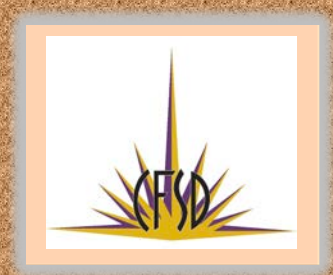


# The BOARDER



## *A Summary Report of the April 8, 2025, CFSD Governing Board Meeting*

### **Outstanding Achievements**

Superintendent Denise Bartlett shared the following student and staff achievements:

#### 2025 KEYS Research Interns

We are happy to share that Catalina Foothills High School students William Jacobsen and Inara Smith have been selected for the prestigious 2025 KEYS Research Internship at the University of Arizona's BIO5 Institute. They are among 66 exceptional high school students from 35 schools across Arizona chosen for this highly competitive seven-week summer program, which runs from June 2 to July 18.

The KEYS (Keep Engaging Youth in Science) internship empowers students to work alongside top research faculty, contributing to real-world bioscience projects that use cutting-edge biotechnology and data analysis techniques. Interns deepen their scientific understanding and sharpen their science communication and literacy skills as they engage in interdisciplinary research experiences.

#### Early Childhood Learning

We are proud to recognize the exceptional accomplishments of our early childhood learning students at the recent Arizona Proficiency and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) STAR Events competitions. These talented students demonstrated creativity, leadership, and a deep understanding of early childhood education through their impressive performances.

- Audrey Fiore earned a Silver medal in The Art of Storytelling
- Abigail Knutson received a Gold medal in Toys that Teach
- Emma Harphant was awarded Bronze in the Entrepreneurship category
- Baaba Sarsah earned a Silver medal for her Leadership presentation
- Sophia Venning, who was elected to a state leadership officer position

These achievements reflect the dedication and passion of our students and the strength of our early childhood education program and the guidance of Ms. Brenda Cabarga. Congratulations to all!

#### Esperero Canyon Middle School Band

We are proud to share that the Esperero Canyon Middle School Band, under the direction of Mr. Cory Walavich, received a Superior rating at the Arizona Band and Orchestra Directors Association (ABODA) Band Festival on February 27 at Queen Creek High School. This marks the third consecutive year that the ECMS Band has earned this prestigious recognition!

This outstanding achievement reflects the dedication and talent of our student musicians, the leadership of Mr. Walavich, and the district's strong commitment to the arts. Congratulations to the entire ECMS Band community for continuing to set a high standard of excellence!

#### Catalina Foothills High School Choir

The Catalina Foothills High School Choir earned a Gold rating and placed 2nd in the Concert Choir category in the 3A division at the Nashville Heritage Festival.

As a result of their exceptional performance, the choir has been invited to perform in Chicago in 2026 as part of the prestigious Elite Festival of Gold.

A special highlight of the trip: the choir performed an original composition by CFHS student Carter Ferrell.

We also celebrate Senior Meryl Abdelmessieh, who was honored as the only student at the festival to receive the WorldStrides Ovation Award for her outstanding mentorship of incoming students in the choir program.

Congratulations to Meryl, Carter, and all of our talented singers who represented us with excellence.

#### Exemplary Educator Award Finalist

We are pleased to announce that Renee Shane-Boyd, Director of Bands, has been named a finalist for the Exemplary Educator award at the Metro Education

Commission's upcoming Evening to Empower(ED) event on May 9, 2025.

This special event coincides with Teacher Appreciation Week and builds on three decades of honoring educational excellence through the Crystal Apple Awards. Exemplary Educators are individuals who demonstrate exceptional service to learners and empower them on their journey toward prosperity. Renee Shane-Boyd is that ideal.

Renee has served Catalina Foothills School District for 42 years, teaching at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Under her leadership, the CFHS Marching Band has been the largest in Arizona for decades and has performed at renowned venues, including the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade (twice), the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, and the 2008 Pre-Olympic Ceremonies in Beijing, China. The band has also performed in Hawaii, Australia, and England. As Fine Arts Chair for the Catalina Foothills School District, she has served on numerous curriculum and architectural committees.

Renee's contributions have been recognized through numerous honors, including the OM Hartsell Excellence in Music Education Award, 2025 University of Arizona Honored Educator, 2009 CFSD Teacher of the Year Award, AMEA Longevity in Teaching Award, and a Paul Harris Fellow designation from Rotary International for her outstanding service to the community. She is also a regular guest conductor with the Arizona Symphonic Winds.

