

The BOARDER



A Summary Report of the March 11, 2025, CFSD Governing Board Meeting



Pictured left to right: Board Member Tom Logue, Marci Petti, Catalina Buffum, and Principal Rob Henikman

Super Volunteer Recognition

The governing board recognized two Super Volunteers, Catalina Buffum and Marci Petti, who were nominated by Manzanita Elementary School Principal Rob Henikman, for their outstanding volunteer contributions to Manzanita Elementary School.



Ms. Catalina Buffum has served in key roles on the Family Faculty Organization (FFO) board, including Fundraising Vice President, Spirit Wear Manager, and Volunteer Coordinator. Ms. Buffum is a hands-on leader, actively involved in school

events such as Family Evening of the Arts & Culture, Read-A-Thons, Book Fairs, and Picture Days.

As FFO Website Coordinator, Ms. Marci Petti has played a vital role in organizing major school events, including Family Evening of the Arts & Culture, Read-A-Thons, Book Fairs, and School Picture Days. Ms. Petti's countless hours of service have helped create a warm and engaging school environment.

Board member Tom Logue shared that beyond their official roles, Ms. Buffum and Ms. Petti have been the backbone of countless school events, always showing up and putting in the hard work behind the scenes. Recognized as the "dynamic duo", they were described by colleagues as the first to arrive, the last to leave, and always willing to help.

The governing board expressed their gratitude to Ms. Buffum and Ms. Petti's for their dedication, kindness, and enthusiasm which has made a lasting impact on the Manzanita Elementary School learning community and presented both with a certificate and key chain.

Outstanding Achievements

Superintendent Denise Bartlett shared the following student and staff achievements:

CFHS Change of Pace Choir

On February 7-9, Change of Pace Choir traveled with Mr. Jeffrey Evans, CFHS Director, to Flagstaff to compete in the Jazz & Madrigal Festival hosted by Northern Arizona University. This three-day festival featured over 100 choirs from more than 100 schools, with participants from California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona.

In both the Jazz and Madrigal categories, Change of Pace earned Superior—the highest possible rating. They performed at both NAU's Ardrey Auditorium and Epiphany Church in Flagstaff. They were adjudicated by Professor Emeritus Bruce Rogers (Mt. San Antonio College) and Professor Mathew Myers (Washington State University)—both highly esteemed in the world of choral music. Change of Pace Choir members are Ellaina Carnahan, Carter Ferrell, Jacqueline Foley, Fox Foster, Isabella Gamas Collazo, Aisha Gereau,

Kiera Kuehnle, Siena Mayfield, Zachary Pittner, Finch Silverman, Abigail Sinclair, Louisa Stine, Alejandro Tavera-Reyes, and Luis Urtaza.

National Merit Finalists

I am pleased to share that all seven of our National Merit Semifinalists have advanced to Finalist status in the National Merit Scholarship Program! This is a remarkable accomplishment that reflects the academic excellence, dedication, and perseverance of our students. They are Joseph Drexler, Fox Foster, Sara Christina Nielsen, Nilay Patel, Carson Ruiz, Tahlia Szoke, and Bryan Zhang.

Each finalist was presented with a Certificate of Merit from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) in recognition of their outstanding achievement. The final selection process is underway, with approximately 6,870 Merit Scholarship winners to be chosen from the pool of more than 15,000 Finalists nationwide. The NMSC will notify scholarship recipients via email in March. Congratulations to our Finalists for their hard work and commitment!

CFHS Pomline

The Catalina Foothills High School Pomline showcased their talent at the USA Spirit Nationals, held February 13–17, 2025, at the Anaheim Convention Center. We applaud the team's dedication, countless hours of practice, and passion for excellence. Under the leadership of Coach Camryn Breese, our athletes demonstrated exceptional skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship on a national stage.

