

DRAFT

**CATALINA FOOTHILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tucson, Arizona**

DRAFT

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD
Carole Siegler Boardroom at Valley View Early Learning Center
3435 E. Sunrise Drive - Tucson, Arizona
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 - 6:30 PM, Doors Opened at 6:00 PM**

Regular Meeting Minutes

NOTICE OF MEETING

On March 9, 2026, the announcement of the meeting was posted at Catalina Foothills High School, Esperero Canyon Middle School, Orange Grove Middle School, Ventana Vista Elementary School, Canyon View Elementary School, Manzanita Elementary School, Sunrise Drive Elementary School, Valley View Early Learning Center, and on the Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD) website (www.cfsd16.org).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present:

Amy Krauss, President
Tom Logue, Vice President
Jacquelyn Davoli, Member
Eileen Jackson, Member
Gina Mehmert, Member

District Administration:

Denise Bartlett, Superintendent
Mindy Westover, Associate Superintendent
Sheryl Castro, Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Mark Rubin-Toles, Orange Grove Middle School Principal

District Personnel:

Ryan Koch, Systems Engineer
Amie Sams, Administrative Assistant

Visitors Present:

Bentley Crawford, David Crawford, Lindsay Fairbanks, Christina Flynn, Collin Flynn, Donna Flynn, Andrew Hannon, Bailey Hollingsworth, Alex Laguna, Peter Maxwell, Carole Siegler

Joining Online:

Approximately 16 visitors attended the meeting through the YouTube live link.

1. **OPENING**

1.1. **Call to Order and Welcome**

President Amy Krauss called to order the governing board meeting at 6:30 p.m.

1.2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

President Krauss led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. **Rules of Order for Governing Board Meetings**

President Krauss read the Rules of Order for governing board meetings.

1.4. **Super Volunteer Recognition**

The governing board recognized Mr. Collin Flynn for his continued dedication to Orange Grove Middle School (OGMS) students. Since his retirement, Mr. Flynn has generously returned each year to coach and prepare students for the Arizona Council on Economic Education Economic Challenge, a statewide competition held in Mesa. Under his guidance, OGMS teams have earned first place honors nearly every year, a testament to his expertise and the commitment he inspires in students.

As shared by OGMS Principal Mark Rubin-Toles in his nomination letter, from January through March, Mr. Flynn meets with students on Sundays, guiding them through advanced case studies in personal finance and coaching them in the principles of micro and macroeconomics. Students

develop detailed financial recovery plans, analyze budgets and debt reduction strategies, and prepare for rigorous quiz bowl competitions covering topics such as supply and demand, interest rates, and international trade. His ability to break down complex economic concepts into accessible, engaging lessons reflects the same high standards and passion for learning that made him a legendary and beloved teacher at Orange Grove.

Board Member Eileen Jackson highlighted the unique nature of the program, noting that OGMS students willingly dedicate hours outside of the school day, including Sundays and late start Wednesday mornings, to master complex economic concepts. She described visiting a recent session where dozens of students, dressed in professional attire, worked collaboratively on case studies, fully engaged in developing presentations, budgets, and financial plans. She also emphasized Mr. Flynn's remarkable ability to make challenging topics both accessible and enjoyable, as well as the positive, supportive environment.

Mr. Flynn credited the program's success to the strong partnership with OGMS Social Studies Teacher Dawn Willman and praised the students' dedication, noting their willingness to invest many hours of their own time to participate. He shared that the program has grown significantly over the years and continues to inspire students to think critically, apply real-world financial skills, and see themselves as capable young professionals.

Through his time, talent, and unwavering commitment, Mr. Flynn continues to elevate students to new heights. As Principal Rubin-Toles noted, his work has impacted thousands of students, equipping them with essential life skills in personal finance and confidence in their abilities. Mr. Flynn exemplifies the very spirit of a Super Volunteer.