We are incredibly proud to see Renee's extraordinary career and service recognized on such a prestigious regional stage.

#### CFHS Choir

Senior Finch Silverman was awarded first chair in the Tenor section for the 2025 Arizona All-State Choir. Finch, along with seniors Fox Foster and Siena Mayfield, Juniors Carter Ferrell and Louisa Stine, and Freshman Avis Victory will be traveling with Mr. Evans to Northern Arizona University in mid-April to participate in the All-State Music Festival. The singers will unite as a part of a 200-voice choir made up of the best singers from around the state of Arizona. The choir will be conducted by the Director of Choral Activities from the University of Oregon, Dr. Sharon Paul.

#### FBLA State Conference Success

This year the Computer Science club had 14 students compete in presentation events at the FBLA State Leadership Conference. In addition, 12 students took

objective tests. Two teams made it to the final rounds of competition:

- Caitlyn Trail and Calvin Mathew in Mobile Application Development
- William Jacobsen, Wyatt Miller and Gordon Kim in Data Analysis

William, Wyatt, and Gordon took first place in their event and qualified to go to the National Leadership conference over the summer.

All students that competed made awesome programs that showcased their programming talent.

#### STARTALK Chinese Language Program

We are proud to share that CFHS students Jaylin Peterson and Sofie Collins have been selected to participate in the prestigious STARTALK Chinese language program at the University of Arizona in 2025.

STARTALK, a federal program funded by the National Security Agency, supports the study of critically needed world languages in the United States. This year's program, *Chinese Pathways in Arizona*, offers an immersive Mandarin Chinese experience and provides one University of Arizona credit upon successful completion. With a highly competitive applicant pool from across the nation, Jaylin and Sofie were selected for their exceptional proficiency and strong interviews.

Please join us in congratulating these students. Their success reflects the district's continued commitment to world language excellence and global learning opportunities.

#### 2025 Southern Arizona Research, Science, and Engineering Fair (SARSEF) Winners

CFSD students shined at the 2025 Southern Arizona Research, Science, and Engineering Fair with sixty-three (63) projects receiving awards. Awards received include sixteen (16) first place awards, fifteen (15) second place awards, fourteen (14) third place awards, six (6) SARSEF Board Awards, one (1) Cordell Family Award, two (2) Tucson Electric Program (TEP) Awards, one (1) Women's Chemistry Group (WCG) 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Award, one (1) WCG 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Award, one (1) Spark of Innovative Elementary School Award, one (1) Arizona Hydrological Society Award, one (1) Family Fun Pack Award, one (1) Community Gardens of Tucson Award, one (1) Math is Fun! Award, one (1) Up, Up, and Away Award, and one (1) Patricia Abbey Memorial Award. CFSD winners by school include:

#### Canyon View Elementary School

- Audrey Fraser (Grade 5) – *Styrofoam Lunch Trays: A Study on Disposable Vs. Closed Loop Systems* – SARSEF Board Award

- Charlize Beier (Grade 5) – *Does Ball Size Matter?* – Third Place
- Evelyn Hartshorne (Grade 1) – *Doodle Droids* – First Place; Texas Instruments Elementary School Award for Excellence in STEM 3rd Place
- Hadley Callie (Grade 5) – *The Burrito Lockdown* – Spark of Innovative Elementary School
- Jaylin Barrow (Kindergarten) – *How to make a flying car* – Second Place
- Luke Thompson (Grade 1) – *Citrus Batteries* – Second Place
- Myla Closterman (Grade 5) – *What Puts the Pop in My Popovers?* – Second Place
- Olivia Babst (Grade 5) – *How does painted art affect people's feelings?* – First Place; The Betsy Bolding Award
- Ryder Bayne (Grade 5) – *H<sub>2</sub>O No! A Clear Look at Water Filtration* – Arizona Hydrological Society
- Sawyer Thompson (Grade 1) – *Life Savers* – Second Place

