

**Minutes of the Regular Governing Board Meeting
Amphitheater Public Schools
Tuesday, September 9, 2025**

A Regular public meeting of the Governing Board of Amphitheater Public Schools was held on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Wetmore Center, 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson, AZ 85705 in the Leadership and Professional Development Center.

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. 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 Andrew Szczepaniak, Principal of Donaldson Elementary, to come forward to introduce his students. Mr. Szczepaniak spoke about Donaldson students being guided by the character traits of respect, responsibility, kindness, and safety which supports the Promise of a Graduate. He went on to explain that at Donaldson, staff makes a difference one student at a time, one lesson at a time, and one moment at a time.

Mr. Szczepaniak shared that he is proud of the students present who embody the spirit of making a difference. He introduced Xiomenna, Henry, Mackenzie, Ruby, Jordan, Roman, and Cali. The students led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Cox Golder asked if any of the students wished to say anything. Several of the students introduced their families in the audience. She presented the students with certificates of recognition. A photo was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Mr. Szczepaniak, and the Donaldson students to mark the occasion.

3. RECOGNITION OF STUDENT ART

Mr. Szczepaniak asked art teacher and interventionist, Ms. Jennifer Iadevaia, to come forward and commented that she works to nurture students' artistic talents and creativity while also working to help students become confident, skilled readers. Ms. Iadevaia spoke about the masks in the display case made by 4th and 5th graders who studied Cubism art. They incorporated different building materials, but applied math and science skills to form the cement pedestals for the masks. She went on to speak about the art in the Boardroom which was a collaborative effort between last year's kindergarteners and 1st graders who made large format, Mickey Mouse mash-ups. Lastly, Ms. Iadevaia shared about the colorful Legacy Wall students paint to "leave their mark" on Donaldson.

Ms. Cox Golder presented Ms. Iadaveia with a certificate of recognition. A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Mr. Szczepaniak, and Ms. Iadevaia.

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

President Zibrat announced the next Special Governing Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Wetmore Center, 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson AZ, 85705, in the Leadership and Professional Development Center.

5. ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE TO APPOINTED GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

Superintendent Jaeger stated he was pleased to welcome the newest Board member, Dr. Michael Gemma, who he noted, is not a stranger to the district as he was previously the principal of Canyon del Oro High School for nine years. He went on to speak about Dr. Gemma's wide breadth of experience in education and how fortunate the District is that he decided to return to Amphitheater to complete Ms. Harris' term.

Superintendent Jaeger explained that Arizona state law requires that governing board members subscribe to the public oath of office set up for public officers in Arizona. He noted Dr. Gemma already did so last week at the Pima County Superintendent's Office, but it is customary to also administer the oath publicly at a board meeting.

President Zibrat asked Mrs. Karen Gemma, Dr. Gemma's wife, to come forward as she would be administering the oath. Dr. Gemma recited the Oath of Office. President Zibrat called a break for a reception to congratulate Dr. Gemma.

The reception began at 6:16pm. The meeting was called back to order at 6:30pm.

6. RECOGNITIONS

A. Presentation of Distinguished Service Awards

President Zibrat asked Superintendent Jaeger to introduce the awards.

Superintendent Jaeger stated that each month during the school year a certificated and a classified staff member are recognized with a Distinguished Service Award. He asked Tim Ripp, Principal of Mesa Verde Elementary, to come forward to introduce the classified recipient.

Mr. Ripp introduced Debbie Doe, Office Clerk from Mesa Verde, as a cornerstone of what makes Mesa Verde special and stated her love for the Mesa Verde community is unmatched. He went on to speak about her dedication first as a parent volunteer, yearbook creator, and eventually as an employee in the school office. Mr. Ripp spoke of her professionalism, tireless efforts, and her pursuit of the very best for the students of Mesa Verde.

A video presentation was shown honoring Ms. Doe for the work she has done in the District.

President Zibrat asked Ms. Doe if she would like to say anything. Ms. Doe thanked her husband and daughter and her Mesa Verde friends. She expressed her gratitude for the Mesa Verde community.

President Zibrat presented Ms. Doe with a certificate of recognition from the Governing Board, a Distinguished Service Award and a gift card donated by the Amphi Foundation.

