



November 18, 2025

Superintendent's Report





Pumpkins!



First-graders from Painted Sky Elementary visited a pumpkin patch a couple weeks of before Halloween. The field trip gave the students a chance to explore fall traditions, practice observation skills, and enjoy some time outdoors.





Halloween Fun



Wetmore had a wonderful time celebrating Halloween with kindergarteners from Prince, Nash and Walker — and with students from the Rillito Center! Halloween was filled with costumes, smiles and plenty of festive fun.

Students Sharing with Students



Canyon del Oro High School's Student Government invited Harelson Elementary School's Student Council to attend last month's CDO's homecoming spirit assembly, giving the younger leaders a chance to experience the energy of a high school pep rally. The Bobcats and Dorados had a blast, and Harelson's council walked away with fresh ideas for their next spirit assembly.



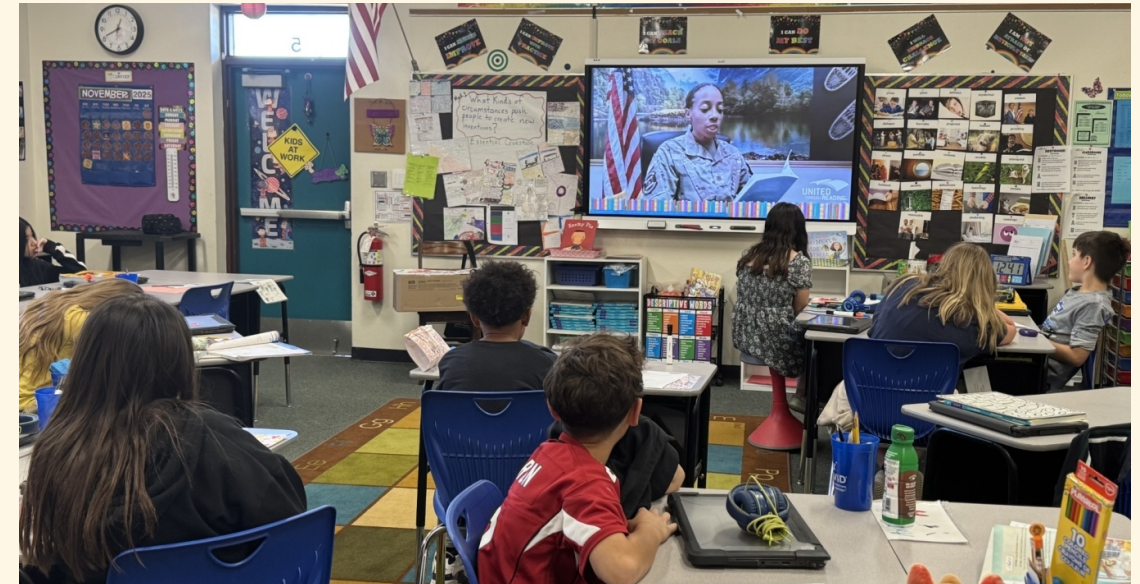
Olympic Champions!



Students from the Rillito Center hit the lanes recently for a Special Olympics bowling competition. The participants had a great time, and we love to see our students exploring activities and enjoying time together.



Honoring Those Who Served



Schools across the District honored Veterans Day with meaningful celebrations. Above, Wilson K–8's annual Veterans Day assembly, which brings the community together to recognize and thank our veterans. Top right, Holaway Elementary participated in a special program where deployed service members joined classrooms online to read to students. Bottom right, at Ironwood Ridge High School, Culinary Arts students helped cater the school's annual veterans assembly, showcasing their skills while serving those who have served our nation.





A Big Thank You



Realtor Lisa Bayless generously hosted a group of our outstanding middle and high school students at the Greater Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce State of the Town event, giving them a front-row look at local leadership and community collaboration.



This Is High School



Fifth-graders from Nash, Prince, Walker, Keeling, Rio Vista and Holaway visited Amphi High last week for "This is High School". The annual event allows students to explore the programs waiting for them in the years ahead.





