

The BOARDER



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



CFSD Deep Learning Showcase (A Showcase of Quality Teaching) Building a Sustainable Future: Esperero Canyon Middle School National Junior Honor Society Students Restore Sabino Canyon

The governing board premiered a deep learning showcase video, *Building a Sustainable Future*, featuring Esperero Canyon Middle School (ECMS) National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) 8th grade students who took learning beyond the classroom and into the desert as part of their NJHS community service program. Partnering with Watershed Management Group (WMG), they participated in a hands-on restoration project at Sabino Canyon. With guidance from Science teacher Casey Virgil, Social Studies teacher Maggie Givens, and WMG expert Becky Fitzpatrick, students built one-rock dams to slow erosion, capture rainwater, and support the fragile desert ecosystem. Through this immersive experience, students not only applied scientific concepts in a real-world setting but also developed a deeper connection to their local environment. Their efforts demonstrate how small, intentional changes can have a significant impact on sustaining natural landscapes.

Note: [The Building a Sustainable Future video](#) is currently available on the CFSD website's homepage.

Outstanding Achievements

Superintendent Denise Bartlett shared the following student and staff achievements:

FIRST LEGO League State Championship

Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD) celebrates the outstanding achievements of its FIRST LEGO League (FLL) teams at the State Championship held on Saturday, January 18, at Arizona State University's West Campus. Competing against 71 teams from across Arizona, CFSD teams excelled, earning multiple awards, placing three teams in the top 10 for robot scores, and advancing three teams to postseason competition.

CFSD had five teams earning top awards and three placing in the top 10 for robot scores. As many as three CFSD teams may advance to postseason competition.

Award Highlights:

Team 5155 Reef Rangers – 3rd Place for the Core Values Award

Team 5158 Partners for Life – 2nd Place for the Innovation Project

Team 5151 Marine Micro Masters – 3rd Place for Robot Design

Team 5153 Illuminators – 2nd Place for the Core Values Award

Team 5152 Barbaric Blooms – 1st Place for the Innovation Project

CFSD extends heartfelt gratitude to the coaches Charlotte Ackerman, Noah Mickey Colman, Maura Baker, Tiffany Wiley, Nancy Hsiao, and all of the parent and student mentors who guided our teams to success. Their leadership and dedication have been instrumental in inspiring teamwork, innovation, and excellence among our students. Many of our alumni were recruited as judges and referees for the state tournament.

Team Roster Highlights:

Team 5155 Reef Rangers – 3rd Place for the Core Values Award Team Members: Andrew Trombetta (OG), Damon Hayden (OG), Emily Fink (OG), Gigi Trombetta (OG), Isadora Friedman (SD), Lily Ruiz (OG), Lucas Rodriguez (EC), Mikey Stefano (OG), Sophia Barrios (OG)

Team 5158 Partners for Life – 2nd Place for the Innovation Project Team Members: Brenden Sult (OG), Ethan Luo (OD), Graham Martin (SD), Kason Strunk (VV), Lucas

Byrne (SD), Noah Chavez (OG), Sebastian Bonomolo (OD)

Team 5151 Marine Micro Masters – 3rd Place for Robot Design Team Members: Amelie Puell (SD), Isha Bandopadhyay (SD), Luke Danilowitz (OD), Richelle Yang (OD), Yihan Yang (OD), Dylan Pan (SD), Turner Jason (SD)

Team 5153 Illuminators – 2nd Place for the Core Values Award Team Members: Kaeli Greer (VV), Rebecca Black (VV), Jacob Colman (EC), Ellie Bao (VV), Liam Wilhelm (VV), Brooke Miller (VV), Gideon Singerman (VV), Sylvia Goldstein (VV)

Team 5152 Barbaric Blooms – 1st Place for the Innovation Project Team Members: Natasha Jain (VV), Mara Janjić (VV), Blake Brasfield (EC), Connor Flaherty (EC), Colin Wilhelm (VV), Lilly Candlish (VV), Ben Barlow (EC), Claire Varden (EC)

Team 5154 Tellers of the Propellers – Scored 30th in robot performance with a max score of 200 points Team Members: Beckett Latcham (VV), Stella Obler (VV), Brooks Matchett (VV), Henry Kiser (VV), Cyrus Candlish (EC), Ezra Coan (VV), Ava Moore (VV), Ezra Rottenstein (VV), Landry Henderson (VV)

This year's theme, "**Submerged**," invited teams to explore underwater environments and focus on marine sustainability and innovation. Teams designed and programmed robots to tackle tasks related to underwater challenges, conducted research to identify specific problems, and proposed innovative solutions.

Pioneer Robotics

Huge congratulations to Pioneer Robotics on an unforgettable performance at the FTC Palo Verde-Goodyear Qualifier on Saturday, January 25.

