



GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM AMPHITHEATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10

DATE OF MEETING: January 13, 2026

TITLE: Superintendent's Recommendation for School Closures and Consolidation

BACKGROUND:

This Agenda Item follows a year-long study process concerning the District's budget as impacted by multiple factors and concludes with this official recommendation and request for Governing Board authorization to close Copper Creek Elementary, Donaldson Elementary, Holaway Elementary, and Nash Elementary schools, effective at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 school year, and to consolidate their student populations and programs into neighboring "welcoming schools."

The Governing Board studied this same proposal at its December 9, 2025 meeting, at which time the Superintendent presented additional materials and information which remains available on the District's website, in the agenda documents from that meeting. It is therefore not repeated here but will only be briefly summarized.

Narrative and Rationale

For over 130 years, Amphitheater Public Schools has served as a cornerstone of the Tucson and Oro Valley communities. However, a convergence of historic demographic shifts and legislative changes has created a critical need for "right-sizing" our district to ensure long-term fiscal stability and the continued delivery of high-quality educational programs.

As detailed in the comprehensive reports previously presented (Board Exhibits 1.1 through 1.5 on December 9), the District – like others throughout the state – faces three primary challenges:

1. **Declining Birth Rates:** Arizona's birth rate has dropped by 36% since 2007, significantly reducing the "natural" pipeline of new students.
2. **Voucher Expansion (ESAs):** Within the Amphitheater boundaries, over \$13.5 million in funding is currently directed toward Empowerment Scholarship Accounts. This includes a recent \$1.7 million annual loss specifically from students transitioning from our public classrooms to private or micro-schools.
3. **Facility Underutilization:** The District currently maintains capacity for nearly 19,000 students but serves just under 11,000. Operating half-empty buildings or worse diverts millions of dollars away from other valuable classroom instruction and student services.

The Superintendent recognizes the profound emotional weight and historical significance of this recommendation. These schools are more than buildings; they are repositories of family memories and community identity. This recommendation is therefore made with a heavy heart but with a steadfast commitment to the "Promise of a Graduate"—ensuring that the resources saved by consolidation are reinvested into the remaining campuses to maintain our A-rated status, 1:1 technology, full-day kindergarten, and so many other programs and services vital to our community's children.

Summary of Recommended Consolidation

The following table outlines the proposed transition plan for the impacted school communities. These "welcoming schools" have been selected based on geographic proximity, capacity, and the preservation of existing feeder patterns.

Closing School	Primary Welcoming School(s)	Feeder Pattern Alignment
Copper Creek Elementary	Wilson K–8 / Harelson Elementary	Ironwood Ridge / CDO
Donaldson Elementary	Mesa Verde Elementary	Canyon del Oro (CDO)
Nash Elementary	Keeling Elementary / Walker Elementary	Amphitheater High
Holaway Elementary	Rio Vista Elementary	Amphitheater High

Key Rationale Indicators

The decision-making process was guided by the following data points, which illustrate the fiscal and operational necessity of consolidation:

Factor	Metric/Impact
Sudden Revenue Loss	\$4.3 Million (attributed to sharp single-year enrollment decline)
Total Facility Capacity	19,000 Students
Current Total Enrollment	~10,500 Students
Local Charter/Private Competition	21 Schools within District Boundaries
Staff Preservation Goal	100% (Vacancies created by natural attrition factors will be used to minimize impact to existing staff)

Community Sensitivity and Public Input

Throughout the year-long study process involving multiple stakeholder committees, as well as the recent community forums held in November 2025 at Ironwood Ridge, Canyon del Oro, and Amphi High Schools, the District received extensive feedback from families and staff. In direct response to this input, the Superintendent revised the initial proposal for Copper Creek to include **Wilson K-8** as a welcoming school, preserving the "sister campus" relationship with Harelson and providing a more stable, continuous learning environment for those families.

The District acknowledges the mourning process that accompanies the closure of a neighborhood school. To honor this history, the District is committed to:

- **Legacy Preservation:** Documenting the history of each closing site through commemorative events and archives.
- **Staff Stability:** Following Governing Board policy to ensure teachers and support staff are placed in new roles within the District, keeping familiar faces with their students whenever possible.
- **Repurposing with Care:** Ensuring that vacated facilities are maintained and eventually repurposed in a manner that remains an asset to the surrounding neighborhood.

Superintendent's Recommendation

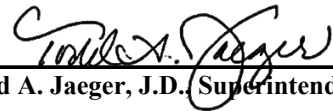
It is recommended that the Governing Board approve the closure of Copper Creek, Donaldson, Holaway, and Nash Elementary Schools effective June 2026. This action is necessary to safeguard the financial solvency and educational excellence of the District and to ensure that Amphitheater remains "Future Ready" for the next generation of students.

Over the course of the current school semester, substantial work will be undertaken by the District and its schools to ensure caring transition plans are developed and implemented for our students, staff and family to minimize disruption and honor the legacies we will always cherish.

RECOMMENDATION: The Administration recommends approval of the closures and consolidations presented.

INITIATED BY:

Date: January 6, 2026



Todd A. Jaeger, J.D., Superintendent