

Minutes of the Organizational Governing Board Meeting
Amphitheater Public Schools
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

An Organizational public meeting of the Governing Board of Amphitheater Public Schools was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Canyon del Oro High School, 25 W Calle Concordia, Tucson, AZ 85704 in the Fine Arts Auditorium.

Governing Board Members Present

Ms. Susan Zibrat, President
Ms. Deanna M. Day, M.Ed., Vice President
Ms. Vicki Cox Golder, Member
Dr. Michael Gemma, Member
Mr. Matthew A. Kopec, Member

Superintendent's Cabinet Members

Mr. Todd A. Jaeger, J.D., Superintendent
Ms. Tassi Call, Associate Superintendent for Elementary Education
Mr. Matthew Munger, Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education
Mr. Scott Little, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Richard La Nasa, Executive Director of Operational Support
Mr. John Hastings, Director of Human Resources
Ms. Elizabeth Jacome, Director of Curriculum & Assessment
Ms. Kristin McGraw, Director of Student Services
Ms. Julie Valenzuela, Director of 21st Century Education
Ms. Michelle Valenzuela, Director of Communications

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Zibrat called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Superintendent Jaeger asked Dr. Oranté Jenkins to introduce the Ironwood Ridge students leading the Pledge this evening. Dr. Jenkins introduced students from the art program, Paige, Emmaline, Taya, and Makenna. He shared each students' academic interests, extracurricular activities, and plans after graduation. The students led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Gemma presented each of the students with a certificate of recognition and thanked them for coming this evening. Each of the students thanked their parents and teachers for their support and expressed their gratitude to be able to represent their school.

A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Dr. Jenkins, and the Ironwood Ridge students to mark the occasion.

3. RECOGNITION OF STUDENT ART

Superintendent Jaeger acknowledged the two Ironwood Ridge art teachers, Mr. John Bennet and Ms. Jill Menaugh. Mr. Bennet spoke about the arts as an avenue of expression and unmatched accessibility. He noted that seeing the world through the artist's lens broadens creative thinking, critical thinking, and caring which are all attributes of Amphitheater's Promise of a Graduate. Mr. Bennet thanked the Governing Board for their continued support of the arts and the opportunity for the Nighthawks to showcase their talent which is currently displayed at the Wetmore District offices.

Dr. Gemma presented Mr. Bennet and Ms. Menaugh with certificates of recognition. A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Mr. Bennet, and Ms. Menaugh to mark the occasion.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT SPECIAL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

President Zibrat stated the next Special Governing Board meeting will be Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. at the Wetmore Center, 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson AZ, 85705, in the Leadership and Professional Development Center.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Details of agenda items, supporting documents, and presentations are available in the electronic Board Book by clicking on the hyperlink below.

[*Amphitheater Public Schools Public View - BoardBook Premier*](#)

President Zibrat asked if any items needed to be removed for further discussion or comment. There were none.

Ms. Cox Golder moved for Consent Agenda Items 6. A.- O. be approved as presented. Mr. Kopec seconded the motion. Vote in favor – 5. President Zibrat, Vice President Day, Ms. Cox Golder, Dr. Gemma, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. Consent Agenda Items 6. A.-O. passed.

A. Approval of Appointment of Non-Administrative Personnel

The Governing Board approved Appointment of Non-Administrative Personnel as submitted in Exhibit 1.

B. Approval of Personnel Changes

The Governing Board approved Personnel Changes as submitted in Exhibit 2.

C. Approval of Leave(s) of Absence

The Governing Board approved Leave(s) of Absence as submitted in Exhibit 3.

D. Approval of Separation(s) and Termination(s)

The Governing Board approved Separation(s) and Termination(s) as submitted in Exhibit 4.

E. Approval of Stipend for Coaching Volunteers

The Governing Board approved Stipend for Coaching Volunteers as submitted in Exhibit 5.

F. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

The Governing Board approved minutes from the December 9, 2025 as submitted in Exhibit 6.

G. Approval of Revision to the 2025-2026 Governing Board Meeting Schedule

The Governing Board approved the Revision to the 2025-2026 Governing Board Meeting Schedule as submitted in Exhibit 7.