This Is High School



Students from surrounding elementaries also got a chance to see what the future holds at This is High School at Ironwood Ridge last week. Thanks to our high school students for showing the fifth-graders the opportunities they will have as Nighthawks.



Update on Private School Vouchers

- Arizona's school voucher system (also known as "Empowerment Scholarship Accounts" recently hit some new records.
- The program offers parents state funding for private schooling (including "micro-private schools" which they establish in their homes, to be distinguished from traditional home schooling).
- According to the 24-25 4th Quarter Report from the Arizona Department of Education :
 - ADOE was issuing vouchers for 85,195 students across Arizona (but is now issuing 96,802, not even halfway through the current school year)
 - Total of vouchers (annualized basis) was \$881,662,142 (but now is over \$1 Billion -- an average of \$10,348 per private school student)
 - 11,100 items and services were purchased (funded) for voucher families



Update on Private School Vouchers

- Arizona's voucher program remains the least accountable and least transparent private school voucher program in the nation:
 - No safety oversight
 - No financial transparency
 - No academic accountability
- In fact, ADOE has instituted a policy which automatically approves any voucher purchases under \$2,000
- Investigative reporting (News 12, Phoenix) demonstrated vouchers are being used to purchase diamond rings and necklaces, luxury hotel stays, lingerie, hundreds of Apple iPhones, appliances, gift cards, and lots of big screen TVs.



