

DRAFT

**CATALINA FOOTHILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tucson, Arizona**

DRAFT

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD
Carole Siegler Boardroom at Valley View Early Learning Center
3435 E. Sunrise Drive - Tucson, Arizona
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 - 6:30 PM, Doors Opened at 6:00 PM**

Regular Meeting Minutes

NOTICE OF MEETING

On February 17, 2025, the announcement of the meeting was posted at Catalina Foothills High School, Esperero Canyon Middle School, Orange Grove Middle School, Ventana Vista Elementary School, Canyon View Elementary School, Manzanita Elementary School, Sunrise Drive Elementary School, Valley View Early Learning Center, and on the Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD) website (www.cfsd16.org).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present:

Amy Krauss, President
Eileen Jackson, Vice President
Jacquelyn Davoli, Member
Tom Logue, Member (Remote)
Gina Mehmert, Member

District Administration:

Denise Bartlett, Superintendent
Mindy Westover, Associate
Superintendent
Andrea Davidson, Sunrise Drive
Elementary School Principal
Julie Farbarik, Director of Community
Relations
Lynn Pence, Director of Educational
Technology
Lisa Taetle, Director of Finance
Carmela Zega, Sunrise Drive
Elementary School Assistant Principal

District Personnel:

Gigi Dover, Sunrise Drive
Elementary School Physical
Education Teacher
Amie Sams, Administrative
Assistant

Visitors Present:

Claudia Beltran, Wyatt Golisch, Jill Greene, Tracy Rea, Jenn Staples, and Rob Staples

Joining Online:

Approximately twelve visitors attended the regular meeting through the YouTube live link.

1. OPENING

1.1. Call to Order and Welcome

President Amy Krauss called to order the governing board meeting at 6:30 p.m.

1.2. Pledge of Allegiance

President Krauss led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. Rules of Order for Governing Board Meetings

President Krauss read the Rules of Order for governing board meetings.

1.4. Super Volunteer Recognition

The governing board honored Tracy Rea as the district's "Super Volunteer" for her outstanding contributions to Sunrise Drive Elementary School (SDES). Nominated by Principal Andrea Davidson and Assistant Principal Carmela Zega, Ms. Rea has been an invaluable presence at Sunrise Drive during her three daughters'

attendance throughout the past seven years. Vice President Eileen Jackson shared of Ms. Rea's crucial role in school-wide events, most notably leading the highly successful Mathathon fundraiser, which has improved students' math skills and has generated over \$20,000 annually, about a third of the SDES Family Faculty Organization (FFO) budget. Additionally, Ms. Rea has been instrumental in the school wide Steppers Club, working closely with SDES Physical Education Teacher Gigi Dover to encourage student participation in physical activity. Colleagues and FFO members describe Ms. Rea as energetic, organized, and always willing to step up. She also chairs the Book Fair at Orange Grove Middle School (OGMS) and is deeply involved in her children's activities outside of school. As she transitions fully to volunteering at OGMS, her leadership at Sunrise Drive will be missed, but Ms. Rea has already ensured a smooth handoff of her responsibilities to the next generation of parent volunteers.

The governing board members expressed deep gratitude for Ms. Rea's dedication to the Sunrise Drive learning community. In recognition of her contributions, she was honored with a "Super Volunteer" certificate, a keychain, and a copy of her nomination letter as small tokens of appreciation. Ms. Rae was celebrated with a standing ovation for her years of service and lasting impact on the Sunrise Drive Elementary School community.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A board member requested to pull consent agenda item 3.7 the acceptance, with gratitude, of the gifts and donations memorandum and 3.8 the award of RFP 25-03-30 Employee Benefits Consulting.

Upon a motion by Eileen Jackson and a second by Jacquelyn Davoli, the governing board approved the following items on the consent agenda: 3.1 the governing board February 8, 2025, special meeting minutes, as presented; 3.2 the governing board February 11, 2025, regular meeting minutes, as presented; 3.3 the expense voucher memorandum, as presented; 3.4 the field trip request memorandum, as presented; 3.5 the fundraising request memorandum, as presented; 3.6 the personnel memorandum, as presented; 3.9 the updated estimates to the cooperative purchase list for fiscal year 2024-2025, as presented; and 3.10 the award to General Acrylics for the track replacement at Orange Grove Middle School in the amount of \$638,761.64, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

Consent Agenda Item 3.7

A board member acknowledged the generous financial support of our Family Faculty Organizations (FFOs) who donated more than \$13,000.00 over the past month and emphasized the importance of the partnership between our schools and families to provide CFSD students with learning enrichment opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom.