H. Approval of Vouchers Totaling and Not Exceeding Approximately \$2,373,855.66

A copy of vouchers for goods and services received by the Amphitheater Public Schools and recommended for payment has been provided to the Governing Board. The following vouchers were approved as presented and payment authorized as submitted in Exhibit 8.

Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount
1156	\$467,581.74	1157	\$125,859.70	1158	\$12,189.16
1159	\$62,580.13	1161	\$25,124.59	1162	\$24,804.78
1163	\$67,040.47	1164	\$33,945.59	1165	\$102,816.73
1166	\$9,813.75	1167	\$38,849.51	1168	\$153,842.41
1169	\$4,786.39	1170	\$7,392.38	1172	\$7,075.22
1173	\$148,491.62	1174	\$20,611.02	1175	\$512,097.26
1176	\$4,325.92	1177	\$84,305.53	1178	\$116,140.90
1179	\$42,620.65	1180	\$151,455.11	1181	\$100,119.20

I. Acceptance of Gifts

The Governing Board approved the Acceptance of Gifts as submitted in Exhibit 9.

J. Approval of Parent Support Organization(s) - 2025-2026

The Governing Board approved CDO Choir Boosters as submitted in Exhibit 10.

K. Approval of Disposal of Surplus Property via PublicSurplus.com

The Governing Board approved the Disposal of Surplus Property via PublicSurplus.com.

L. Approval of Lease Agreement with T-Mobile West, LLC

The Governing Board approved the Lease Agreement with T-Mobile West, LLC as submitted in Exhibit 11.

M. Approval of Arizona Department of Administration School Facilities Division Building Renewal Grants

The Governing Board has approved Arizona Department of Administration School Facilities Division Building Renewal Grants as submitted in Exhibit 12.

N. Physical Education Credit for High School Graduation and Request for an Individual Exemption

The Governing Board approved Physical Education Credit for High School Graduation and Request for an Individual Exemption as submitted in Exhibit 13.

O. Approval of Out of State Travel

The Governing Board approved Out of State Travel as submitted in Exhibit 14.

7. ACTION**A. Superintendent's Recommendation for School Closures and Consolidation**

President Zibrat asked Superintendent Jaeger to present the item. Superintendent Jaeger shared that he was bringing forth a recommendation that is one of the hardest in the District's 132 year history: to close four of its schools. He spoke about a history of meeting the needs of the Tucson community and the necessity of making an adjustment to ensure the District's longevity in continuing to serve.

Superintendent Jaeger summarized the challenges the District has faced for some time and have been studied in great detail over the last year including the declining birth rate, expansion of Empowerment Scholarships (private school vouchers) and competition from private and charter schools which have all contributed to an enrollment decline. He noted that the District is currently maintaining infrastructure for 19,000 students while currently serving under 11,000 and continuing to do so will deprive active classrooms the resources they need. Superintendent Jaeger stated that consolidation allows the District to build and strengthen existing programs that are hampered by low enrollment and ensures against the loss of vital programs like all-day free Kindergarten, Fine Arts and PE, extracurriculars, and expanded course offerings.

Superintendent Jaeger reiterated his recommendation to close Copper Creek Elementary, Donaldson Elementary, Holaway Elementary, and Nash Elementary effective June 2026. He noted this was not a reflection of the quality of these schools, but a response to the shifting landscape of the community. He once again shared the welcoming schools the affected students would attend next school year and explained that these sites are eager to welcome new students and staff. Superintendent Jaeger went on to speak about the expectation that most all impacted staff will be offered positions within the District. He also spoke to Legacy Preservation for closing schools, steps to welcome students to their new campuses, and the productive repurposing of the closed sites by exploring community partnerships.

Superintendent Jaeger spoke to each Board member individually about their own experiences and investments made through their involvement with the District via the Governing Board, but additionally as students, parents, teachers, and administrators of the Amphitheater community. He respectfully asked for their support in approving the recommendation.

President Zibrat explained the Board would now hear from the public about this issue before voting and read the protocol for Public Comment.

Sharon Lovemore is a parent who spoke about the Copper Creek students who receive Special Education Services. She expressed her concern about separating the cross-categorical students from the rest of their general education peers at a new school site. Ms. Lovemore stated that this is a restrictive move that raises equity and disability rights concerns. She went on to praise Copper Creek's current program and asked the Governing Board to postpone their decision to close Copper Creek. Ms. Lovemore asked the Governing Board to consider relocating Painted Sky students to Copper Creek instead.

