



Catalina Foothills Unified School District #16
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BOARD AGENDA ITEM

ITEM NO: 3.4

BOARD MEETING DATE: Tuesday, June 9, 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:

Class of 2026 Diploma Distinctions

We are recognizing three diploma distinctions earned by the Class of 2026 that stand out for the rigor, breadth, and dedication they represent. Each is a formal recognition by the College Board or the Arizona Department of Education and appears on the student's diploma and transcript.

AP Capstone Diploma

The AP Capstone Diploma, awarded by the College Board, is one of the most rigorous credentials a high school student can earn. It requires a score of 3 or higher on AP Seminar, AP Research, *and* on four additional AP exams of the student's choosing. AP Seminar and AP Research are two yearlong, college-level courses focused on independent research, evidence-based argumentation, collaboration, and presentation skills. The diploma is recognized by colleges across the United States and around the world.

Three CFHS seniors have earned the AP Capstone Diploma: Porter Bache, Hannah Levin, and Avery Maland.

Arizona Seal of Biliteracy

The Arizona Seal of Biliteracy recognizes graduating seniors who have achieved proficiency in English *and* at least one additional language. To qualify, students must maintain a 2.0 or higher GPA across their high school English coursework, pass an English language assessment, and demonstrate proficiency in a second language through an approved exam such as the AP World Language exam or the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages. The seal is affixed to the student's diploma, noted on the transcript, and also satisfies the two-year world language requirement for admission to Arizona's three public universities.

Eighty members of the Class of 2026 earned the Arizona Seal of Biliteracy, across ten different languages.

David Akator, Alejandra Albino Chapman, Cristina Angel, Paulette Antelo, Tania Apodaca Quintero, Oceane Armour, Bryan Arredondo, Victoria Benitez, Taylor Brown, Tatum Bruwer, Giana Bueno Johnston, Zula J Campbell, Owen Cantor-Goldner, Christopher Cariaso, Paige Carpenter, Derek Cassen, Emma Chamness, Yash Chauhan, Chloe Clark Shanks, Breayana Class, Katelyn Cruz-Arzac, Connor Daggett, Sophia L Dodd, Emily DuCheney, Paulina Elias Leon, Emily Figueroa De La Vara, Arthur Filgueiras Pinto, Gianna Garcia, Mia Garcia, Hailey Hairgrove, Zachary Henson, Scott Hollander, Melanie Huguet, Norah Jackson, Lillian Johnson, Amelie Kaiser, Gordon Kim, Korben Larson, Felix Leblanc, Lucas Leonard, Hannah Levin, Alexander Lewnes, Ethan Lin, Harry Longenecker, Cindy Lu, Junbin Lyu, Avery Maland, Victoria Mendoza, Oliver Moeller, Ava Moltrup, Valeria Montano Luque, Henry Moore, Calista Morrison, Abigail Moulton, Veronica Napolitano, Daniela Oliver, Isabella Parks, Ana Partida Guillen, Camila Peralta Cuevas, Christian Pierson, Felisberto Pondecá, Jesus Preciado Rios, Madeleine Reed, Mia Reidy, Julia Riddle, Julian Roettger, Alex Rowswell, Annalise Runyon, Tomas Salazar, Mud Stafford, Amy Sternberg, Samuel Strause, Sherry Tawadros, Lil Taylor, Sophia Toapha, Thomas Vamos, Sage Wexler, Ryo Wigginton, Kennedy Yribar, and Nuoyan Zhang.

Arizona Seal of Arts Proficiency

The Arizona Seal of Arts Proficiency, signed into law in 2019, is one of the most demanding diploma seals offered by the Arizona Department of Education. To earn it, students must complete a minimum of four credits across one of five artistic disciplines (visual arts, music, theatre, dance, or media arts), maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA in every qualifying arts and CTE course, log 80 hours of arts-related extracurricular activity over their high school career, and complete a senior-year capstone project that demonstrates artistic literacy and original creative work.

Eleven CFHS seniors earned the Arizona Seal of Arts Proficiency.

Hannah Buck, Owen Cantor-Goldner, Alex Cramton, Phaedra Farbrook, Jade Leon, Haylee Meadowcroft, Calista Morrison, Madeleine Reed, Natalie Reyerson, Jasper Stafford, and Evan Welander.

Falcon Theatre: 2026 Monte Awards

On May 17, our cast brought down the house with a stellar performance of "Toledo Surprise" from "The Drowsy Chaperone," and four of our students were nominated for principal roles: Azalea Peterson (Drowsy), Evan Welander (Aldolpho), Jade Love Leon (Janet), and Nathaniel Wiley (Robert). Jade and Nathaniel went on to become finalists.

"The Drowsy Chaperone" won Best Creative Elements AND Best Musical of 2026! Making it even sweeter, the Best Musical award was presented by CFHS's very own Lance Jacobson from the class of 2024, and the 2024 Monte Award winner.

We are so proud of this cast, the designers, the crew, and the band. Every bit of this recognition is earned. A huge thank-you to the team that made it happen: director/production manager Amy Byroad, choreographer Sarah Merry, band director Renee Shane-Boyd, technical director Norm Testa, music director Harrison Dodge, and assistant director Rowan Sandeen. And to our incredible booster parents, thank you for everything you do behind the scenes.

CFHS Theater Earns Silver Performance Ranking at Regionals

Congratulations to Theatre Arts Director Amy Byroad and the Catalina Foothills High School theatre troupe on earning a Silver Performance Ranking from Arizona Thespians for the 2025-26 Regional Festival.

The Performance Ranking recognizes a troupe's collective work at Regionals, where high school theatre programs across the state present and compete in performance and technical events. Silver places CFHS solidly among the strongest theatre programs in Arizona.

