

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Governing Board:

Ms. Taylor Bell
Mr. Frank Nevarez
Mr. Austin Babcock
Mr. Will David
Mr. Matthew Chavez

Also Present:

Melody Herne, Superintendent
Tari Garrison, Board Secretary
Dave Beery, Principal
Lynn Leonard, Financial Director
Gretchen Wesbrock, Dir. of Student Support
Services

Meeting Started at: 6:01 PM

I. OPENING

I.1. Call to Order

I.2. Roll Call

- President Bell – Here
- Vice President Nevarez – Here
- Member Babcock – Here
- Member David – Here
- Member Chavez – Here

I.3. Pledge of Allegiance

I.4. Moment of Silence

I.5. Adoption of Agenda

Motion to Adopt the Agenda as presented by Member Babcock, and seconded by Vice President Nevarez.

- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 5-0

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

II. STUDENT RECOGNITION

- Mingus Academics – Luke Shelton
- Mingus Academics – Allie Sabol
- English & Literature – Sofia Albert
- Science – Dana Prada
- Mathematics – Gianna Hawley
- Social Studies – Coco Zuniga
- Physical Education – Emma Cushman
- Foreign Language – D'Jean Fung
- Performing & Visual Arts – August Shea
- Career & Technical Education – Cameron Walker
- AVID – Elijah Ojeda
- Male Athlete – Silas Scott
- Female Athlete – Lana Booth
- Victory with Honors – Kate Poole

Senior Spotlights

- Senior – Sincere Logan

III. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Cafeteria Staff:

- Maria Hernandez
- Lupe Molina
- Saira Carabajal

IV. **REPORTS** -- The Superintendent and Board Member(s) reports will consist of brief summaries of current events. These reports will be without any discussion or feedback.

IV.1. **Superintendent's Report**

Student Recognition & Academic Achievement:

- Three students (Daemon Fox, Tania Kolomiets, Xavier Montgomery) selected for the *Civics Matters Leadership Challenge* and will travel to Washington, D.C. at no cost, marking the first time MUHS has participated.
- MUHS students competed in the HOSA State Leadership Conference (first year attending), with Kate Poole placing 5th in the state.

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

- Students earned awards in the Congressional Art Competition, including a 2nd place scholarship award and a People's Choice award.
- Multiple students recognized in MATFORCE contests (poster and essay), along with several honorable mentions.

CTE, Arts, and Programs:

- VACTE celebrated its 25-year anniversary, highlighting programs and announcing Superintendent Bob Weir's upcoming Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Strong participation and awards in the Verde Valley Fair, including numerous art and livestock recognitions and over \$839,000 raised in the youth livestock auction.
- Theatre, music, and performing arts programs were highlighted through:
 - ATORT support of a middle school musical
 - One Act Festival student performances
 - Final Band and Choir Concert
 - Continued success in the ASU Gammage High School Musical Theatre Awards (finalists in 7 categories).

Athletics & Activities:

- Track & Field athletes competed at the Division III State Championships, earning multiple medals including a gold in discus.
- Unified Volleyball season concluded with a championship game victory.
- Student-athlete Kaden Pusch signed to play baseball at Yavapai College.

Community & Student Engagement:

- "Meet the Bus" program introduced preschool students to bus safety and expectations.
- MUHS students supported community partnerships, including theatre collaboration with COCSD.

Staff Recognition:

- Coach Dave Moncibaez selected as a keynote speaker at the Glazer Football Clinic.

Upcoming Events:

- End-of-year activities include Athletics Night, Senior Honors Night, Senior Field Day, Graduation, and other senior events scheduled May 15–22.