Varsity Pomline Members include Avelyn Alcott, Jazlynn Arias, Alexis Bates, Haley Brett, Liliana Clevenger, Audrey Dessent, Mary (Emmie) Gooding, Elizabeth Harlow, Norah Jackson, Adalyn Maynes, Annika Maynes, Aubrey Maynes, Coral Michel, Talia Monash, Peighton Rolfe, Presley Sarullo, Cally Sulger, Lauren Thompson, and Katelyn Trenka. We congratulate these outstanding student-athletes and Coach Breese on an incredible season.

On February 22, the Catalina Foothills High School Pomline captured a first-place win in the Varsity Pom division at the Pink State Championship. The private tournament was held at North Canyon High School in Phoenix. This marks an incredible streak for our senior athletes, who have ended their high school careers as four-time Pink State champions. We are incredibly proud of your achievements and can't wait to see what's next for this talented team.

CFHS Varsity Cheer

On February 14-17, our varsity cheerleaders were in Anaheim to compete at the USA Spirit Nationals Competition! We competed in both All Girl Stunt & Varsity Intermediate Show Cheer.

Our All Girl Stunt team placed 11th out of 41 teams, an incredible accomplishment for the five ladies: **Seniors** Lauren Sita & Des Ortiz, and **Juniors** Ava Moltrup, Cristina Angel, and Sidney Flores.

Our Varsity Show Cheer put on a great routine that truly modeled all of the hard work and countless hours they put in throughout this season. The routine included: **Seniors** Lauren Sita, Kira Saathoff & Des Ortiz, **Juniors** Ava Moltrup, Cristina Angel, Sidney Flores, Cindy Lu, Gabby Fiello, Giana Bueno Johnston, Victoria Benitez, Taylor Garcia, Maya Alvarez, and Maiya Nixon-Lopez, **Sophomores** Annelise Kohut, Destani McKenna, and Sedona Drumm-Lee, and **Freshman** Lily DuPont. The team's coaches are Brooke Hoglin and Emma Fuller.

CFHS Boys Soccer Team Receives AIA Sportsmanship Award

We are proud to announce that the Catalina Foothills High School Boys Soccer Team has been selected to receive this year's AIA Soccer Sportsmanship Award! This prestigious honor is presented annually by the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) to the team in each conference that exemplifies the highest level of sportsmanship, as determined by game officials. The team received this award during halftime at this year's State Championship Game held on March 1st at Mesa High School.

Winning the AIA Sportsmanship Award shows the leadership, discipline, and positive culture fostered by Head Coach Greg Whitney, Assistant Coach Wes Wade, and Assistant Coach Ryan Whitney. The team's dedication to fair play and respect for the game has earned them this well-deserved distinction.

The CFHS Boys Soccer Team includes **Seniors** Jackson Cosgrove, Nicolas Lawrence, John Pierson, Giovanni Procopio, Sebastian Rogers, Gibran Verdugo, and Bryce Weege, **Juniors** Nathan Aguirre, Pedro Cazares, Luca Celi, David Ibarra, Andrew King, Jaidon Muratti, Ely Savir-Baruch, and Itai Winter, **Sophomores** Horacio Pedrazo-Corella, Aydan Laufer, Jules Manger, Seth Nottingham, and Rylan Smith-Carrillo, and **Freshman** Elmer Morales, Mateo Perez, Miguel Ruiz-Briones, and Moses Wollner.

Congratulations to our student-athletes, coaches, and the entire Falcon Soccer community on this incredible achievement! We look forward to celebrating their success both on and off the field.

CFHS Model United Nations Excels at NAIMUN LXII

From February 13-16, Catalina Foothills High School Model United Nations students showcased their skills on the global stage at NAIMUN LXII. Held in Washington, D.C., the event brought together over 3,000 students from across the United States and countries including South Africa, France, and Italy.

CFHS delegates engaged in high-level debates on historical and contemporary global issues, demonstrating their diplomatic expertise and critical thinking. Among hundreds of competitors, Tahlia Szoke and Porter Bache stood out, earning awards for their outstanding speeches in their respective committees—a remarkable achievement at such a competitive conference! Beyond the competition, students immersed themselves in Washington, D.C.’s rich history and international presence. They toured the Embassy of Spain, explored the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, and visited iconic landmarks such as the Washington Monument, the U.S. Capitol, and the White House.