Superintendent Jaeger asked Ms. Tara Bulleigh, Principal of Canyon del Oro High School to come forward to introduce the certificated honoree.

Ms. Bulleigh introduced Ms. Jill Christman, Chemistry teacher from Canyon del Oro. Ms. Bulleigh shared that Jill Christman has been at CDO for twenty-five years and currently serves as the Science Department Chair and is an integral part of the school's leadership team. She went on to share some of Ms. Christman's other accolades including the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science teaching which is the highest award a K-12 teacher can earn from the US Government.

A video presentation was shown honoring Ms. Christman for the work she has done in the District.

Dr. Gemma asked Ms. Christman if she would like to share anything. She thanked her husband and daughter, her colleagues, and Ms. Bulleigh for her support.

Dr. Gemma stated it was a honor to be a colleague of Ms. Christman. He presented Ms. Christman with a certificate of recognition from the Governing Board, a Distinguished Service Award and a gift card donated by the Amphi Foundation.

A photo was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Ms. Doe, Ms. Christman, Mr. Ripp, and Ms. Bulleigh to mark the occasion.

B. Recognition of the National Athletic Trainers' Association Secondary School Athletic Trainer of the Year Recipient

Superintendent Jaeger asked Mr. A.J. Malis, Principal of Amphitheater High School, to introduce this recognition. Mr. Malis introduced, Ms. Monica Ortiz, Athletic Trainer from Amphi High. He explained that each year the National Athletic Trainers' Association honors eleven regional and one national winner of the Secondary Athletic Trainer of the Year. Criteria of the award includes elevating the AT profession, providing public awareness and education, contributing to their communities beyond their athletic duties, and providing excellent patient care.

Mr. Malis shared that Ms. Ortiz has been the Athletic Trainer at Amphi High since 2023 and has been instrumental in streamlining athletic care for their student athletes, is a knowledgeable care provider, and has engaged community health care partners to offer two free physical exam clinics for student athletes to ensure a physical is not a barrier to participation in athletics. Ms. Ortiz has also worked with the Amphi Foundation to help provide healthy snacks for students after school. Mr. Malis praised Ms. Ortiz's hard work and dedication in her role as the Athletic Trainer at Amphi High.

Mr. Kopec asked if there was anyone Ms. Ortiz would like to recognize. Ms. Ortiz thanked her colleagues in the audience, her athletic trainer from high school, Connie, and her husband for his support.

Mr. Kopec presented Ms. Ortiz with a certificate of recognition from the Governing Board. A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Ms. Ortiz, and Mr. Malis to mark the occasion.

C. Recognition of Senior Professional in Human Resources Certification Recipient

Superintendent Jaeger explained he had two Cabinet members who pursued national level certifications from their respective professional associations this year and how proud he is of them for completing them.

He introduced John Hastings, Director of Human Resources and shared that Mr. Hastings is a long time employee who first began in Human Resources as an administrative assistant. Superintendent Jaeger stated that he knows what a lengthy and indepth process it was to complete the certification and the knowledge base that it required.

Vice President Day commented on Mr. Hastings's long tenure with the district and presented him with a certificate of recognition from the Governing Board. Mr. Hastings thanked the Board for the recognition and gave a special thanks to Superintendent Jaeger for supporting his professional endeavors.

A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, and Mr. Hastings.

D. Recognition of Accreditation in Public Relations Recipient

Superintendent Jaeger explained this is also a very prestigious accreditation and shared that Ms. Michelle Valenzuela, Director of Communications, has been with the District for seven years. He commented on the rigor required to complete the accreditation process and what a nice way it is to acknowledge Ms. Valenzuela's expertise in public relations.

Ms. Valenzuela spoke about the accreditation process which included a panel presentation and an examination. She extended a thank you to her fellow Cabinet members for their support and to the Governing Board.

President Zibrat presented Ms. Valenzuela with a certificate of recognition from the Governing Board.

A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, and Ms. Valenzuela.