I.V. 2. Board Member Report(s)-- Board Members will report on Performing Arts (ATORT's Something Rotten, Theatre Arts Classes One-Act Plays, and Choir & Band Concert), Verde Valley Fair, and athletics event participation

Member Babcock shared that, as a long-standing tradition, their family hosted a "carbo load" dinner for state track participants prior to the competition. This marked approximately the 20th time hosting student-athletes across multiple programs, including track, cross country, swim, and flag football. The member noted the positive experience of supporting and encouraging students ahead of the state meet in

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Phoenix. Additional recognition was given to the track team, noting that the girls' 4x4 relay team advanced to the finals, and another athlete placed 7th at the state competition.

Vice President Nevarez shared that they attended the Theatre Arts One Act Festival and were impressed by the portion they were able to see. The performances were described as outstanding, highlighting both the talent of the student actors and the technical skills of the stage crew, including sound and production. The member expressed appreciation to Mr. Ball and his team, noting the strength of the program and a bright future for the students.

President Bell shared that they attended the FFA Fair and noted that students performed very well. The presentation and participation of students were described as strong, continuing the program's tradition of success at the event.

Member Chavez shared that they attended the fair and enjoyed viewing the student animal exhibits and artwork. He also noted they have in the past participated by showing their chickens.

Member David shared that they attended many events, starting with the Verde Valley Fair, noting they come from a farming family and describing the experience of walking through the fair and being surrounded by animals. They shared that what was most delightful was seeing MUHS students showcased in every building and space, highlighting the artwork, energy, and professionalism of the students and how well they represented the district.

The member stated that attending these events has helped them become more a part of the community and described it as illuminating. They attended events with their wife, including all three One Act plays, the choir and band concert, and the musical *Something Rotten*, noting the performances were exceptional and still being talked about. He also shared that they often researches before attending performances, not for spoilers, but to "prime the pump" and better appreciate what they are about to see. They explained that this approach helps get their brain ready to fully engage with the experience. They specifically mentioned doing this for *Something Rotten*, using the Music Theatre International site to review the synopsis, content, and overall context.

They noted that this preparation enhanced their experience, especially since they are not typically familiar with Shakespearean works, and appreciated the historical and cultural context presented in the performance. They described the production as representing a pivotal moment in history where humanity was "trying to figure itself out," making it a meaningful and enjoyable experience.

The member clarified they are not a theater critic but spoke from a leadership perspective, sharing that with nearly 40 years of experience, they recognize the level of time, dedication, trust, and relationship-building required to produce high-quality performances. They emphasized that programs like *Something Rotten*, *Mamma Mia*, and others are a testament to the strong leadership of staff, the support of volunteers, and the talent and effort of the students, especially given the constant turnover and need to continually rebuild teams.

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

V. PRESENTATION AND INFORMATION

V.2. Student Council Presentation—Student Council members will provide an update on current and upcoming student body activities, including recognition of senior students (Staff: E. Gray).

Student Council provided an update recognizing senior members Dawson Rice, Isabel Clark, and Zahyra “Z” Cejudo for their leadership and contributions to the school community. Each student was highlighted for their dedication, service, and positive impact through involvement in school activities, leadership roles, and community engagement.

Student Council expressed appreciation for the seniors’ commitment, noting their lasting influence on the school and the positive example they have set for others.

V.3. AVID Information - AVID students will present how the AVID program has impacted and benefited their educational journey. (Staff: P Bodam)

The AVID program reported strong student success, with 22 seniors planning to attend college and students completing 156 college applications and 791 scholarship applications.

Students participated in multiple college visits and benefited from a variety of guest speakers, while also receiving support through grant funding for classroom resources.

The program highlighted that 80% of MATFORCE winners are AVID students and noted continued growth in student participation, along with summer opportunities including internships, college courses, and service trips.

V.4 . Key Club--Members will present their final FY2026 Key Club Report (Staff: Ms. Rose).

Key Club reported growth in membership and increased student involvement, with participation rising from 17 to 22 members and service hours expanding from over 19 to more than 60 hours.

Students participated in a variety of events throughout the year, including Freshman Night, STEAM Night, a Scholastic Book Fair with over 70 books donated to the community, and other school activities.