The governing board expressed their gratitude to Mr. Flynn for his continued impact on the Orange Grove Middle School learning community and presented him with a certificate and commemorative key chain in appreciation of his service.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Four individuals expressed concern for the district's non-participation in the Project Focus program: Bentley Crawford, David Crawford, Andrew Hannon, and Alex Laguna. One individual expressed concern for rising employee benefits and the importance of affordable, high-quality plans: Lindsay Fairbanks

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon a motion by Tom Logue and a second by Eileen Jackson, the governing board approved the following items on the consent agenda: 3.1 the governing board March 3, 2026, regular meeting minutes, as presented; 3.2 the governing board March 3, 2026, executive session meeting minutes, as presented; 3.3 the governing board March 10, 2026, special meeting minutes, as presented; 3.4 the governing board March 10, 2026, executive session meeting minutes, as presented; 3.5 the expense voucher memorandum, as presented; 3.6 the field trip request memorandum, as presented; 3.7 the personnel memorandum, as presented; 3.8 the acceptance, with gratitude, of the gifts and donations memorandum, as presented; and 3.9 the award of RFP 26-05-31 Outsourced Transportation Services to First Student, Inc., for a one-year contract effective from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, funded through maintenance and operations at the cost of \$1,681,544.00 for the first year, with the option to renew for four additional years, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

3.1. **Approval of March 3, 2026, Regular Governing Board Meeting Minutes Memorandum**

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the regular governing board meeting minutes for March 3, 2026, as presented.

3.2. **Approval of March 3, 2026, Executive Session Governing Board Meeting Minutes Memorandum**

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the executive session governing board meeting minutes for March 3, 2026, as presented.

- 3.3. Approval of March 10, 2026, Special Governing Board Meeting Minutes Memorandum
 On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the special governing board meeting minutes for March 10, 2026, as presented.
- 3.4. Approval of March 10, 2026, Executive Session Governing Board Meeting Minutes Memorandum
 On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the executive session governing board meeting minutes for March 10, 2026, as presented.
- 3.5. Approval of Expense Voucher Memorandum
 On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the following expense vouchers:

Expense Voucher		Amount
26122	\$	1,640,999.20
26123		123,889.09
26124		17,159.06
26125		13,544.27
26126		72,356.46
26127		1,758,702.80
26128		35,814.87

- 3.6. Approval of the Field Trip Request Memorandum
 On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the field trip request memorandum, as presented.

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>LEARNING NEXUS</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>*FEE</u>
Catalina Foothills High School (CFHS) Advanced Biotechnology	Kitt Peak National Observatory Tour	Students will explore stellar life cycles, optics, and photonics while interacting with scientists and deepening their understanding of the universe and solar system.	Tucson, AZ	04/08/2026	\$0.00
CFHS Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)	International (National) Competition for DECA	Students will compete in the final, international level of competition for the 2025-2026 season.	Atlanta, GA	04/24/2026 to 04/29/2026	\$0.00
Orange Grove Middle School (OGMS) 8 th Grade Choir	American Choral Directors Association Junior High Choral Festival and Musical Instrument Museum	Students will perform for judges, receiving a rating and feedback. Students will learn about instruments from around the world in an immersive environment.	Phoenix, AZ	05/08/2026	\$0.00
Canyon View Elementary School (CVES) 5 th Grade	Science Camp	Students will build leadership and outdoor skills while learning star gazing, fire safety, geocaching, GPS navigation, knot tying, and hiking etiquette through an immersive overnight nature experience.	Mt. Lemmon, AZ	05/07/2026 to 05/08/2026	\$100.00

- 3.7. Approval of the Personnel Memorandum
 On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the personnel, as presented.

ADMINISTRATIVE	CERTIFIED STAFF	CLASSIFIED STAFF	COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	VOLUNTEER
• Resignation	• Resignations • Release from contract	• New Hires • Rehire	• New Hires • Rehire	• Classroom

	-Health & Hardship • Extra Duty	• Resignation	• Status Changes	
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3.8. Approval of Gifts and Donation Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board accepted, with gratitude, the following gifts, and donations:

DATE	DONOR	SCHOOL	PURPOSE/ITEM	AMOUNT
2/24/2026	Texas Instruments Foundation	Catalina Foothills High School	Band	\$771.88
2/24/2026	Foothills Basketball Fastbreak Club	Catalina Foothills High School	Motor Coach	\$1,850.00
2/25/2026	Foothills Boys Volleyball Club	Catalina Foothills High School	Coach Stipend	\$2,318.40
3/5/2026	Lady Falcon Beach Volleyball Booster Club	Catalina Foothills High School	Coach Stipend	\$1,981.00
3/5/2026	CFHS Band Boosters	Catalina Foothills High School	Band	\$652.00
3/5/2026	Gergely Kota	Catalina Foothills High School	Science Olympiad	\$20.00
3/5/2026	Microsoft Matching Gift	Catalina Foothills High School	Science Olympiad	\$20.00
3/5/2026	Nancy Jiang	Orange Grove Middle School	Instruction	\$200.00
3/5/2026	RTX Matching Gift	Orange Grove Middle School	Instruction	\$200.00
3/5/2026	Nancy Jiang	Sunrise Drive Elementary School	Instruction	\$200.00
3/5/2026	RTX Matching Gift	Sunrise Drive Elementary School	Instruction	\$200.00
3/5/2026	Gergely Kota	Catalina Foothills High School	Instruction	\$20.00
3/5/2026	Microsoft Matching Gift	Catalina Foothills High School	Instruction	\$20.00
3/9/2026	Esperero Canyon FFO	Esperero Canyon Middle School	Field Trip	\$797.90
3/9/2026	Arizona Community Foundation	Sunrise Drive Elementary School	Extraordinary Educators	\$1,500.00
3/9/2026	Arizona Community Foundation	Esperero Canyon Middle School	Extraordinary Educators	\$1,345.00
3/9/2026	Arizona Community Foundation	Orange Grove Middle School	Extraordinary Educators	\$1,500.00
			TOTAL	\$13,596.18

3.9. Approval of Award of Request for Proposal (RFP) 26-05-31 Outsourced Transportation Services (Confidential)

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the award of RFP 26-05-31 Outsourced Transportation Services to First Student, Inc., for a one-year contract effective from July 1, 2026,

through June 30, 2027, funded through maintenance and operations at the cost of \$1,681,544.00 for the first year, with the option to renew for four additional years, as presented.

4. **DISCUSSION / REPORTS**

4.1. **Fiscal Year 2027 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Budget Proposal**

Superintendent Denise Bartlett presented the proposed fiscal year (FY) 2027 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budget, a discussion process that will continue at each regular governing board meeting until the board adopts a budget in late June. The budget proposal maintains all student programs, services, and staffing. Dr. Bartlett reviewed what new revenue the district would receive from the state and how those revenues would be spent. 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. The proposed budget is based on three key revenue assumptions. First, it uses an Average Daily Membership (ADM) of 4,627 students, which reflects average attendance rather than total enrollment, to calculate per-pupil funding. Second, a 2% increase in basic state funding is assumed, as required by law. Third, the district plans to transfer \$1,073,010 from District Additional Assistance (DAA) to M&O to support employee compensation increases for FY27. Additionally, while not part of M&O revenue, an increase in the Classroom Site Fund (CSF) per-pupil allocation from \$842 in FY26 to \$880 in FY27 will help offset M&O expenses by covering a portion of teacher salaries.

The proposed FY27 budget proposal included seven key expenditure assumptions. First, the district remains committed to sustaining a wide range of student programs and services across all grade levels to meet community expectations and keep students engaged. Second, the current student-to-teacher ratio will be maintained to support personalized learning and meet diverse student needs. Third, the district proposes funding salary/wage increases for all employees and maintaining the district's contribution of \$6,084, pro-rated to match the full-time equivalency (FTE) of an employee working .75 and above, for medical insurance premiums. For employees working less than .75 FTE, the district contributes towards the employees' dental and vision premiums, pro-rated to the employee's FTE. For the 2026-2027 school year, an increase to the first step of the professional/certified teacher salary schedule of \$1,000 was recommended, resulting in a first-year teacher base salary of \$54,000. Returning certified teachers would receive an average raise of 4.06%, combining a \$910 step increase and a \$1,000 longevity addendum. Classified staff would see a 4% wage increase, bringing the minimum hourly wage to \$16.26. A 4% increase would also be added to the salary pools for exempt classified staff and administrators, distributed based on performance. The total projected cost of these compensation changes is \$1,332,962.00. Fourth, adding a 1.5 FTE for math teachers to decrease middle school and high school standard math class sizes, with a projected cost of \$116,353.79. Fifth, adding a .5 reading tutor at Manzanita Elementary School, the only elementary school that does not have Title I funding or excess staffing to provide reading intervention to its students, with a projected cost of \$16,993.00. Sixth, adding a .5 FTE office clerk at Orange Grove Middle School due to the increased scope of work related to growing enrollment and security requirements, enabling staff to complete tasks within the workday and eliminate the need to work overtime, with a projected cost of \$18,910.00. Lastly, the budget will account for routine adjustments in expenditures such as utilities, insurance, technology licenses, and outsourced services, along with annual reconciliations of salary and wage budgets to actual costs.