#### *Catalina Foothills High School*

- Aaron Handler (Grade 12) – *Biodegradable Gum* – Family Fun Pack
- Courtney Tong (Grade 12) – *Thermoplastic Horse Shoes* – Second Place
- Daija Derum (Grade 12) – *Understanding The Role Of Experience In Ant Contests* – Powered by Perseverance High School, SARSEF Board Award
- Elise McFarlane, Robin Oxnam (Grade 12) – *Decomposers and Soil Remediation* – Community Gardens of Tucson Award
- Hannah Hiscox (Grade 12) – *Scents That Repel* – Third Place
- Gyiana Madero (Grade 12) – *Music's affect on bacterial growth* – SARSEF Board Award
- Olivia Irish (Grade 12) – *Sound vibrations and worm composting* – SARSEF Board Award
- Sebastian Cross (Grade 12) – *Cordyceps Militaris Antimicrobial Properties* – Second Place
- Sophie Roth Gordon (Grade 11) – *Preventing Type 2 Diabetes in Youth* – Math Is Fun!
- Tyler Tosca (Grade 12) – *Ecosystem Recovery Post Forest Fire* – Third Place
- William Jacobsen (Grade 11) – *Hot Droughts & Ecosystem Productivity* – First Place; NASA Earth System Science Award
- Zoe Wung (Grade 12) – *Effect of Growth Hormones on Yeast* – Third Place

#### *Esperero Canyon Middle School*

- Bryce Edwards, Harrison Hannley (Grade 7) – *Fire Hydrant Power* – First Place
- Emma McNulty, Azalea Bailin (Grade 7) – *Water Power in Fire Suppression* – SARSEF Board Award

- Isabella Johnson (Grade 7) – *LED Light Spectrum & Nasturtium Growth in Space* – Second Place
- Isabelle Babst (Grade 7) – *Solar-Panel Shade for Crops (Year 3)* – First Place
- Jonah Trail (Grade 7) – *Mission to the Moon Rocket Analysis* – "Up, Up, and Away"
- Kelly Smith's class (Grade 7) – *Fire Resistance of Succulents* – First Place; Third Place, Wonderful Whoops
- Mia Gamboa Veliz, Abigail Jarczyk, Liliana Roberts (Grade 7) – *Clear the Air* – Third Place; TEP Award of Excellence

#### *Manzanita Elementary School*

- Eli Smerz (Grade 5) – *The Weighted Blanket Experiment* – Third Place
- Ella Winter (Grade 3) – *Vision and Taste Perception* – Second Place
- Lilah Winter (Grade 4) – *Macronutrients, Activity, and Glucose/Ketones* – First Place
- Lucy Prevenas (Grade 1) – *Apple Storage Methods* – First Place
- Maura Baker's class (Grade 4) – *The Power of Duct Tape* – TEP Award of Excellence
- Megan Winter's class (Grade 1) – *Slide Speed* – SARSEF Board Award

#### *Orange Grove Middle School*

- Emery Chukly (Grade 6) – *Fungi to the rescue* – Third Place

#### *Sunrise Drive Elementary School*

- Aaheli Shil (Grade 5) – *Trash to Tunes* – Third Place
- Alice Puell (Kindergarten) – *Where are most of the conductors?* – Second Place
- Asher Sakievich (Grade 4) – *Trash Talking Stinknet* – First Place; Fixing Things That Stink
- Blue Ennesser, Violet Peterson (Grade 5) – *Temperature on Glow Sticks* – Third Place
- Daniel Li, Leland Toth (Grade 5) – *Five Second Rule* – Third Place
- David Bui, Jonathan Parsons, Ming Shung Reid (Grade 5) – *Sourdough Journey to Space* – Second Place
- Elise Peterson, Stella Velasco (Grade 5) – *Project Coffee Stains* – Second Place
- Jiwoo Yang (Grade 3) – *A Day Without Plastic* – Patricia Abbey Memorial Award
- Jotham David (Grade 3) – *Healthy pH, Healthy Teeth* – First Place
- Katharina Mangelsdorf (Grade 3) – *Germs, Germs, Everywhere!* – WCG Best Project: Grade 3
- Lucas Byrne, Graham Martin (Grade 5) – *Time To Fly!* – Third Place
- Max Hao, Andrew Wang (Grade 5) – *Popcorn Seeds* – Third Place

- Stasia Stevens (Grade 4) – *Kisses...And Cures?* – WCG Best Project: Grade 4
- William Mangelsdorf (Grade 1) – *Ready, Set, Launch!* – First Place; Evil Genius  
Valley View Early Learning Center
- Evelyn Wong (PreK) – *Gummy Bear Experiment* – First Place  
Ventana Vista Elementary School
- Alexander Bevevino (Grade 5) – *Why is my car so hot?* – TEP Award of Excellence
- Ava Escajeda (Grade 5) – *Running Guinea Pigs* – The Cordell Family Award
- Beckett Latcham (Grade 5) – *Burning Down the House* – Second Place
- Colin Wilhelm (Grade 5) – *Dissolving The Rainbow* – First Place
- Leo Cusanovich (Kindergarten) – *Apple Weights and Seeds* – First Place
- Michael Montoya (Grade 2) – *Keeping It Fresh* – Second Place
- Natasha Jain (Grade 5) – *Fizz & Fangs* – First Place
- Pascal Guifarro (Grade 1) – *Bird Buffet* – First Place; Sonoran Desert Science Award
- Penelope Chavez (Grade 5) – *Fruit Preservation* – Third Place
- Pierce Greene (Grade 5) – *Wingspans and Distance* – Second Place
- Toby Rupprecht (Grade 5) – *Stay Dry Style* – Third Place
- Yoshi Chavez (Kindergarten) – *Float Up* – Second Place