Jennifer Skinner is a parent and asked the Board to reject the recommendation to close Copper Creek Elementary. She spoke about the school as the heart of the Copper Creek neighborhood that has meant so much to generations of families. Ms. Skinner spoke about the disruption the closure will cause families and that its closure doesn't solve the root issue. She offered praise for the staff and community of Copper Creek Elementary and criticized the District's lack of transparency in exploring the lease of the building to outside vendors.

Caitlin Provencio is a parent who criticized the Board for not listening to the voices of families in the District regarding closures. She shared that this issue has lead her to look outside of Amphitheater to school her children. Ms. Provencio acknowledged that things can't remain as they are, but the ramifications of these decisions will be felt for years to come.

Lorella Ritzell is a parent and District employee. She asked for more collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving to address the current issues. Ms. Ritzell stated there were inconsistencies in information presented to the public and that many people felt like their concerns and comments about the process were being ignored. She expressed concern for her employment and about the fairness in which employees affected by closures will be placed. Lastly, Ms. Ritzell pointed out that Copper Creek is being considered for an A+ Distinction and a decision to close it should not be made until those results are announced in February.

Amanda Griffin is a parent and expressed her disappointment that it seems like the Board has already made its decision. She went on to speak about her child's positive experiences at Holaway and how difficult it is for her special needs child to not be moving on with their general education peers. Ms. Griffin went on to say that schools are not just for academics, but are places where students feel safe and build connections with others. She offered criticism of asking the most vulnerable students to pay the emotional price for a system decision.

President Zibrat stated now was the time for the Board to discuss the recommendations.

Mr. Kopec asked about the fate of Amphi Academy Online (AAO) which is currently housed at Donaldson Elementary. Superintendent Jaeger explained that AAO will continue to run without an interruption in service, however it will be decentralized with staff being housed at other sites across the District.

Mr. Kopec asked about how special education students' needs, specifically those at Copper Creek, are being met and IDEA requirements. Superintendent Jaeger explained that Federal law prefers students to be educated at the closest facility to their home which in the case of Copper Creek students would be Painted Sky. He also clarified that the term of "least restrictive environment" quoted in the law, refers to program/placement and not the actual physical building. He presented the specific federal code language pertaining to the same. Lastly, he noted that many of the staff members will be moving with the Special Education students to their new site.

Mr. Kopec asked about employee impact and the placement process for displaced staff. Superintendent Jaeger stated that Human Resources have already met with affected employees and explained that seniority is used to place classified employees, but the law states that other factors like experience and professional skills must be used to place certified staff. Superintendent Jaeger noted that natural attrition through retirements and resignations also offers openings for displaced staff across the District.

Mr. Kopec asked about the repurposing of closing sites and how the District will maintain security there. Superintendent Jaeger noted that school sites cannot be sold to private parties without voter approval, however the District can engage in sale or leasing agreements with other governmental entities in easier ways. He

acknowledged that there have been recent reports about the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind expressing interest in one of the Amphitheater sites and that it hadn't been mentioned publicly yet, because it is a fairly new development. Superintendent Jaeger explained that any lease agreement would need to be approved by the Governing Board in the future, but in reality, the Board first needs to vote to close schools before they can be leased or sold. He went on to discuss security measures for vacant schools such as patrols and cameras.

Dr. Gemma shared that he has read all of the comments and letters submitted to him and understands the emotions and concerns. He noted that he has offered his own suggestions and questions which have all been met with a sound rationale behind the current recommendations. Dr. Gemma praised the District personnel for the work they have done to offer a solution that affects the smallest group of students while continuing to offer excellent educational programs and resources. He noted that children are resilient and praised the willingness of teachers and staff to welcome them at their new schools. Dr. Gemma thanked everyone who participated in the process and encouraged everyone to move forward in a positive way.

Seeing no further discussion, President Zibrat stated she would now entertain a motion regarding the Superintendent's recommendations.

Vice President Day motioned for the Governing Board to approve the recommendation to close Copper Creek Elementary, Donaldson Elementary, Holaway Elementary, and Nash Elementary at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Vice President Day noted that it is difficult for her to make this motion as she has been a part of the District for the past 69 years as a student, teacher, and Governing Board member. She spoke about the only other school closure of Wetmore Elementary many years ago and the growth of the District after that time.