Upon a motion by Eileen Jackson and a second by Jacquelyn Davoli, the governing board approved consent agenda item 3.7 the acceptance, with gratitude, of the gifts and donations memorandum, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

Consent Agenda Item 3.8

A board member asked what kind of services are provided by the recommended employee benefits consultant. Associate Superintendent Mindy Westover outlined the services provided by the consulting firm which include assisting the district with securing and managing various employee benefits, including health, dental, life, disability, vision, employee assistance programs, flexible spending accounts, and health savings accounts. They ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, including Medicare and FMLA, and keep the district updated on legislative changes. Additionally, the firm supports open enrollment for health benefits, manages insurance plan bids, provides data on employee benefits usage, and helps design programs to maximize employee wellness. They also advise on funding and contributions, offering guidance during the budgeting process for the district's contribution towards employee benefits.

Upon a motion by Eileen Jackson and a second by Gina Mehmert, the governing board approved consent agenda item 3.8 the award of RFP 25-03-30 Employee Benefits Consulting, a one-year contract with the option to renew for four additional years to Gallagher Benefit Services, Incorporated with an estimated first year cost of \$32,000, as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

3.1. Approval of February 8, 2025, Special Governing Board Meeting Minutes Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the special governing board meeting minutes for February 8, 2025, as presented.

3.2. Approval of February 11, 2025, Regular Governing Board Meeting Minutes Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the regular governing board meeting minutes for February 11, 2025, as presented.

3.3. Approval of Expense Voucher Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the following expense vouchers:

Expense Voucher		Amount
25094	\$	1,700,809.32
25097		6,755.69
25098		195,055.91
25099		185,115.63
25100		39,245.86
25101		2,140,114.02
25103		101,109.08
25105		89,445.09

3.4. Approval of the Field Trip Request Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the field trip request memorandum, as presented.

ORGANIZATION	ACTIVITY	LEARNING NEXUS	WHERE	DATE(S)	*FEE
Catalina Foothills High School (CFHS) Student Council	Arizona Association of Student Councils (AASC) Summer Camp	Students will learn new techniques of how to reach all community members and gain a variety of perspectives on leadership from other Arizona student councils.	Prescott, AZ	06/09/2025 to 06/13/2025	\$325.00
CFHS AP Environmental Science	Freeport-McMoRan Inc. Sierrita Mine Tour	Students will learn about the stages of mining, including exploration, extraction, processing, and reclamation, while learning about mining's environmental impact and gaining understanding for the role of mining in the local economy.	Green Valley, AZ	04/08/2025	\$0.00
CFHS Foothills Falcon Band	Band Camp at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University	Students will learn and develop marching and music skills for the upcoming marching performance season.	Prescott, AZ	07/18/2025 to 07/24/2025	\$855.00
Ventana Vista Elementary School (VVES) 4 th Grade	Colossal Cave	Students will make connections to understand how geological systems	Vail, AZ	05/06/2025	\$0.00

	Mountain Park Tour	change and shape the Earth.			
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3.5. Approval of the Fundraising Request Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the fundraising request memorandum, as presented.

NAME	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	LOCATION	DATE(S)	GROSS REVENUES	NET INCOME
Catalina Foothills High School (CFHS)						
CFHS Student Council	Ticket sales for "Café Falcon", a catered dinner for students, friends, family, and staff	To raise funds for future student activities, supplies, and conventions.	On campus	03/14/2025	\$1,500.00	\$700.00

3.6. Approval of the Personnel Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the personnel, as presented.

CERTIFIED STAFF	CLASSIFIED STAFF	COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	COACH	VOLUNTEER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resignations Released from Contract 24-25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Hires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Hire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom Band

3.7. Approval of Gifts and Donation Memorandum

On the consent agenda, the governing board accepted, with gratitude, the following gifts, and donations:

DATE	DONOR	SCHOOL	PURPOSE/ITEM	AMOUNT
2/7/2025	Gergely Kota	Murphey Administration Center	Executive Administration	\$20.00
2/7/2025	Microsoft Matching	Murphey Administration Center	Executive Administration	\$20.00
2/7/2025	Bigyan Adhikari	Murphey Administration Center	Executive Administration	\$25.00
2/7/2025	Raytheon Matching	Murphey Administration Center	Executive Administration	\$25.00
2/7/2025	Gergely Kota	Murphey Administration Center	Executive Administration	\$20.00
2/7/2025	Microsoft Matching	Murphey Administration Center	Executive Administration	\$20.00
2/7/2025	Manzanita FFO	Manzanita Elementary School	Transportation	\$219.02
2/7/2025	Manzanita FFO	Manzanita Elementary School	Transportation	\$289.89
2/7/2025	Manzanita FFO	Manzanita Elementary School	Transportation	\$1,289.70
2/10/2025	Canyon View FFO	Canyon View Elementary School	Artist in Residence	\$2,215.30
2/11/2025	Canyon View FFO	Canyon View Elementary School	Transportation	\$350.52
2/11/2025	Canyon View FFO	Canyon View Elementary School	Transportation	\$464.40
2/14/2025	Manzanita FFO	Manzanita Elementary School	Transportation	\$8,800.00
			TOTAL	\$13,758.83

3.8. Approval of Award of RFP 25-03-30 Employee Benefits Consulting Services

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the award of RFP 25-03-30 Employee Benefits Consulting Services, a one-year contract with the option to renew for four additional years to Gallagher Benefit Services, Incorporated with an estimated first year cost of \$32,000, as presented.