**Approval of Revisions to Policy IHB and Regulation IHB-R Special Instructional Programs (second reading)**

Associate Superintendent Mindy Westover presented no additional revisions to the policy and regulation related to special instructional programs since the board’s review on April 1. Previously recommended revisions included procedure clarification for implementing special instructional programs for students with special needs, a statement allowing the superintendent to appoint a designee to oversee special instructional program procedures, and the rewording of paragraphs within sections A and F to provide clarity and readability. The proposed revisions to the regulation included clarification that identified students must reside within district boundaries (*Child Find* section), contact information was updated to include the current title “*director of special services*” (*Discipline* section), and language was added to specify that evaluation decisions involve a knowledgeable group, including those familiar with the student, evaluation data, and placement options (*Evaluation & Eligibility* section). Additionally, a statement was added to ensure student placements comply with the National Archives Code of Federal Regulations [34 CFR 104.34](#).

Video conferencing was added as an option for communication with parents/legal guardians, and spelling, grammar, and sentence structure improvements were made for clarity and readability. The governing board approved Policy IHB and Regulation IHB-R, as presented.

**Approval of Revisions to Policy IHBA and Regulation IHBA-RA Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations for Disabled Students (second reading)**

Ms. Westover shared no additional changes to the policy and regulation related to special instructional programs and accommodations for disabled students since the board’s initial review on April 1. Proposed revisions to the policy and regulation included the addition of contact details for the District’s Director of Special Services and Section 504 Coordinator, grammar corrections, clarification that the Director of Special Services serves as the District’s 504 Coordinator for due process hearing requests, and an update to the Director of Special Services’ contact phone number. The governing board approved Policy IHBA and Regulation IHBA-RA, as presented.

**Approval of Revisions to the K-12 Gifted Education Programming Framework (second reading)**

Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment Sheryl Castro presented additional revisions since the board’s April 1 review of proposed revisions to the K-12 Gifted Education Programming Framework. Arizona Revised Statute 15-779.02 requires school districts to submit the scope and sequence for gifted education programming to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) for approval every five years. Since the board’s initial review on April 1, “AASA” was replaced with “*state achievement test(s)*” and the specific reference to “*ParentSquare*” was revised to the district’s “*digital communication tool*”. Ms. Castro provided clarification related to high school Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Remaining proposed revisions to CFSD’s K-12 Gifted Education Programming Framework included the renewal date for the scope and sequence, the addition of *Review Team Members (2025)*, and updated terminology. *Math 8 Accelerated* was added to the middle school courses, and clarifications were made regarding service options for gifted programs, placement options for grades K-5, and specificity about skill areas addressed in grades 6-8. Information about Collaborative Inquiry Teams, the updated Gifted Program Staff list, and a clarification related to the state’s gifted grant funding source were also included. The governing board approved the K-12 Gifted Education Programming Framework, as amended.

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

Superintendent Bartlett presented the proposed 2025-2026 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budget, a discussion

process that continues until the governing board adopts a budget in late June. The budget proposal maintains all student programs, services, and staffing. New significant expenses for the district focus on employee compensation, which supports successful recruitment and retention of quality staff, a critical function correlated to the quality of CFSD's education programs for students. Detailed information about the [fiscal year 2026 M&O budget proposal](#) was made available to the CFSD community as part of the governing board meeting agenda item 5.1 on the CFSD website ([www.cfsd16.org](http://www.cfsd16.org)).

**Approval of Professional Salary Schedule for 2025-2026**

Ms. Westover presented the proposed professional salary schedule for the 2025-2026 school year. For the 2024-2025 school year, the board approved a substantial increase to the salary schedule which brought the starting salary to \$53,000. The district recommended to maintain the current professional salary schedule for the 2025-2026 school year with \$910.00 increments between steps, a vertical step movement for all certified employees, and a \$1,000 longevity addendum for each certified employee who returns for the 2025-2026 school year. The recommendation would increase the cost to the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budget to \$740,457. The vertical step movement and longevity addendum result in a \$1,910 increase in compensation per returning certified employee. The salary change reflects an increase of 2.11% to 3.48% for an average compensation increase of 2.7%. The governing board approved the professional salary schedule for 2025-2026 and a vertical step movement on the proposed professional salary schedule, along with a \$1,000 longevity addendum, for returning certified employees, as presented.

