



Catalina Foothills Unified School District #16
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BOARD AGENDA ITEM

ITEM NO: 1.4

BOARD MEETING DATE: Tuesday, August 12, 2025

OPENING ITEM: Outstanding Achievements

SUBMITTED BY: Denise Bartlett, Superintendent

PRESENTED BY: Denise Bartlett, Superintendent

I am pleased to highlight the following CFSD staff achievements:

Catalina Foothills High School Athletic Director Wins National Title

We're proud to recognize Charles Pierce, Catalina Foothills High School's Athletic Director, for winning his 4th national title at the United States Strongman (USS) National Championship, held June 28, 2025, in Charlotte, North Carolina. The event drew over 500 elite athletes from across the country and featured five intense, strength-based challenges. Competing in the 308+ weight class, Mr. Pierce delivered a dominant performance:

950 lb yoke carry – 60 feet

320 lb log press – 6 reps

605 lb frame carry – 120 feet

750 lb frame hold – 16 seconds

Sandbag toss medley – over a 16-foot bar

Mr. Pierce's strength, discipline, and competitive drive are matched only by his commitment to supporting CFHS student-athletes. His national achievement is a true reflection of the excellence he brings to our campus every day.

Congratulations, Mr. Pierce—we're proud to have a national champion leading Falcon Athletics!

CFSD Teacher Selected for Prestigious White House Institute

We are proud to announce that Jocelyn Jimenez Smerz, the STEM Integration Specialist at Manzanita Elementary School, was selected to participate in the prestigious White House Historical Association's Teacher Institute in Washington, D.C. This immersive program includes exclusive access to the White House and Blair House, hands-on sessions with renowned historians, and insights from former White House staff. As one of only six Master Teachers chosen nationwide for 2025, Mrs. Smerz will also mentor fellow educators and share innovative classroom strategies.

Mrs. Smerz has been rooted in Tucson's educational community for two decades, most recently as a 5th grade teacher at Canyon View Elementary School. Throughout her career, she has inspired students through hands-on science experiments, engineering projects, and the integration of local Arizona and U.S. history, helping CFSD students understand their place in both our community and the wider world. Known for creating inquiry-driven classrooms, Mrs. Smerz believes deeply in the power of cross-curricular learning, critical thinking, and meeting each student where they are. Her twenty years of experience are marked by her continued innovation in the classroom.

We are incredibly proud to see Mrs. Smerz representing CFSD on the national stage and continuing to lead the way in education.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Information Item