3.9. Approval of Updated Estimates to the Cooperative Purchase List for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the updated estimates to the cooperative purchase list for fiscal year 2024-2025, as presented.

3.10. Approval of Award to General Acrylics for the Track Replacement at Orange Grove Middle School

On the consent agenda, the governing board approved the award to General Acrylics for the track replacement at Orange Grove Middle School in the amount of \$638,761.64, as presented.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

4.1. Public Hearing on Revisions to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Revision #2)

President Krauss opened the public hearing at 6:54 p.m. and informed all who were in attendance that the hearing provided the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions to the fiscal year 2025 budget. There were no public comments. The public hearing closed at 6:55 p.m.

4.2. Approval of Revisions to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Revision #2)

Director of Finance Lisa Taetle presented the second revision of the district's 2025 expenditure budget for the governing board's review and approval, following its prior approval at the July 8, 2024, special meeting. Most budget adjustments were made to reflect actual expenditures and funding. Ms. Taetle highlighted an increase to the Unrestricted Capital Outlay (UCO) in the amount of \$1.79 million due to the transfer of Maintenance and Operations (M&O) funds back to District Additional Assistance (DAA), which were previously allocated to DAA to balance the 2025 budget. The district used current year DAA to balance the 2025 budget prior to receiving final carryforward dollars from the prior year. The proposed budget revision accurately reflects the District Additional Assistance (DAA) transfer to the Maintenance and Operations (M & O) budget, which appeared as a high-risk item in the auditor general's report distributed to governing board members in January 2025.

The Classroom Site Fund increased due to a decrease in prior year 2024 actual expenditures and an increase to 2024 interest revenue earned. The DAA transfer to M & O decreased by \$1.59 million due to a larger M & O carry forward amount than previously budgeted. In addition, the decreased transfer was due to the allocation of one-time DAA funding for the free and reduced-price lunch program in the amount of \$195,000. The Property column budget increased for the purchase of new computer devices for the food service program, which assists the district in meeting the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) matching requirement. Federal Projects amounts were updated to reflect 2025 actual funding. The category Other Funds increased by \$500,000 due to additional funds awarded by the School Facilities Division to maintain safe and secure school environments.

Board members inquired about the increased carryforward which was attributed to conservative budgeting practices, payroll adjustments, and Average Daily Membership (ADM) enrollment fluctuations. Concerns were raised regarding the timing of the auditor general's report, which was issued before final reconciliations of the prior year expenditures from the state were provided, leading to a potentially misleading high-risk designation. It was noted that future budget revisions in December could help mitigate similar reporting issues.

Upon a motion by Gina Mehmert and a second by Jacquelyn Davoli, the governing board approved the fiscal year 2025 expenditure budget (revision #2), as presented.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea; Motion carried 5-0.

5. **DISCUSSION / REPORTS**

5.1. CFSD Classified Retention Report

Superintendent Bartlett presented a summary report on CFSD's classified staff retention report conducted in the Spring of 2024, the first of its kind for CFSD, with one hundred and fifty-seven of the approximately three hundred and fifty classified employees participating. Classified positions in CFSD include employees who work in positions that do not require a certificate or license and who are employed on an hourly basis such as educational

assistants (EAs), office staff, custodians, and computer technicians. While response rates were lower than for the certified staff survey, classified employees expressed appreciation for being surveyed, viewing it as validation of their contributions to CFSD. Many classified employees come from different careers, often seeking a job that allows them to give back to their community or work part-time in retirement.

Challenges of classified employee retention include competition with private sector jobs that offer higher pay and better benefits; many positions are not year-round employment which leads to finding additional employment during summer months to create year-round work; employee concerns about safety, working conditions, and a lack of respect; heavy workloads which contribute to stress and burnout; and limited professional development and training that could enhance their skills and career prospects.

The top reasons for applying to CFSD were the district's reputation, work schedule, and specific job roles. Classified employees cited salary, location, administrative support, and job responsibilities as major factors in staying with CFSD. Respondents shared they are very satisfied with their work schedule, security and safety measures at their worksite, their supervisor, job responsibility and expectations, and co-workers and collaboration. Those surveyed also shared they are somewhat satisfied with their work climate, benefits, and salary and wage, although the district has made notable classified wage increases (over 30% in recent years). The top three factors that respondents shared would draw them to look for a position outside of CFSD include salary and wage, benefits, and a career change.