E. Recognition of Cognia STEM Certification Recipients

Superintendent shared that he was proud of both of these schools for this achievement and asked Ms. Call to talk about it further. Ms. Call spoke about the Cognia STEM Certification which recognizes schools that demonstrate excellence in science, technology, engineering and math education. She shared that Keeling Elementary and Innovation Academy are two of 400 school across 35 states to earn this certification. Ms. Call went on to detail the work required of Ms. Orelup and Mr. McConnell to compile all of the information required for submission including eighteen teaching videos and culminating in a presentation and Q & A with Cognia.

Ms. Orelup shared how proud she was to receive the certification on behalf of Keeling. She spoke of the commitment, collaboration, and many hours of hard work from Keeling's staff, students, families, and community partners. Ms. Orelup explained that becoming a STEM school has been a powerful transformation that has reshaped teaching, learning, and preparing students for the future. She thanked Mr. McConnell and the staff of Innovation Academy for their guidance and support through the process.

Mr. McConnell extended his congratulations to Keeling Elementary School. He noted that the recertification process was a meaningful time to reflect on their journey over the last nine years and recognize the growth the school has made. Mr. McConnell stated that earning this certification reaffirms that the school is continuously evolving to meet the needs of today's learners. He shared he is privileged to work for such an amazing and supportive community of staff, students, and families and gave credit to them for all of the work they continue to do. Mr. McConnell thanked the Governing Board for their support.

Mr. Kopec commented on how much work has been done at both sites and how many students have benefited from it. He presented Ms. Orelup and Mr. McConnell with certificates of recognition from the Governing Board. A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Ms. Orelup, Mr. McConnell, and Ms. Call to mark the occasion.

7. INFORMATION

A. Superintendent's Report

For the Superintendent's Report PowerPoint see Exhibit 1.

Superintendent Jaeger shared highlights of recent events in the District:

- Amphi Middle School and Prince Elementary held an Open House and Resource Fair for families
- The Food Service team instituted "Lucky Tray Day" for several elementary schools with prizes for having a lucky tray
- The first round of awards assemblies occurred at Harelson and Walker Elementaries
- Coronado K-8 National Junior Honor Society members spent an afternoon making blankets for children in foster care and in hospitals
- Thank you to the volunteers from Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for spending a day of service working on projects at several District schools
- The REACH Institute was a huge success offering education to gifted students and parents
- AVID educators from around the state gathered at Amphi High School for the AVID PATH Conference

- Rio Vista Elementary School completed their annual school photo on the playground in the shape of a heart
- The Amphi Foundation announced the creation of the Patsy Harris Memorial Fund with proceeds directly supporting students and educators in the District

Superintendent Jaeger went on to discuss the 2024 NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) Results. He provided some background information on the report's origins and purpose as it explores trends in education and explained that the assessment is conducted using a random sampling of schools across the country and Cross Middle School was included in the 2024 sample. Superintendent Jaeger shared highlights of the report:

- More students than ever are scoring below the NAEP's threshold for mastery of basic skills
- The lowest performers are falling even further behind
- Absenteeism is up among high school seniors with 31% of seniors saying they missed 3 or more days of school the previous month
- 12th graders were less prepared for college than their 2019 counterparts
- All students at all performance levels except the very highest saw statistically significant score declines
- More students than ever before are now performing at the lowest levels in both math and reading

Superintendent Jaeger shared information regarding Arizona 4th and 8th grade trends in reading and math, but noted no Arizona high schools were included in the 2024 NAEP assessment cohort and no Arizona schools were sampled in science at any grade level. He went on to share graphics of how Arizona's performance in 4th and 8th grade reading and math compare to other states. He offered Board members the opportunity to request further information.

B. Status of Construction Projects

For the Status of Construction Projects PowerPoint see Exhibit 2.

Superintendent Jaeger asked Mr. La Nasa to present his report. Mr. La Nasa stated all of the summer construction projects have been completed and his team is starting to plan larger projects to start during Fall and Winter breaks. He said his report this evening would focus on discuss Capital projects and the Building Renewal Grant (BRG) program.

