



Catalina Foothills Unified School District #16
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BOARD AGENDA ITEM

ITEM NO: 3.4

BOARD MEETING DATE: Tuesday, May 13, 2025

OPENING ITEM: Outstanding Achievements

SUBMITTED BY: Denise Bartlett, Superintendent

PRESENTED BY: Denise Bartlett, Superintendent

I am pleased to highlight the following CFSD student and staff achievements:

Orange Grove Middle School Economics & Personal Finance Teams

We are proud to recognize a group of 8th grade students from Orange Grove Middle School whose dedication and hard work have led to a remarkable achievement. Since January, these students have been coming to school on Sundays to deepen their understanding of economics and personal finance—and their efforts paid off!

OGMS students earned an impressive three state championships, along with three second-place and one third-place finishes in this year's state competitions.

1st Place – Economics Quiz Bowl

Trey Keenen, Daniel Lu, James Jacobsen, and Ainsley Johnson

2nd Place – Economics Quiz Bowl

Rafael Calderon Sada, Oliver Peng, Alexander Lu, and Michael Rogers

1st Place – Personal Finance Quiz Bowl

Ethan Fraker, Nathan Denoyer, Zen Shah, and Axel Schocker-Kron

2nd Place – Personal Finance Quiz Bowl

Rafael Calderon Sada, Oliver Peng, Alexander Lu, and Michael Rogers

1st Place – Personal Finance Case Study

Victoria Farney, Sofia Marra, Liliana Ruiz, and Gwyneth Carmichael

2nd Place – Personal Finance Case Study

Leah Ghotmi, Isabel Perez, Alexandria Harvey, and Nathalia Filgueiras Pinto

3rd Place – Personal Finance Case Study

Cayden Kitz, Taric Bruckner, Reese Morgan, and Alex Yetka

Congratulations to all participating students—and a special thank you to their coaches Dawn Willman and Collin Flynn—for their time and commitment preparing our students. You've made OGMS and CFSD proud!

Falcon Musicians Earn Top Honors

On Tuesday, April 22, the CFHS Symphonic Strings class traveled to Chandler, AZ to perform at the ABODA State Festival—and they delivered an outstanding performance! We are thrilled to share that they earned a rating of Superior with Distinction, the highest possible honor. This was their first time earning a Superior with Distinction rating at the state level of ABODA. Congratulations to Mr. Ryan Watson and our talented and hard-working student musicians for this well-deserved recognition.

Under the direction of Ms. Renee Shane-Boyd, the Symphonic Winds earned a Superior rating, and the Wind Ensemble achieved a Superior with Distinction at the State Concert Festival in Chandler on Thursday, April 24. Congratulations to our outstanding Catalina Foothills musicians!

CFHS Art

Four of our CFHS art students were picked to showcase and exhibit their work alongside artist Hank Willis Thomas in his 'Love Rules' exhibition at the University of Arizona Museum of Art. Senior student Makena Thompson was one of five winners to be selected for Outstanding Emerging High School Artist with a \$1,000 tuition award for *The Long Goodbye*. Additionally, several seniors had their work exhibited in a student show in the Scottsdale Museum of the West in partnership with The Arizona Art Education Association this year: Gwendolyn Alviar, Celeste Bergantino, Steven (Archer) Kelly, Scarlett Perkins, Joselynn Salas, and Makena Thompson.

CFHS Guitar

Three seniors made the first ever Arizona All-State Guitar this year, and one senior won 1st place in a guitar competition! Maximilian Henry, Liam Posey, and Daniel Lizarraga all made the all-state guitar, and Daniel Lizarraga won the guitar competition.

Catalina Foothills Students Shine at State Chess Championship

Congratulations to our students from Ventana Vista Elementary School and Sunrise Drive Elementary School for their outstanding performances at the 2025 Arizona State Chess Competition! For the second year in a row, Ventana Vista's K-1 team earned 2nd place in the state—a tremendous achievement against tough competition. Team members included Nik Jain (5 points), Angelos Kyriacou (4.5 points), Ian Moore (3.5 points), and Marco Wolford Asencio (3 points), with strong contributions also from Thomas Shoua and Evan Harvey. In individual rankings, Nik Jain placed 4th and Angelos Kyriacou placed 10th in the K-1 division!

