

# The BOARDER



## *A Summary Report of the November 4, 2024, CFSD Governing Board Meeting*



***Pictured: 2025 National Merit® Scholarship Program Semifinalists and Commended Students, Board Member Gina Mehmert, and Principal Chris Lambert***

### **CFSD Star Award**

The governing board recognized the Catalina Foothills High School (CFHS) National Merit® Scholarship Program Semifinalists and Commended Students. The National Merit® Scholarship Program is an annual academic competition among high school students for recognition and college undergraduate scholarships that began in 1955. The 2025 semifinalists are Joseph Drexler, Fox Foster, Sara Christina Nielsen, Nilay Patel, Carson Ruiz, Tahlia Szoke, and Bryan Zhang. The 2025 commended students are Sebastian Cross, Ella Hennings, Lilian Li, Siena Mayfield, Brandon Mokhtarian, Kyriaki Papas, Nina Raju, and Zacarias Young. Board Member Gina Mehmert and Catalina Foothills High School Principal Chris Lambert highlighted the students' remarkable journeys and the challenges each have faced to achieve this elite recognition. Each commended scholar and semifinalist were presented with a certificate and pin.

### **Deep Learning Showcase - History Under Investigation: Fifth Graders Crack the Case of the Boston Massacre**

The governing board viewed a presentation featuring an engaging fifth-grade Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) project at Canyon View Elementary School led by teacher Samantha Thompson, who transformed a lesson on the Boston Massacre into a dynamic Crime Scene Investigation experience. Parents took on the roles of witnesses to the historic event, allowing students to interview them for first-hand accounts. Immersed in their roles as detectives or reporters, students analyzed documents and "evidence" from the scene, piecing together details about how the Boston Massacre occurred. Detectives compiled their findings into crime scene files, while reporters crafted newspaper articles to capture the event's significance. The project culminated in student presentations to small groups, who offered constructive feedback, enhancing both their understanding of history and their communication skills.



***Pictured: Canyon View Elementary School IDS Teacher Samantha Thompson***

### **Outstanding Achievements**

Superintendent Denise Bartlett shared the following student and staff achievements:

Catalina Foothills School District Named Arizona's Only All-A K-12 District

Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD) proudly stands as Arizona's only K-12 district to have every school earn an "A" rating from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) for the 2023-2024 school year. This exceptional milestone reflects CFSD's commitment to excellence, rigorous academic standards, and the collective effort of its students, teachers, families, and community.

Additionally, CFSD is thrilled to announce that Sunrise Drive Elementary School achieved a perfect score of 100 in the total points earned in the Arizona Accountability Model. This achievement makes Sunrise Drive Elementary the only K-8 public school among Arizona's 1,368 K-8 schools to earn this distinction, underscoring the school's unwavering dedication to academic excellence and student growth.

The ADE's A-F Letter Grade system annually evaluates schools on critical performance metrics, including student growth in English language arts, math, and science; proficiency and growth of English language learners; high school graduation rates; and readiness indicators for college or careers. CFSD's achievement reflects a district-wide dedication to preparing students for success in college and beyond.

#### National Merit Semifinalists

We are proud to announce that seven of our seniors have been named National Merit Semifinalists in the 2025 National Merit® Scholarship Program. In an average year, less than 1% of U.S. high school seniors are named National Merit Semifinalists. By comparison, an impressive 1.4% of CFHS seniors earned this prestigious distinction.

Congratulations to our Class of 2025 Semifinalists Joseph Drexler, Fox Foster, Sara Christina Nielsen, Nilay Patel, Carson Ruiz, Tahlia Szoke, and Bryan Zhang. These students now have the opportunity to compete for nearly 7,000 National Merit Scholarships worth a total of \$26 million, to be awarded in the spring of 2025. To advance in the competition, our Semifinalists must fulfill several additional requirements to achieve Finalist standing. We are incredibly proud of them and wish them continued success as they move forward in this competition.

#### CFHS Girls Golf

The CFHS girls' golf team, coached by Robert Rathbun, qualified and competed in the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) Division II State Championship! The state

championship took place at Aguila Golf Club in Phoenix on Monday, October 28th and Tuesday, October 29th. The team proudly finished in seventh place at the state championships, achieving a total score of 683. The girls had a remarkable season, coming within just one stroke of an undefeated match record. They recently secured a victory over their top Southern Arizona rivals, Salpointe Catholic and Ironwood Ridge, in a thrilling match. The team was led by Junior Sofia Strobel, who shot an outstanding 4-over-par 41. Congratulations to our talented athletes for their hard work, dedication, and impressive performance on the course!