Mr. La Nasa explained that the School Facilities Oversight Board receives money from the legislature and has to stretch the funds as far as they can when approving grant projects. They released a fiscal year 26 Building Renewal Grants Project Planning Funding Prioritization Plan. He offered key points of the BRG Program:

- FY 26 appropriation is \$200 million
- BRG have funded \$47million in projects thru 8/15/25
- There are \$310 million of projects awaiting funding
- Gap in funding reflects importance of voter approved bonds

Mr. La Nasa went on to share the proposed BRG road map which outlines the priority of awards including Fire/Life/Safety projects, HVAC, weatherization, urgent and critical projects. He projected the District would still likely be successful in getting roofing projects funded despite the complicated award system. Mr. La Nasa spoke about a more streamlined way the District has been submitting projects for approval.

Mr. La Nasa shared that August 2025 funding totaled \$178,157 bringing the school year total to \$2,728,748 with \$13 million in projects awaiting funding which includes roofing and weatherization projects. He offered to answer any questions. There were none.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

President Zibrat indicated she would, assuming no objection, exercise her privilege to move this item forward, given the hour to allow the single recorded speaker to address the Board. There were no objections.

Maggie Schaffer is the Director of Field Experiences for the University of Arizona College of Education in the Elementary and Early Childhood programs. She shared that she began teaching in Amphitheater schools and wished to acknowledge the wonderful partnerships the University of Arizona has with many of the District's elementary schools. Ms. Schaffer shared that school administration and faculty have been great partners in the UA teacher preparation program. She offered her gratitude to Tassi Call for her thoughtful considerations and efficient organization, Laurie Sheber for technical assistance and guidance, and the Technology Department for connecting students to technology accounts. Ms. Schaffer went on to say they love to place their students with Amphi teachers as they are wonderful mentors and students report a high level of satisfaction in working with them. In closing Ms. Schaffer again offered her gratitude for the partnership with Amphitheater and is pleased the next cohort is beginning this year at Prince Elementary.

9. 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 9. A.– K. be approved as presented. Mr. Kopec seconded the motion. Roll Call vote in favor – 5. President Zibrat, Vice President Day, Ms. Cox Golder, Dr. Gemma, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. Consent Agenda Items 9. A.-K. passed.

A. Approval of Appointment of Non-Administrative Personnel

Non-administrative personnel appointments were approved as listed in Exhibit 3.

B. Approval of Personnel Changes

Certified and classified personnel changes were approved as listed in Exhibit 4.

C. Approval of Leave(s) of Absence

Leave(s) of Absence were approved as listed in Exhibit 5.

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

Separations and Terminations were approved as listed in Exhibit 6.

E. Approval of Stipend for Coaching Volunteers

Stipend for Coaching Volunteers were approved as listed in Exhibit 7.

F. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Minutes from the August 26, 2026 Governing Board meeting were approved as submitted in Exhibit 8.

G. Approval of the 2025-2026 Organizational Chart

The Governing Board approved the 2025-2026 Organizational Chart as submitted in Exhibit 9.

H. Approval of Vouchers Totaling and Not Exceeding Approximately \$1,130,984.28

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 10.

Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount
1048	\$79,147.74	1049	\$15,788.19	1050	\$19,320.01
1051	\$112,593.23	1052	\$7,797.51	1054	\$251,690.28
1055	\$49,382.16	1056	\$332,924.30	1057	\$11,774.82
1058	\$4,016.01	1059	\$101,823.68	1060	\$144,726.35

I. Acceptance of Gifts

Gifts were accepted by the Governing Board as submitted in Exhibit 11.

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

The Governing Board approved CDO Football Touchdown Club, CDO Parent Organization, Nighthawk Parent Organization, Nighthawk Swim & Dive Booster, CDO International Baccalaureate, La Cima Middle School PTO, and IRHS School Theatre Booster as submitted in Exhibit 12.

K. Approval of Out of State Travel

The Governing Board approved requests for Out of State Travel as listed in Exhibit 13.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

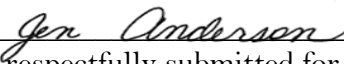
There was no public comment.

11. BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

President Zibrat moved to adjourn. Ms. Cox Golder seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Voice vote in favor – 5. President Zibrat, Vice President Day, Ms. Cox Golder, Dr. Gemma, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. The meeting adjourned at 7:58p.m.


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

September 26, 2025
 Date


Susan Zibrat, Governing Board President

October 14, 2025
 Date