The club recognized graduating seniors and shared goals for the upcoming year, including expanding membership, continuing the book fair, and developing a signature service project.

V.3. Other Information for Reading -- May 2026 MUHS Newsletter

VI. BOARD MEETING MINUTES NOT PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

VI.1. Meetings –

Member David

stated that the minutes are an important representation of what occurs at board meetings and are the only official documented record. He expressed concern that the current minutes do not adequately capture the

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

gravity of the April 23rd meeting and, as part of the official record, should be corrected for future reference.

Member David

made a motion to amend the minutes to include two components that are presently lacking. First, he requested that the minutes reflect more of the content, if not a full transcription, of the Call to the Public, stating it is important to document precisely what occurred. Second, he requested that the minutes include a statement noting that the Board chose not to take action.

He further noted that while public comments may include constructive and sometimes critical feedback, they are important and reflect First Amendment rights. He also referenced Open Meeting Law obligations, emphasizing the Board's responsibility to allow the community to speak and to preserve that record.

Member Chavez

agreed with Member David's request to Amend the April 23rd Board Meeting minutes.

Vice President Nevarez

stated that he appreciated Member David's comments and clarified for the record that he was not present at the April 23rd meeting.

Superintendent Herne

reminded attendees that a board meeting is for the Board to conduct business and requested that the public refrain from interfering with the meeting.

A point of order was made noting that a motion and a second had been presented to amend the minutes based on Member David's recommendations.

Member Babcock

asked about prior advice from legal counsel and if amending the minutes would be going against guidance that was given

Superintendent Herne

stated legal counsel advised that amending the minutes as requested would not go against prior legal guidance but cautioned the Board to proceed carefully to avoid potential Open Meeting Law concerns. At that time, a motion and second were on the table to approve the minutes as amended.

Motion to Amend April 23, 2026, Minutes as presented by Member David, and seconded by Member Chavez

- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

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MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Information--The governance team would like to remind the public that while open call to the public serves as an opportunity for community members to express concerns, support, and ideas, it is important to follow the proper chain of command when reporting issues. Please reference the District and School administration and the website for proper chain of command and direct matters to the proper staff members.

VII. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – At the conclusion of the call to the public, Board members may respond to any criticism made by an individual who addressed the Board. Board members may also direct staff to review the concern or request the item be discussed at a future meeting. Board members may not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during this open call to the public. If you have submitted a Request to Speak form, the Board President will call upon you and ask that you please identify yourself by clearly stating for the record your name and address. Citizens are asked to restrict their comments to three (3) minutes. Groups wishing to speak should select a spokesperson to represent the view of the group. (Board President may refrain from reciting this section if no RTS forms have been submitted).

President Bell stated that there were 30 requests to speak, allowing for a total of 30 minutes for Call to the Public, with 3 minutes for each person. It was suggested that individuals consider 1 representative if it is a large group to speak for them or shortening their time. A reminder was given that this is an open public meeting and that all attendees must remain orderly and respectful. It was noted that a School Resource Officer was present if needed.

The Call to the Public was then opened

1. **Chip Curry:**

Mr. Ball changes the lives of students because that is what he does. He took a program that was once minimal and turned it into something meaningful. Using a sports analogy, it is like a Super Bowl-level team, showing the growth and success that has been achieved. There are individuals in the community who may feel overlooked or ostracized, but efforts are made to ensure people are supported and given the opportunity to succeed.