This learning experience not only sharpened their debate and diplomacy skills but also deepened their understanding of global affairs. Congratulations to all CFHS Model UN participants and advisor Mr. Peter Maxwell on this world-class accomplishment.

District and Pima County Spelling Bees

The Catalina Foothills School District is proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our students in this year’s CFSD Spelling Bee.

1st Place: Natasha Jain (Ventana Vista Elementary, 5th grade) – Advanced to represent CFSD at the Pima County Spelling Bee on February 15.

2nd Place: Dominic Bayze (Ventana Vista Elementary)

3rd Place: Tien Long Ho-Patel (Ventana Vista Elementary)

These students demonstrated exceptional perseverance, competing through 10 challenging rounds and advancing to middle school-level words.

Natasha Jain proudly represented CFSD at the Pima County Spelling Bee, making it to the fourth round—a remarkable achievement! Mrs. Martinez went above and beyond by organizing the CFSD Spelling Bee and personally coaching Natasha in the weeks leading up to the county competition. Her dedication and encouragement helped Natasha feel prepared and confident on stage.

We are incredibly proud of all our participants for their hard work and commitment to academic excellence.

DECA State Competition Results

At the Arizona State DECA Conference, held at the Arizona Grand Resort, over 2,300 students from across the state competed in a highly competitive environment. Catalina Foothills High School (CFHS) DECA students, under the guidance of business teacher and DECA advisor Jason Reinhardt, demonstrated professionalism, dedication, and exceptional performance, with several students earning high placements and seven qualifying for the International DECA Competition, which will take place in Orlando, Florida, from April 25-30, 2025. The following students have qualified for

the International DECA Competition, where they will compete against more than 21,000 students from around the world:

Kyleigh Benton—4th Place in Event

Isabella Franco—7th Place in Event & Top 20% Test Score*

Sydney Hellbusch—7th Place in Event & Top 20% Test Score*

Sophia Mallino—3rd Place in Event

Daniela Oliver—4th Place in Event & Top 20% Test Score

Zarya Vinal—4th Place in Event

Zachary Wagenheim— 4th Place in Event

Sage Wexler—4th Place in Event & Top 20% Test Score

** Normally it is only the top 5 from an event that qualify for Internationals, so the fact that these students have been invited to compete speaks volumes about their acumen and ability.*

Two students received state-level recognition for their outstanding performance:

Joaquin Islas – Top 20% Test Score

Thomas Vamos – Top 20% Test Score

The following CFHS students also competed at Arizona DECA State, demonstrating excellence and dedication: Aiden Amado, Charisma Corkle, John Donnelly, Shelby Drake, Arthur Fileguesias Pinto, Sam Irish, Andrew King, Walker Nighswander, Natalia Ortiz, Dylan Panno, Shubh Patel, Ely Savir-Baruch, and Aiden Wilt.

In addition, CFHS DECA is under consideration for three spots in the highly competitive Leadership Training Program at Internationals, demonstrating the professionalism, sportsmanship, and leadership displayed by our students. We are extremely proud of all our DECA competitors for their hard work and accomplishments. Their success at Arizona DECA State highlights their business acumen, leadership, and communication skills, and we look forward to their participation at the International DECA Competition in Orlando this April.

Tucson Festival of Books Artist

Congratulations to Canyon View’s Ava Erlacher! This talented 4th grader was selected in the Tucson Festival of Books’ Young Artists Competition. Ava created a painting of San Xavier Mission at sunset. She will be honored alongside other winners at the Tucson Festival of Books on Saturday, March 15.

Approval of Non-Renewable Teacher Contracts

Associate Superintendent Mindy Westover presented a list of teachers to be hand-delivered a written notice about the governing board action not to renew their employment contract for the 2025-2026 school year. Affected teachers include those hired after September 1, grant-funded positions, temporary assignment hires, part-time staff, first-year teachers, teachers who failed to maintain Arizona

teacher certification as required by contract, retirees, and those with failed to obtain a valid, appropriate Arizona Teaching Certificate. While these contracts are officially not renewed, most affected employees are expected to be rehired once student enrollment counts for the 2025-2026 school year are confirmed. The governing board approved the list of non-renewable teacher contracts, as presented.

