:

- CFSD STAR Award
- Approval of Revisions to CFSD Performance Award Plan (second reading)
- Consideration of Revisions to the Facility Rental Rate Schedule per Policy KF *Community Use of School Facilities* (first reading)
- Consideration of Revisions to Policy IKF *Graduation Requirements* (first reading)
- Consideration of Academic Standards for K-12 World Languages (first reading)
- Fiscal Year 2026 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Budget Discussion



Please welcome new CFSD staff members!

Benjamin Anderson, Math Teacher, CFHS
Melissa Anderson, EA Inclusion, CFHS
Jordan Harrell, Film/TV Teacher, CFHS
Douglas Langley, 5th Grade Teacher, MZES
Sydney Madrid, PE Teacher, VVES
Yusuf Rahman, EA Inclusion, CFHS
Sarah Stewart, School Counselor, OGMS
Brian Welsh, PE & Health Teacher, CFHS