Championship Win: Pioneer went undefeated, winning 8 straight matches, including 2 semi-finals and 2 final matches against different alliances. Their dominance on the field secured them the Winning Alliance First Pick and an incredible 286 points in the final match, the 4th highest score in the state!

Inspire Award: Pioneer also took home the Inspire Award, the highest honor in the FIRST Tech Challenge. This award celebrates teams that exemplify innovation, teamwork, and leadership, serving as ambassadors of the program while competing with Gracious Professionalism®.

Pioneer team members are Estaban Aguirre, Owen Cantor-Goldner, Aidan Chang, Braeden Gracy, Ethan Lin, Kyle Lo,

Ali Lucas, Isaak Martin, Valerie McLamarrah, Quin Mekkelsen, Milo Peters, Nathan Wu, and Zoya Zar.

Pioneer is coached by Charlotte Ackerman and Sam Kunzeman. Team Mentors are Lukas Gruber, Joel Boroquez, and Michael Gross.

CFHS Student Council

At the Arizona Association of Student Council (AASC) conference on January 25, CFHS junior Fiona Westmoreland was elected by hundreds of her peers as next year's AASC President! Catalina Foothills High School's student council earned the prestigious "Outstanding Council" award and several others.

Congratulations to Gary Thompson for being named AASC Student Council Advisor of the Year! He was nominated by his student council students and selected by the AASC Executive Board out of several outstanding advisors across the state. Gary has also been invited to serve on the AASC Executive Board.

Catalina Foothills absolutely shined at this year's State Convention.

CFHS Advanced Theatre

The Catalina Foothills High School Advanced Theatre program performed well at the Southern Arizona Festival of Theatre (SAFT) Regionals on Saturday, January 25, earning accolades in team and individual events.

The program fielded two teams in the Tech Challenge, showcasing their backstage skills in critical theatre tasks. The teams, comprised of Saki Grobe, Veronica Davis-Soto, Calista Morrison, Robin Oxnam, Elise McFarlane, Cameron Smith, and Aidan Bryant, earned:

Second Place in Sewing Machine Threading

Second Place in Knot Tying

Four students also participated in individual events, earning impressive ratings:

Saki Grobe: Superior Rating for their Stage Management Portfolio

Vivianna Colson: Superior Rating for her Musical Theatre Dance Performance

Jade Leon: Superior Rating for her Musical Theatre Solo Vocal Performance

Calista Morrison: Excellent Rating for her Musical Theatre Solo Vocal Performance

The instructor of Advanced Theatre is Amy Byroad, Theatre Arts Director. The Catalina Foothills School District congratulates Ms. Byroad and the Advanced Theatre students on their continued success.

CFSD Certified Retention Report

Superintendent Bartlett shared the results of the Spring 2024 administration of the Teacher Retention Survey with the governing board. Since 2015, the district has studied the retention of certified staff through a retention survey administered every three years. The goals of the survey are to understand the factors that: 1) attract teachers to apply to CFSD, 2) contribute to them accepting a job in CFSD, 3.) contribute to continue employment in CFSD, and 4.) might influence a teacher to seek employment outside of CFSD.

Detailed information about the [CFSD Certified Retention Report](#) was made available to the CFSD community as part of the governing board meeting agenda item 4.1 on the CFSD website.

Arizona School Boards Association (ASBA) Board Operations and Leadership Training Seminar (B.O.L.T.S) Report

Board members Jacquelyn Davoli and Tom Logue provided information from the ASBA Board Operations and Leadership Training Session (BOLTS) held on January 24, 2025. Topics covered were open meeting law, the Auditor General's Classroom Spending Report and Financial Risk Analysis Report, improving student outcomes through strategic planning, goals, and monitoring, the 2025 legislative session, and governing board meeting procedures. Both shared that the sessions were informative and well done.

2025 Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity

Board members discussed concerns over proposed legislation to make school board elections partisan and budget cuts to the Department of Developmental Disabilities impacting Arizona students with special needs.

Consent Agenda Items

The governing board approved the following consent agenda items:

- January 28, 2025, regular governing board meeting minutes
- Expense voucher memorandum
- Fundraising memorandum
- Personnel memorandum
- Gifts and donation memorandum
- 3rd Quarter Tax Credit Eligible Fees

Upcoming Board Meeting

The next regularly scheduled governing board meeting is **Tuesday, February 25, 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 February 25 agenda include:

- Super Volunteer Recognition
- Public Hearing on Revisions to Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Revision #2)
- Approval of Revisions to Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Revision #2)
- CFSD Classified Retention Report
- Pima County School Board / Superintendent Collaborative Meeting Report (February 17, 2025)



Please welcome new CFSD staff members!

Monika Jayne Connelly, EA Inclusion, CVES