Approval of Amendment to the High School Academic Recognition Process for 2025-2026

The governing board revisited the high school academic recognition process due to inaccuracies shared in a previous presentation. Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment Sheryl Castro clarified that eligibility for the 2024-2025 school year requires a weighted 4.0 GPA for each of the first three quarters of the school year, not across different school years as previously misstated. For 2025-2026, eligibility will be determined by averaging a student's first and second semester GPAs within the same academic year to eliminate confusion. Awards will be categorized as Silver (4.0+ weighted GPA) and Blue (3.75-3.99 weighted GPA), with recognition events planned for underclassmen in the fall and for seniors in May. The governing board approved the amendment to the high school Academic Awards program, as presented, for implementation in the 2025-2026 school year.

Listen and Learn Presentation

Superintendent Bartlett, Tracy Benson, President of the Waters Center for Systems Thinking, and Director of Community Relations Julie Farbarik shared insights from community feedback obtained during the Listen and Learn sessions held in the Fall of 2024 and the action steps taken by the district. The sessions' goal was to reflect on where the Catalina Foothills School District is and to hear thoughts from key stakeholders on where CFSD should go in the future. Key themes included:

- Cultivate a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment
- Foster community engagement and build a cohesive school culture
- Strengthen teacher support, retention, and professional development
- Promote rigorous academic standards and career-ready skills
- Enhance personalized learning and individualized support
- Encourage transparent communication and active family engagement
- Modernize facilities and resources to support diverse learning needs

Detailed information about the [Listen and Learn Presentation](#) was made available to the CFSD community as part of the

governing board meeting agenda item 5.1 on the CFSD website.

2025 Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity

Board members discussed the movement toward compromise between the Arizona governor's office and the state legislature regarding an increase in the state land trust draw for Proposition 123. Two concerns with the current legislation are the definition of teacher and teacher raises for only those in the top two performance classifications which may disadvantage new teachers. This would require the district to backfill funding gaps. A concern for the potential shuttering of the Department of Education which manages Title I and IDEA funds and oversees civil rights enforcement was also discussed.

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 – Discussion of Employee Salary/Wage and Benefit Proposals for 2025-2026.

Consent Agenda Items

The governing board approved the following consent agenda items:

- February 25, 2025, regular governing board meeting minutes
- Expense voucher memorandum
- Field trip request memorandum
- Fundraising memorandum
- Personnel memorandum
- Gifts and donation memorandum
- Award of RFP 25-02-30 District Pest Control and Termite Services, a one-year contract with the option to renew for four additional years to Essential Pest Control, Incorporated with an estimated annual cost of \$15,454.64.
- Addition of LRP Publications to the sole source vendor list for fiscal year 2024-2025
- School Facilities Division award to Tolin Mechanical for the replacement of an air conditioner unit at Canyon View Elementary School in the amount of \$17,099.

Upcoming Board Meeting

The next regularly scheduled governing board meeting is **Tuesday, April 1, 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 April 1 agenda include:

- To Consider and, if Deemed Advisable, to Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of School Improvement Bonds of the District

- Consideration of Revisions to Policy IHB and Regulation IHB-R *Special Instructional Programs* (first reading)
- Consideration of Revisions to Policy IHBA and Regulation IHBA-RA *Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations for Disabled Students* (first reading)
- Pima County School Board / Superintendent Collaborative Meeting Report (March 24, 2025)
- Executive Session: Discussion of Employee Salary/Wage and Benefit Proposals for 2025-2026



Please welcome new CFSD staff members!

Raymon Cervantez, EA Inclusion, CFHS

Kathryn "Casey" Parker, EA Inclusion, VVELC

Bree Varnadore, CARE Activity Leader, MZES