The team consists of Brienna Claw, Charisma Corkle, Sara Emslie, Emiliana Lamb, Gabrielle Matty, Olivian Matty, Jayden Nester, Elsa Ricker, and Sofia Strobel.

#### CFHS Boys Golf

The Catalina Foothills High School boys' golf team delivered an outstanding performance at the Division II State Golf Championship held at Aguila Golf Course on October 30-31, 2024. Sophomore Zachary Schaefer earned the title of Division II Boys Golf State Runner-Up with an impressive 8-under 136, while Junior Chase Cesarek took fourth place with a 7-under 137. The team collectively secured the State Team Runner-Up title with a remarkable 8-under 568.

Led by longtime coach Julie Walters, the athletes: Chase Cesarek, Everett Corwon, Kallum De Guia, Oliver De Guia, Jack Khedia, Grant Matheny, John Matheny III, Griffin Meister, Alex Ramos, Kai Saldalla, Zachary Schaefer, Ari Schiller, and Parker Servoss represented Catalina Foothills with skill and dedication. Congratulations on this impressive achievement at State!

#### CFHS Choir

On October 20-21, CFHS hosted the Arizona Choral Educators Fall Festival in the Music Hall. There were 25 choirs from 15 different schools from all over Southern Arizona. The choirs were adjudicated by local choral experts Dr. Marcela Molina, Jennifer Campman, and Dr. Jeff Vanderlee. Out of the 25 participating choirs, our choirs received the top three scores of the whole festival, earning them the title of Superior with Distinction. The Concert Chorale received the highest overall rating, and Change of Pace took the top score in literacy. Congratulations to all of the singers for their hard work and excellent musicianship!

Choir Silver members include Meryl Abdelmessieh, Sunita Adhikari, Jillian Bea, Ivy Buffalo, Abigail Carnahan, Ellaina Carnahan, Madisyn Gabbard, Gia German, Riley Goetsch, Brielle Groves, Sarina Herrington, Harper Hisey, Sophia Hudgens, Elise Lanzarotti, Olivia Linton, Lorena Marye, Sophia Maria Oliveira, Anna Palmer, Alexis Perry, Ada Tenbroeck, Isabella Trader, and Avisa Victory.

Concert Chorale members include Meryl Abdelmessieh, Abigail Amante, Frances Bavier, Owen Becker, Sophie Bian, Laila Brooks, Ellaina Carnahan, Mariah Coats, Mia Correggio, Lillian Dupont, Nora Fadel, Carter Ferrell, Addison Fluegel, Fox Foster, Layla Fraser, Madisyn Gabbard, Isabella Gamas Collazo, Isabella Garcia, Aisha Gereau, Charlotte Gordon, Zachary Green, Norah Jacob, Alexandra Kapke, Audrey Landau, Laney Lee-Hilton, Thomas Lindgren, Sebastian Mehl-Dominguez, Vincent Merheb, Esperanza Naney, Salome Nifong, Stephie Norvilus, Edgar Padilla, Anna Palmer, Fernanda Partida Guillen, Alexis Perry, Cullen Rae, Anakin Ramirez, Maya Reed, Taylor Rupprecht, Eli Schmidt, Benjamin Silverman, Eden Tarquinio-Alexander, Joseph Towe, Mason Trible, Luis Urtaza, Arian Valiani, and Nathaniel Wiley.

Change of Pace members include Ellaina Carnahan, Carter Ferrell, Jacqueline Foley, Fox Foster, Isabella Gamas Collazo, Aisha Gereau, Kiera Kuehnle, Siena Mayfield, Zachary Pittner, Benjamin Silverman, Abigail Sinclair, Louisa Stine, Alejandro Tavera-Reyes, and Luis Urtaza.

Mr. Jeffrey Evans is the Director of Choirs for Catalina Foothills High School.

#### CFHS Band

The Catalina Foothills High School Falcon Marching Band achieved remarkable success at the University of Arizona's Band Day competition on Saturday, November 2, 2024. Competing against 47 bands, the Falcon Marching Band earned first place in their division, achieved the highest music performance score of the day, and secured the top individual marching score, distinguishing them as the highest-scoring Tucson band at the event.

This year's show, titled "Play!", was recognized for its beloved musical pieces, dynamic artistry, and engaging themes. Under the direction of Renee Shane-Boyd, Ian Marcusiu, and Tina Walton, and led by Drum Majors Bryan Zhang, Shelby Giachetti, Dominic Bell, and Sara Nielsen,

the band's performance was honored in multiple categories, winning top captions in General Effect, Visual Performance, and Music.

