



Catalina Foothills Unified School District #16
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BOARD AGENDA ITEM

ITEM NO: 1.4

BOARD MEETING DATE: Tuesday, October 13, 2026

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:

CFHS Students Earn National Merit[®] Recognition

Congratulations to three Catalina Foothills High School seniors who have been named National Merit[®] Semifinalists in the 2027 National Merit[®] Scholarship Program. Congratulations to Colin Gooden, Milo Peters, and Nathan Wu.

In an average year, fewer than 1% of U.S. seniors earn this distinction. Approximately 16,000 Semifinalists are selected from around 1.5 million students who enter the competition by taking the PSAT/NMSQT.

CFHS also celebrates five students who earned Commended Student recognition based on their PSAT/NMSQT scores, placing them among the top 50,000 entrants nationwide. About 1% of seniors nationwide are recognized as Commended Students.

The 2027 CFHS Commended Students are: Ahmed Bozdogan, Braeden Gracy, Jules Manger, Antoinette Ofori, and Elizabeth Povsner.

Thank you for helping us celebrate these outstanding Falcons!

CFHS Choir Students Selected for Arizona All-State Jazz Choir

We want to recognize two exceptional Catalina Foothills High School students who earned top-tier placement in the All-State Jazz Choir. Out of only 20 high school students selected statewide, junior Avis Victory secured 1st Chair Alto and freshman Xavier Zazueta earned 4th Chair Tenor.

The opportunity to audition is presented annually to singers in the high school's premier vocal ensemble, Change of Pace, under the direction of teacher Mr. Jeffrey Evans. Students record and submit auditions for competitive adjudication. By earning these elite spots, Avis and Xavier will perform in November at the Arizona All-State Jazz/Show Choir Festival in Scottsdale. There, they will spend three days working closely with a nationally renowned jazz clinician, culminating in a performance alongside a live jazz combo of local professional musicians.

CFHS Swim Earns First Place at CDO Classic High School Invitational

We are proud to share that Catalina Foothills High School's men's and women's swim teams swept the 19-team CDO Classic High School Invitational on September 19. With Coach Scott Mencke's leadership, both teams earned first place, with the men's team defeating runner-up CDO 392–266 and the women's team securing a commanding 450–287.5 victory. For CFHS, this was the first state qualifier of the season.

The Falcons set multiple Division II state-best standards:

- Senior Leila Stafford swam the fastest 500 freestyle time in the state this year and recorded state-best times in the 200 and 100 freestyle, earning a nomination for the Arizona Republic's Female High School Athlete of the Week.
- The Women's 200 Freestyle Relay team (freshman Kinzi Obler, sophomore Chloe Hermann, and seniors Izzy Geiger and Connolly Taylor) set the Division II season-best standard.
- The Men's Relay team (senior anchor Ariston Elsesser and sophomores Luke Dinsmore, Reef Mencke, and Aidan Kastner) also swam the Division II season-best time.

We had 18 men and 14 women compete (32 total). Overall, CFHS recorded 40 top-10 times (25 for men and 15 for women) in the early state rankings, highlighting the team's exceptional effort and talent.

Orange Grove Middle School Music Program

Congratulations to the Orange Grove Middle School music program and directors Dr. Jason Sah and Mr. Daniel Vega for earning the prestigious Dennis W. Smith "Program of Distinction" Award from ABODA (Arizona Band and Orchestra Directors Association) for the 2025–2026 school year. This honor is achieved by only one to six Arizona schools annually.

The achievement celebrates instrumental music departments that demonstrate exceptional performance, artistic achievement, and educational impact. Both the orchestra and band programs secured this benchmark of excellence by earning multiple "Superior" festival ratings and participating in the AMEA All-State festival.

ABODA presented this award at the OGMS band concert on September 30th. We congratulate our talented students, dedicated directors, and supportive community on this remarkable and well-deserved accomplishment!

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Information Item