Board members asked clarifying questions regarding revenue assumptions, contingency funds, staffing impacts, fund transfers, and budget calculations, including identifying potential discrepancies. District administration provided explanations, noted a conservative budgeting approach, and indicated that corrections and adjustments will be addressed in future budget iterations prior to adoption.

Superintendent Bartlett shared that this item will return to the agenda for governing board review at each regular meeting through June, with updates highlighting any additions, deletions, and budget adjustments leading up to final adoption.

Board members acknowledged the work on the proposed budget, expressing appreciation for the thoroughness of the presentation and the careful consideration given to staffing, compensation, and resource allocations.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.1. **Approval of Professional Salary Schedule for 2026-2027**

Associate Superintendent Mindy Westover presented the proposed professional salary schedule for the 2026–2027 school year for the governing board’s approval. The proposal includes an increase to the starting salary to \$54,000, with \$910 increments between steps, a vertical step movement for all certified employees, and a \$1,000 longevity addendum for each certified employee hired before December 1, 2025, who returns for the 2026–2027 school year. The \$1,000 longevity addendum is pro-rated based on employee FTE. The recommendation would increase the cost to the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budget by \$1,007,573.00.

The vertical step movement and longevity addendum would result in a \$2,910 compensation increase for returning certified employees hired before December 1, 2025. In total, the change represents a compensation increase ranging from 3.22% to 5.20%, with an average increase of 4.06% for returning certified staff.

Board members asked why the professional salary schedule was presented as an action item and about the rationale for the \$1,000 longevity addendum versus a permanent salary increase or additional benefits coverage. Associate Superintendent Westover explained that action was needed to issue teacher contracts promptly, that the addendum provides a one-time compensation increase without creating future budget obligations, and that placing funds in salary rather than benefits positively affects retirement calculations and reaches all eligible employees. She also noted the starting salary increase to \$54,000 ensures competitiveness with neighboring districts while maintaining sustainability within the M&O budget.

Board members expressed appreciation to district administration for their extensive work in preparing the proposed salary schedule and related analyses, and they acknowledged the value of the recommended salary increases for professional staff.

Upon a motion by Eileen Jackson, and a second by Gina Mehmert, the governing board approved the proposed professional salary schedule for 2026-2027, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

Upon a motion by Eileen Jackson, and a second by Gina Mehmert, the governing board approved a vertical step movement for all certified employees on the proposed professional salary schedule, along with a \$1,000.00 longevity addendum pro-rated according to their full-time equivalency for returning certified employees hired before December 1, 2025, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

5.2. **Approval of District Contribution to Cafeteria Plan of Employee Benefits for 2026-2027**

Ms. Westover presented the 2026-2027 proposed employee benefit options for qualifying, benefit-eligible employees for 2026-2027. The current medical insurance and recommended provider Arizona School Boards Insurance Trust (ASBAIT) Meritain Health provided a 6.0% increase in rates with no network disruption and \$15,000 towards a wellness plan for the 2026-2027 school year. The Co-Pay Gold plan offered in prior years has been discontinued by ASBAIT. The district will continue to offer three benefit plans, maintaining its \$6,084 annual contribution per eligible employee, which fully covers the High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) paired with a Health Savings Account (HSA). The HDHP deductible remains at \$2,600, with a \$7,500 out-of-pocket maximum. HSA contributions are per pay period beginning in September. Therefore, employees must cover their expenses in

July and August using another payment method and be reimbursed by the HSA account when funds become available. Employees retain ownership of the funds if they leave the district. Employees can contribute pre-tax funds, with a maximum of \$4,400 for individuals and \$8,750 for families, plus an additional \$1,000 catch-up contribution for those 55 and older. The district will allow employees to adjust HSA pre-tax contributions throughout the plan year. Other plan options include Value Gold and Classic Gold, each requiring some employee subsidy beyond the district's contribution. ASBAIT included the Health Savings Administration, COBRA administration, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and the telemedicine program, Teledoc, which includes Primary 360 and behavioral health services at no additional cost to the district. Employees enrolled in the district's plans can access telemedicine for primary care, mental health, and the EAP, with benefits extending to their families.