Ms. Cox Golder seconded the motion.

Ms. Cox Golder stated it was with a heavy heart that she seconded the motion. She spoke about finding the sites to build Copper Creek, Painted Sky, Wilson K-8, and Ironwood Ridge years ago and that now with one of those sites closing, others will be welcoming those students and teachers. Ms. Cox Golder was also encouraged by the prospect of new tenants for the vacated buildings.

President Zibrat asked if there was any further discussion by the Governing Board. There was none. She stated due to the significance of this item and for historical interest of clarity, she was asking for a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote in favor: President Zibrat-Yes, Vice President Day-Yes, Ms. Cox Golder-Yes, Dr. Gemma-Yes, Mr Kopec-Yes. Opposed-0. Motion passes 5-0.

8. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

A. Nomination and Election of Governing Board President and Vice President
Arizona law, A.R.S. §15-521, requires that the Governing Board hold an organizational meeting annually between January 1 and January 15. The same section of Title 15 requires that the Board elect a president from among its members. The President of the Board presides over all meetings of the Board, in accordance with Arizona law and District Policies.

A.R.S. §15-521(D) provides that the Board must prescribe rules for its own governance. Governing Board Policy 1-103, one of the Governing Board rules of governance, does require the election of a clerk, which the Board has traditionally designated as "Vice-President". The Vice-President presides over all meetings of the Board at which the President is not present.

The nomination of officers, under Roberts Rules of Order, may be done by open nomination. The President initiates this method by simply calling for nominations from the floor. Alternatively, any member could offer a motion that nominations be made from the floor. After passage of such a motion, or upon initiation by the President, the current President takes all nominations for the office of president first. Board members may, alternatively, move the nomination of a candidate, requiring a second and a passing vote for the nominee to be placed on the slate of candidates. This of course, adds an additional step to the election process and is not recommended for small bodies like the Board.

Nominees may decline their nomination prior to any vote. When it appears no further nominations are forthcoming, the President may close the floor to further nominations, or it may be closed upon a passing motion to do the same.

Under Roberts Rules, there are technically several ways of conducting the election of officers following the nomination process; those that are practicable and applicable to the election of Governing Board officers are described below. Secret balloting, for example, is permitted by Roberts Rules, but not by the Arizona Open Meeting Law. Once again, any one of the alternative methods below may be used – either upon selection of method by the current President or by motion (the latter of which controls in the event of conflict). If a voting method is selected, the chair should explain how the matter will proceed prior to the vote being taken.

Acclamation. *If there is only one nominee for an office, the chair of the meeting can simply declare the individual is elected, rather than taking a vote.*

Voice or Other Voting. *Absent election by acclamation, a vote of the Board on nominees is required by voice, roll call, show of hands or rising (where Board members stand). Roberts provides that, unless a method of voting is selected upon motion, the chair will decide the method based upon the nature of the election, closeness of the expected vote, and the size of the group.*

The current President announces the result of a vote formally, for the record. Until that announcement, Roberts permits any Board member to change their vote. In the event of a tie between nominees, the chair may call for a new vote to determine the tie.

President Zibrat nominated Ms. Cox Golder for President; Vice President Day seconded the motion and all concurred. There were no other nominations and through acclamation, Ms. Cox Golder was declared President.

President Cox Golder asked for nominations for Vice President. Vice President Day nominated Mr. Kopec for the Office of Vice President; Dr. Gemma seconded the motion and all concurred. There were no other nominations and through acclamation, President Cox Golder declared Mr. Kopec as Vice President.

The Certificate of Election of Governing Board President and Vice President was signed by all Board members to be forwarded to the Pima County School Superintendent's office.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

10. BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Day moved to adjourn. Vice President Kopec seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Voice vote in favor-5. President Cox Golder, Vice President Kopec, Ms. Day, Dr. Gemma, and Ms. Zibrat. Opposed-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:06pm.

Jen Anderson

Minutes respectfully submitted for Governing Board Approval
Jen Anderson, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent & Governing Board

January 15, 2026

Date

Vicki Cox Golder, Governing Board President

January 27, 2026

Date