CFHS HOSA Team Places in Top 32 at Anatomage National Tournament

Four CFHS students recently represented CFSD and Arizona at the HOSA-Future Health Professionals national tournament in San Jose, California.

Zoya Zar, Nathan Wu, Soleil Sakali, and Benjamin Grandner qualified for nationals by winning the Arizona state competition this past April with their Anatomage Table team. Their state victory positioned them 34th in the nation, a ranking earned by beating out 2,000 other teams competing across the country. At the national tournament, they secured a spot in the top 32 teams in the nation.

"I am very proud of their hard work and commitment," said Megan Kimball, the CFHS teacher who chaperoned the team to San Jose. That commitment is visible in every competition result: months of preparation, collaboration with teammates to master complex anatomical knowledge, and the kind of perseverance that comes from competing at the highest levels.

"Superiors" Across the Board for Middle School Choirs

We are very proud of our middle school choirs. Three Esperero Canyon Middle School choirs — 6th grade, 7th grade, and 8th grade — and Orange Grove Middle School's choir earned "Superior" ratings at the Arizona chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (AzACDA) Junior High Choral Festival in the Phoenix area in May. This was the first-ever choir festival Orange Grove had participated in.

The AzACDA hosts this festival each spring to give middle school choirs a chance to perform for experienced choral educators, receive constructive feedback, and grow as musicians alongside peers from across the state. A "Superior" rating is the highest mark on the festival rating scale, awarded by experienced choral clinicians evaluating each choir against a standard of musical excellence. Earning one is hard, but earning four in a single trip, across three different grade levels, is something else entirely.

Huge thanks to choir directors Julia Higgins (ECMS) and Rachel Antista (OGMS), chaperones, and parents who made participation in this festival possible.

CFSD Math Club Accomplishments

CFSD students had one of the strongest years in competitive mathematics in recent district history, earning a state championship, multiple national qualifications, and top placements across Arizona while competing against some of the strongest math teams in the state.

Manzanita Elementary is the Arizona State Champion in Math League competition Division 5, which includes schools where the highest grade level is 5th grade. In addition, Sunrise Drive Elementary earned 3rd place in the Math League State

competition Division 5. Orange Grove Middle School earned 3rd place in the Math League State competition Division 6 and 7th place in MathCounts State competition.

The Manzanita Elementary math club team members are Cyrus Caire, Rooz Caire, Owen Chu, Graeme Decker, Adam Elitzer, Nachiket Nadig, Elizabeth Sipe, Leo Skirko, Brockett Stutz, Marc Surdeanu, and Christian Yu. Their coach is Laura Surdeanu.

In addition, the following students qualified for the National Math League competition taking place in June in College Station, TX:

- 3rd grade: Rooz Caire and Brockett Stutz
- 4th grade: Christian Yu and Owen Chu
- 5th grade: Cyrus Caire, Marc Surdeanu, and Nachiket Nadig

Individual achievements from Manzanita students include:

- Rooz Caire placed 1st in Arizona in Math League and Arizona State Champion in Math League for 3rd grade.
- Marc Surdeanu placed 1st in Arizona in the national PiMC competition with a perfect score.
- Cyrus Caire won the district-level MOEMS mathematics competition.

In addition, Marc Surdeanu, Cyrus Caire and Rooz Caire qualified for the PiMC finals in June in San Francisco, CA.

Sunrise Drive Elementary also had an outstanding season, earning 3rd place in the Math League State competition Division 5. The Sunrise Drive Elementary math club team members are Alan Liu and Aiden Liu. Their coach is Laura Surdeanu.

Individual achievements from Sunrise Drive students include:

- Alan Liu won the MOEMS mathematics competition at the school level and qualified for the PiMC finals in June in San Francisco, CA.
- Aiden Liu qualified for the Math League National competition in June in College Station, TX.

Orange Grove Middle School had an impressive competitive season, earning 3rd place in the Math League State competition Division 6 and placing 7th at the MathCounts State competition! The MathCounts team members Max Hao, Daniel Li, Esther Yu and Melody Yu won 2nd place in the Southern Arizona Chapter competition and ranked 7th in the MathCounts State competition. The Math League team members Sidhaant Chaudhary, Max Hao, and Melody Yu won 3rd place in the

Math League State competition Division 6! Both teams are coached by Coach Ning Hao.

Individual achievements from Orange Grove students include:

- Melody Yu earned 2nd place and qualified for the National Math League competition in June in College Station, TX.
- Max Hao earned 4th place and qualified for the National Math League competition in June in College Station, TX.

We are incredibly proud of these students, not only for their accomplishments but also for the dedication, perseverance, and teamwork they demonstrated throughout the year.

Sunrise Drive Elementary School Named a Bright Spot by The 74

Sunrise Drive Elementary School has been recognized as a Bright Spot by The 74, a national nonprofit education newsroom, for outperforming expectations in third-grade reading proficiency.

The 74's Bright Spots project analyzed third-grade reading data from approximately 42,000 public schools across all 50 states and Washington, D.C., comparing each school's actual literacy outcomes against expected outcomes based on local poverty rates. At Sunrise Drive, 80 percent of third graders read at or above grade level, compared to an expected rate of 56 percent for a school with its demographic profile, a 24-percentage-point difference that places Sunrise Drive among the roughly 2,158 schools nationwide identified as "positive outliers" in early literacy.

This recognition reflects the daily work of Sunrise Drive's teachers, reading specialists, and school leadership under Principal Andrea Davidson. It joins the school's 2023 National Blue Ribbon designation, its standing as an Arizona A+ School of Excellence, and its "A" rating from the Arizona Department of Education.

Congratulations to Principal Davidson, students, staff, and families whose work this recognition reflects.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Information Item