Ms. Westover reported that the district recommended continuing two dental coverage options through Ameritas, both with the same benefits and costs as the 2025-2026 plan year. The first option Ameritas Passive PPO includes a \$50 deductible, 100% coverage for preventative services twice a year, and an orthodontia maximum age of 26. The second option Ameritas S800B offers \$5 copay office visits and \$0 copay for exams and cleanings.

Avesis, the current vision provider, was also recommended for 2026-2027, with no increased cost to the current plan. The district recommended continuing Basic and Voluntary Life insurance coverage through Minnesota Life, with the district continuing to fully fund the \$50,000 Basic Life benefit for employees despite a 10.8% increase to rates for the 2026–2027 school year. Voluntary Life coverage levels remain the same for employees and dependents. Basic and Voluntary Life rates are guaranteed through June 30, 2029. Madison National Life, the continued provider of voluntary short-term disability was recommended, and Metlife, the continued provider for Pet Care, was also recommended. Both voluntary short-term disability and pet insurance are fully funded by the employee.

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 was recommended to administer the tax shelter annuities for the 403(b) and 403(b) Roth accounts at no administrative cost to the district.

Board members inquired about the adequacy of the district's \$6,084 contribution, the function and advantages of utilizing ASBAIT for better plan rates, the potential to offset the 6% premium increase, and whether the district should seek alternative insurance options. District administration explained that the contribution continues to fully fund the high-deductible plan with additional HSA contributions, emphasized that ASBAIT's pooled structure helps stabilize costs despite the district's loss ratio, and noted that increasing contributions or rebidding was not recommended due to long-term fiscal sustainability concerns, market uncertainty, and the district's decision to prioritize compensation increases over benefit cost increases.

Board members expressed appreciation to district administration for their thorough analysis, clear presentation, and ongoing efforts to balance rising healthcare costs while maintaining stable and competitive benefit options for employees.

Upon a motion by Tom Logue, and a second by Jacquelyn Davoli, the governing board approved to provide full-time benefit eligible employees \$6,084.00 toward a cafeteria plan of benefit options available from July 1, 2026, until June 30, 2027, to employees working between 30-40 hours pro-rated based on their respective full-time equivalencies, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

Upon a motion by Tom Logue, and a second by Eileen Jackson, the governing board approved the list of benefit providers, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

5.3. Approval of First Round of Certified Contracts for 2026-2027

Ms. Westover presented the first round of certified contracts for staff who will be offered contracts for the 2026-2027 contract year. With the list of names of those staff members, samples of all types of contracts were provided for the board's review and approval. Included in the list were returning certified staff hired before December 1, 2025, who will be offered a longevity addendum along with their contract. Those offered a contract, and those offered a longevity addendum will receive it electronically on Wednesday, March 18 and will have 15 business days to return the signed contract.

Board members asked about non-renewable positions, contract addenda, compensation for learning support specialists and instructional coaches, and returning retired staff. Ms. Westover explained the inclusion of hard-to-fill positions in math, science, and special education, the recognition for advanced degrees/certifications, compensation for extra days worked outside of contract, and that retired staff would be included in the second round of certified contracts.

Board members thanked district administration for their work, and Superintendent Bartlett thanked the board for allowing staff to be informed of increases prior to the meeting.

Upon a motion by Gina Mehmert, and a second by Tom Logue, the governing board approved the professional staff contracts and addenda for the 2026-2027 school year, as presented, and directed that they be issued to the staff members listed, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

6. **DISCUSSION / REPORTS (continued)**

6.1. Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity

Board members discussed legislative developments, including proposed mandatory board member training, potential term limits, efforts to make school board elections partisan, and the status of the state budget and pending legislation.

7. **AGENDA PLANNING**

There were no requests for future agenda considerations.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Gina Mehmert, and a second by Eileen Jackson, the governing board adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.