Adding to the celebration, Sunrise Drive Elementary's K-3 team placed 4th in the state, and Aiden Liu took home 1st place individually for the K-3 division—an incredible accomplishment!

We are proud of all of our players for their hard work, strategic thinking, and teamwork. A special thank you to Coach Ken Larson, whose dedication to growing our district's chess program continues to inspire new generations of champions. Coach Larson also coached some of our current CFSD parents when they were students at Manzanita, OGMS, and CFHS!

Congratulations to all our players, families, and coaches—you make CFSD proud!

Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band Member

CFHS sophomore and Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band member Keenan Sammani performed on International Jazz Day (April 30) at the Hotel Congress Plaza. Keenan will also participate with the Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band in the New York City (NYC) Essentially Ellington High School Big Band Competition May 7-11, 2025.

National Merit – The University of Arizona Scholarship Recipients

We are proud to announce that Tahlia Chang Nian Szoke and Joseph I. Drexler have been selected to receive the prestigious National Merit – The University of Arizona Scholarship. This college-sponsored Merit Scholarship® award is offered through a partnership between the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) and The University of Arizona. It is awarded exclusively for use at the university and

recognizes students with exceptional academic achievement, personal excellence, and promise for future success.

Tahlia and Joseph join an elite group of scholars nationwide who have earned this distinguished honor. Congratulations!

2025 Arizona Chinese Speech Contest

We're proud to recognize several students for their exceptional performances in a recent Mandarin language competition. Representing both heritage and non-heritage divisions across multiple levels, these students demonstrated impressive language skills and cultural understanding.

Division A – Heritage

- Aiden Liu – 3rd Place
- Kaylee Xu – 3rd Place
- Ezri Jensen – 3rd Place

Division A – Non-Heritage

- Merritt Johnson – 3rd Place

Division B – Heritage

- Kennedy Kay – 1st Place
- Ace Chou – 3rd Place
- Alan Liu – 3rd Place
- Jonathan Parsons – 3rd Place
- Ming Hsiu Reid – 3rd Place

Division B – Non-Heritage

- Ishwari Dube Bandopadhyay – 3rd Place
- Theo Thome – 3rd Place

Congratulations to all of these students for their dedication and achievement in Mandarin language learning! Your hard work and passion for language and culture shine brightly!

Manzanita and Sunrise Drive Math Teams to US Nationals

We are proud to share the outstanding results from the Math League State Competition held on May 2, 2025, in Queen Creek, AZ. Students from Manzanita Elementary and Sunrise Drive Elementary represented CFSD with excellence in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade divisions and many are now heading to Nationals in June!

Competing in the 3rd and 4th grade divisions, the Manzanita team earned top placements and six students qualified for the Math League National Competition in Houston, TX!

3rd Grade Awards:

- Rooz Caire – 1st Place
- Owen Chu – 3rd Place

4th Grade Awards:

- Marc Surdeanu – 2nd Place
- Cyrus Caire – 3rd Place
- Nachiket Nadig – 7th Place
- Elizabeth Sipe – 10th Place
- Leo Skirko – 13th Place

The Manzanita team coaches are Laura Surdeanu and Kelly Taylor.

Representing the 5th grade division, the Sunrise Drive team took home the Division 5 Championship title and all four students qualified for Nationals!

5th Grade Awards:

- Max Hao – 1st Place
- Andrew Wang – 2nd Place
- Melody Yu – 3rd Place
- Daniel Li – 5th Place

The Sunrise Drive team coach is Ning Hao.

We are incredibly proud of all our Math League participants and their coaches. Thank you for representing CFSD with such excellence and teamwork. Good luck at Nationals this June!

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Information Item