In the spirit of service, the Falcon Marching Band will next perform at the Tucson VA Hospital on Friday, November 8, 2024, to honor our veterans in celebration of Veterans Day, paying tribute to their service and sacrifices.

#### Esperero Canyon Middle School Sixth Grader Recognized in Arizona Treasurer's Essay Contest

The Catalina Foothills School District is proud to announce that Abby Henson, a sixth grader from Esperero Canyon Middle School, has been selected as one of the 20 winners of Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee's annual AZ529 Essay Writing Contest. Abby's winning essay was chosen from among 627 entries submitted by fifth and sixth grade students from across Arizona's 15 counties, representing district, charter, private schools, Bureau of Indian Education, and homeschools.

Abby responded to the prompt, "What Is Your Dream Job and How Do You Plan on Achieving It in the Future?" Her essay captivated judges with her vision of becoming a Supreme Court Justice dedicated to supporting environmental protection. Her thoughtful, original writing demonstrated a strong commitment to both justice and sustainability, underscoring the values of leadership and stewardship.

As one of the 20 winners, Abby received \$529 towards an AZ529 Education Savings Plan, supporting her future educational pursuits. Congratulations, Abby!

#### **Preliminary Approval of the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar (second reading)**

Associate Superintendent Mindy Westover presented no additional changes to the 2026-2027 school year calendar since the governing board's review on October 22. Highlights of the calendar include: new teachers' reporting date of July 29; returning teachers' reporting date of August 4; the first day of school August 10; Fall Break October 12–16 (full week); K-12 parent teacher conferences October 27, 28, 29; PreK parent-teacher conferences September 28–October 9 and April 19–30 by appointment only; Winter Break includes three weekends; semesters are unevenly divided (85/95 days); last day of school on May 26; and last contract day for teachers is

May 27. The governing board tabled the item for additional review by administration to consider options to balance the number of days in each semester. The 2026-2027 school year calendar will return to the agenda for a third reading at the next regular governing board meeting on November 25.

**Consideration of Revisions to Policy and Regulation DJE, DJE-R, Bidding / Purchasing Procedures (first reading)**

Superintendent Bartlett presented revisions to the policy and regulation related to bidding / purchasing procedures to ensure that grant-related purchases are not made from an entity that has been suspended or debarred by the federal government. Suspension and debarment are actions taken by the federal government against organizations or individuals who have committed fraud or a criminal offense in violation of federal law. The policy and regulation have been revised to include language to check for procurement contracts for goods and services awarded under a non-procurement transaction (e.g., grant or cooperative agreement) that are expected to equal or exceed \$25,000, for debarment or suspension of any agency, entity, and its principals. The policy and regulation will return to the agenda for a second reading on November 25.

**Study Session: Understanding A-F Accountability System**

Coordinator of Student Data, Assessment, and Accountability Justin Robinson provided an in-depth study of the A-F Letter Grade Accountability System, including major details regarding how points for specific indicators are calculated in the categories of proficiency, growth, English learners, acceleration/ readiness, graduation, and college/career readiness.

Detailed information about the [A-F Letter Grades Indicator Breakdown](#) was made available to the CFSD community as part of the governing board meeting agenda item 2.1 on the CFSD website.

**2024 Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity**

There was no discussion.

**Consent Agenda Items**

The governing board approved the following consent agenda items:

- October 22, 2024, regular governing board meeting minutes
- Expense voucher memorandum
- Field trip request memorandum
- Fundraising memorandum
- Personnel memorandum
- Gifts and donation memorandum
- School Facilities Division award to Core Construction, Swaim Associates, and Arcadis for the weatherization project at Manzanita Elementary School totaling \$496,057.00

**Upcoming Board Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled governing board meeting is **Monday, November 25, 2024, 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 November 25 agenda include:

- Preliminary Approval of the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar (third reading)
- Approval of Revisions to Policy DJE and Regulation DJE-R, *Bidding / Purchasing Procedures* (second reading)
- Selection of Delegates to the ASBA-ASA Annual Membership Meeting, Thursday, December 19, 2024
- Consideration of Proposed ASBA Bylaws



**Please welcome new CFSD staff members!**

**Jazmin Aguayo**, EA Inclusion, OGMS  
**Tamara Dye**, Remote School Psychologist, MAC  
**Shahira Faizzada**, EA Inclusion, OGMS  
**Carlos Guerra Gomez**, CARE Activity Leader I, SDES