**Approval of District Contribution to Cafeteria Plan of Employee Benefits**

Ms. Westover presented the proposed benefit renewal options for qualifying employees for 2025-2026. The current medical insurance and recommended provider Arizona School Boards Insurance Trust (ASBAIT) Meritain Health proposed a 3.7% increase in rates with no provider disruption and \$15,000.00 towards a wellness plan for the 2025-2026 school year. Despite past stability in medical plans, the district was informed of significant redesign to the available options. The district will continue to offer four benefit plans, maintaining its \$6,084.00 annual contribution per eligible employee, which fully covers the High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) paired with a Health Savings Account (H.S.A.). The HDHP deductible has increased to \$2,600, with a \$7,500 out-of-pocket maximum. Employees can contribute pre-tax funds, with a maximum of \$4,300 for individuals and \$8,550 for families, plus an additional \$1,000 catch-up contribution for those 55 and older. Other plan options include Value Gold, Classic Gold, and Co-Pay Gold,

each requiring some employee subsidy beyond the district's contribution. The Co-Pay Gold plan, an option for employees who are currently enrolled in the plan with a \$0 deductible, is being eliminated after the 2025-2026 school year. The district will allow employees to adjust H.S.A. contributions throughout the plan year. ASBAIT included the Health Savings Administration, COBRA administration, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and the telemedicine program Teledoc at no additional cost to the district.

Ms. Westover reported that the district recommended a change to the current dental coverage Delta Dental to Ameritas Passive PPO, which offers a \$50 deductible, 100% coverage on preventative services two times a year, and increased orthodontia maximum age to 26. A change to the district's pre-paid dental plan provider to Ameritas S800B was also recommended due to the former pre-paid dental plan Employee Dental Services (EDS) being eliminated. The Ameritas S800B plan offers \$5 copay office visits and \$0 copay for exams and cleanings. The current vision provider Avesis was also recommended for 2025-2026, with no increased cost to the current plan. The continued Basic and Voluntary Employee and Dependent Life insurance provider Minnesota Life was recommended due to rates remaining the same for both the Basic Life and the Voluntary Life insurance rates for the 2025-2026 school year. Metlife, the continued provider for Pet Care, was also recommended. The recommendation for Flexible Spending Account management was given to the current provider ASI Flex for administrative services, with no change to the monthly rate. TSA Consulting Group will administer the tax shelter annuities for the 403(b) and 403(b) Roth accounts at no administrative cost to the district. The governing board approved to provide full-time benefit eligible employees who elect health insurance coverage through the district's cafeteria plan of benefits, a contribution of \$6,084.00 to employees working between 30-40 hours prorated based on their respective full-time equivalencies and the list of benefit providers, as presented. The new benefit plan year begins on July 1, 2025, and ends on June 30, 2026.

**Approval of First Round of Certified Contracts for 2025-2026**

Ms. Westover presented the list of professional staff proposed to be offered contracts and addenda for the 2025-2026 contract year. The governing board approved the professional staff contracts and addenda for the 2025-2026 school year, as presented, and directed that they be issued to the staff members listed, as presented. Samples of the [contracts and addenda](#) are available for viewing on the CFSD website as part of the April 8 governing board agenda item 6.3.

**2025 Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity**

There was no discussion.

**Consent Agenda Items**

The governing board approved the following consent agenda items:

- April 1, 2025, regular governing board meeting minutes
- April 1, 2025, executive session governing board meeting minutes
- Expense voucher memorandum
- Field trip request memorandum
- Fundraising memorandum
- Personnel memorandum
- Gifts and donation memorandum

**Upcoming Board Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled governing board meeting is ***Tuesday, April 22, 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 22 agenda include:

- Deep Learning Showcase
- CFSD Star Awards - Seal of Arts Proficiency
- Approval of Second Round of Certified Contracts for 2025-2026
- Approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Audit Report
- Fiscal Year 2026 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Budget Discussion
- Bond Projects Report
- Pima County School Board / Superintendent Collaborative Meeting Report (April 21, 2025)



**Please welcome a new CFSD staff member!**

**Rachel Saler, School Counselor, SDES**