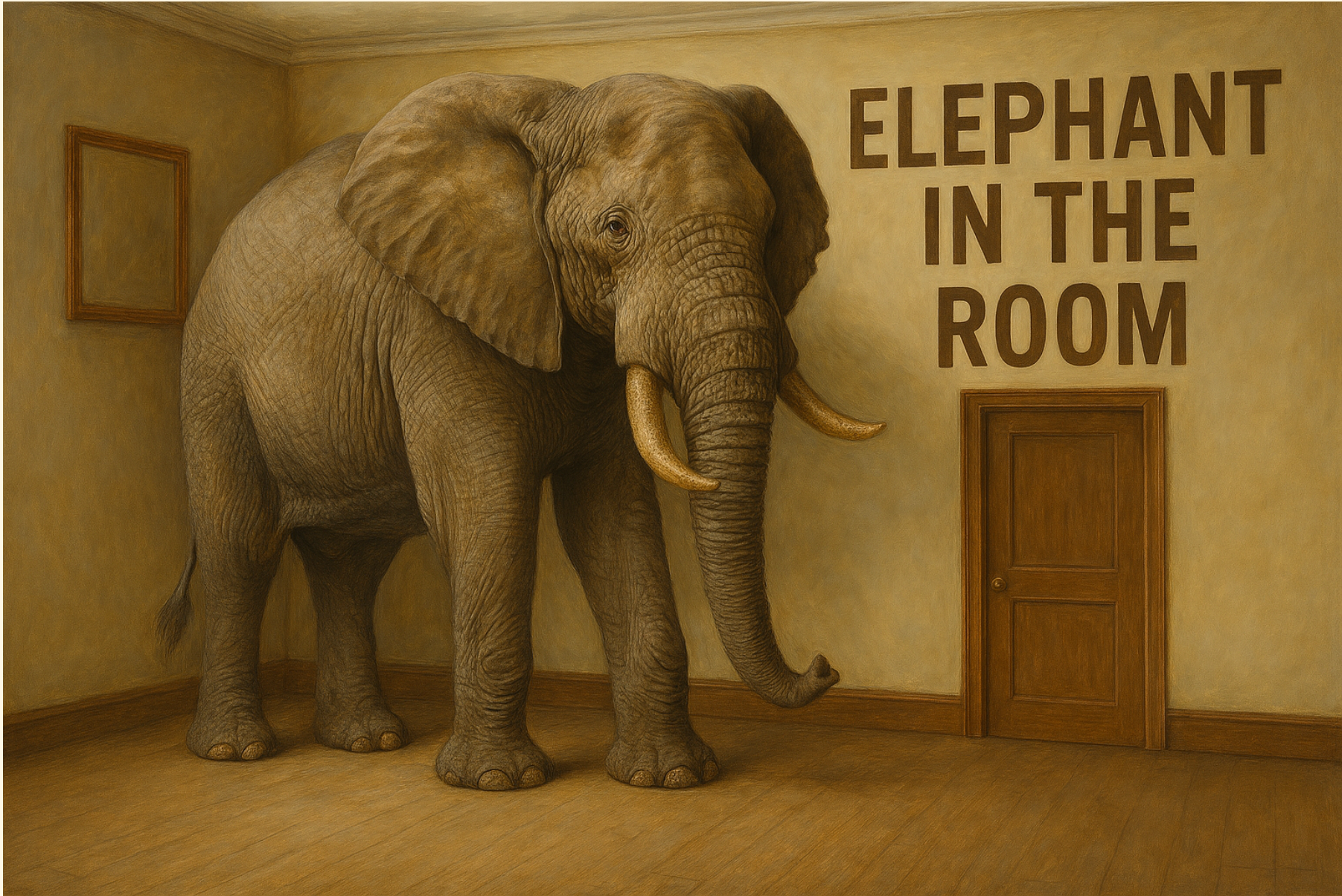
Update on Private School Vouchers

- When open vouchers were approved on party lines by the Republican Legislature and Governor (HB 2852 in 2022), they promised us the first three years of the program would cost taxpayers a total of \$222 million.
- The ACTUAL total cost over those first three years was TEN TIMES that at **\$2.2 billion**.
- Perspective: Arizona's entire annual K-12 budget is only \$8.3 billion -- often the lowest in the U.S.
- Vouchers are therefore siphoning off a full 12% of state education funding for less than 100,000 students, while the remaining 88% (or \$7.3 billion) funds education for 1.3 million public school students (districts and charters).
- Public schools therefore receive an average of \$5,615 per student, while voucher students receive an average of \$10,348 from the state.



Update on Private School Vouchers

- In 2024, parents/guardians of 1,367 students from within the Amphitheater boundaries received vouchers, amounting to more than \$9.5 million that would have funded public education if the students were enrolled in a public (district or charter) school.
- Regardless of public or voucher student status, funding of education in Arizona remains shamefully and shockingly far below the national average of \$17,074 spent per student.
- **Arizona spends 67% less per child.**





A Foundation in Law, Not Ideology

A Ninth Circuit Mandate:

- In *A.C. v. Shelton* and *S.L. v. San Diego Unified School District*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held that denying a transgender student access to facilities consistent with their gender identity constitutes illegal discrimination.
- And, in a recent U.S. Supreme Court action, the High Court allowed a transgender student to continue using school facilities consistent with their identity pending their review of the case.
- Our duty is to operate within the limits and requirements of the law. State law specifically requires that we do so, and we all take a sworn oath to do so.



The Epidemic of Hypocrisy

- Hypocrisy infects so many of our national conversations.
- We see examples everyday of people violating the law or interfering with its enforcement or application – which others decry.
- Yet, those same others, when confronted by a law with which *they* disagree would also violate it or interfere with it -- or perhaps demand that others do so.
- That is not the rule of law. That is the rule of selective convenience and compliance.



Addressing Concerns as We Can





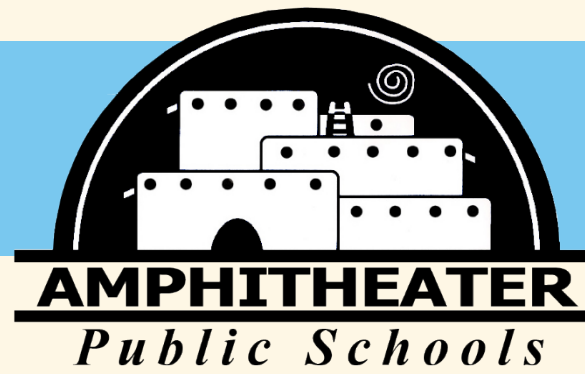
A Lesson from History



Consolidation Timeline

Amphitheater Consolidation Information Timeline





Thank you.