Conclusions from the 2024 report indicated:

- CFSD classified staff are satisfied with the work they are doing in the district.
- Compensation is the largest challenge for classified employees.
- There is a general lack of knowledge of specific funding challenges and state statutes for retirement contributions.
- There is a desire for year-round work or to spread pay over the full twelve months of the year.

District impact included:

- The retention of both certified teachers and classified employees is crucial for ongoing school improvement and the achievement of strategic goals.
- Classified employees provide essential support services that enhance the overall functioning of schools, ensuring that educators can focus on teaching.
- These roles create a cohesive educational system with effective collaboration and communication.
- Prioritizing retention strengthens the workforce and cultivates a culture of commitment and shared purpose.
- By investing in the professional growth and well-being of both groups, schools can build a resilient foundation for long-term success.

A board member inquired about the strategies used to increase participation in the survey. The most effective strategy so far has been having employees complete the survey together at a designated time during paid work hours. Sending the survey via email with a request to respond has not been effective. For those working at school sites, surveys were conducted during early release or late start times.

A board member asked if the survey results have been shared with staff. The results will be provided to site administrators who intend to set-up a time to share results with their staff. The next retention survey will not take place for another three years.

A board member asked how the district could increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits that CFSD offers to certified and classified staff. While benefits are introduced during onboarding and the annual employee benefits open enrollment cycle, participation in benefit informational sessions has been low. Employees tend to stick with their initial benefits selection, often out of comfort, even when better options may be available. Barriers to understanding benefits include the complexity of benefits terminology (e.g., coinsurance, deductibles). Potential strategies for improved awareness include year-round education increasing awareness through ongoing communication, not just during open enrollment, diversifying and simplifying messaging to provide easy-to-understand explanations of benefits and terminology, targeted outreach addressing different employee groups

(e.g., retirees, new hires, part-time staff) with tailored messaging, and providing earlier communication introducing benefit education before open enrollment allowing employees time to process options.

A board member asked what was the actual retention rate of classified staff? The retention rate of classified staff is difficult to pinpoint due to its fluid nature yet is estimated around 75% or higher. There is a high turnover in educational assistants, however recent changes to the substitute policy have helped fill positions more effectively. The Community Schools Department also has constant staffing changes which influence the retention rate. Classified staff are employed under a “notice of appointment” rather than a contract, meaning they can resign at any time, contributing to fluid retention rates. Some employees leave and return due to personal reasons, such as caregiving responsibilities or seasonal work availability. Employees with lower than .75 full-time equivalency (FTE) do not qualify for medical benefits, however, the district covers the cost of dental and vision coverage for an employee and their entire family for those with an FTE of .5 to .74. Many classified staff increase their FTE by working in both the classroom and in the Community Schools program, which can help them qualify for medical benefit coverage.

Detailed information about the [CFSD Classified Retention Report](#) was made available to the CFSD community as part of the governing board meeting agenda item 5.1 on the CFSD website.

5.2. [Pima County School Board / Superintendent Collaborative Meeting Report \(February 17, 2025\)](#)

President Krauss, Vice President Jackson and Board members Jacquelyn Davoli and Tom Logue shared key takeaways from Pima County School Board / Superintendent Collaborative meeting held on February 17, 2025. The meeting fostered connections among Tucson area school board members and superintendents and provided insight into legislative efforts affecting education. A presentation on Executive Orders (EOs) by Lisa Anne Smith of DeConcini McDonald Yetwin & Lacy, P.C provided clarification that EOs do not create laws but serve as guidance, and although currently, there is no immediate impact on education, monitoring is essential. Ms. Smith emphasized staying informed while continuing to prioritize students. Topics of interest from legislative updates at the state level included accommodation bills and pronoun policies, cell phone access regulations in schools, ultra-processed food concerns in school meal programs, criminal liability for school employees, and mandatory reporting status for school board members.

5.3. [Arizona Legislative / Governmental Activity](#)

Board members discussed concerns over the future of Proposition 123 on the ballot in November 2025 and the disagreement between Governor Katie Hobbs and the Arizona State Legislature on who qualifies for Proposition 123 funding (classroom teachers versus non-classroom teachers and other staff). Board members acknowledged State Representative Nancy Gutierrez, a former CFSD parent and current public-school educator, who is leading an effort to extend the free and reduced-price lunch program to include universal free breakfast and lunch programs to all public-school students.

6. **AGENDA PLANNING**

There were no requests for future agenda considerations.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Gina Mehmert, and a second by Eileen Jackson, the governing board adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Jacquelyn Davoli – Yea; Eileen Jackson – Yea; Amy Krauss – Yea; Tom Logue – Yea; Gina Mehmert – Yea;
Motion carried 5-0.