2. **David Lawson:**

OK, I guess that I should have considered myself warned but **when I got our** tickets to something named *Something Rotten*. We have attended several Mingus High School productions in the past, so my wife and I were looking forward to this. That, I'm walking out in disgust and disappointment before the intermission. First, the amount of profanity—not just sexual innuendo, but over sexual language and references. It was mockingly stated that someone would be offended by men dressing like women and boys kissing boys. About the time that you began mocking Christians and the Bible was around the time that we'd had enough. It seems as though the Bible isn't allowed to be taught in school—it is dismissed, it is ignored—and it's OK. way. That would be awful. There was a script writer somewhere who thought that the numerous

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

profanities and sexual content was a great idea and decided to push the envelope. It makes me wonder if this script, before it was approved for presentation at high schools—13, 14, 15, 16—I really wonder about high school students of these ages, enrolled to learn math, science, and history, having to rehearse these lines over and over until they become natural to them. I'm saying it's not a great idea. I had four of my kids graduate from Mingus. I know that I would not have wanted any of that to be schooled in a production like this, so heavily laced with profanity and sexual content. I actually appreciate the foundation of this land seeking religious freedom, and I actually love and respect the Bible. I've purchased many tickets through the years for myself, for family, and friends. I'm sad and disappointed, and I know I won't be doing that anymore.

3. **Sean Morris:**

My name is Sean Morris, and I graduated high school in 2003. My dad graduated Mingus High School in 1965. I was born in this town. My grandmother is buried in the soil of this town. My mother died in this town—that was the most difficult emotional experience of my life—but I was comforted by the fact that that was the natural progression of life. Adult children are supposed to mourn the passing of their parents, and not the other way around. In the 10 years that I've known James, countless young people say, I have heard, "James Ball saved my life. James Ball saved my child's life." It goes beyond the accolades and awards. It goes beyond spending the right dance steps, or memorizing the right lines, or singing the right notes. In a world that feels out of sync, he is helping kids find their voice and find their purpose. He gives them an opportunity to take their pain and turn it into something beautiful, empowering the next generation. At this moment, I would like to pull out this bobblehead of James as a reminder of everything I just said. This was a gift to James from Angelo Catalano. It was delivered to James by Angelo's best friend with the news that he took his own life. I find so much meaning when I look at this bobblehead because it means the work will never stop. The hours and the moments are worth it because James has been called by God to do this work. Anyone who would stand in the way of this man's work, anyone who would bear false witness and slander his name, are sending a message—and that message is they don't care if our kids live or die.

4. **Maureen Nealon**

For the last two decades, I have gone to performances each year, and they have been most entertaining and thought-provoking. The point of thought-provoking and entertainment reports—what theater is all about—is to entertain us and also to make us grow as human beings, and to limit that is striking and saddening. James Ball has put together a program that enables students to move into their lives with confidence. They can go out on the stage, prove themselves, be approved, and be comfortable, and he has given that to them. I cannot imagine that we would want to take that away from them. But the one thing James Ball has not done is groom students.

5. **Mike Westcott**

I would like to comment on remarks made during the Call to the Public at the previous Board Work Session on April 23rd. As a colleague of Mr. James Ball and former Superintendent of the district, I believe the inflammatory, baseless attacks on Mr. Ball's character were both irresponsible and harmful—not only to him personally, but to the culture of trust and excellence we strive to maintain in this district. James's enthusiasm for his subject matter and his success as an educator reflect the long tradition of excellence at Mingus. His ability to inspire students has

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

helped build an award-winning program that has made a meaningful difference in many students' lives. Like many great curricular and extracurricular programs, there are students whose presence here may be solely due to the programs James has built. I am proud of Mingus, incredibly proud of James, and the positive impact he has had on our school and community. I strongly urge this Board, in the appropriate manner, to express your support for James as well.

6. Anita Glazer

My entire career has been in Mingus High School, where I served as a teacher, counselor, and department chair. I also served on the school board for eight years, including four years as president. I know this school intimately. While there has always been some level of controversy over the years, including compared to what is being addressed here tonight, resorting to such clichéd accusations against a dedicated teacher only highlights how flimsy and baseless these claims truly are, especially with zero evidence to support them. Mr. Ball has been my friend and colleague for many years. He is a wonderful ambassador for the school. He is talented, he is gifted, he is kind, respectful, and professional—he is a good man. I cherish him. I believe all teachers should be cherished, but right now I am talking about Mr. Ball. To threaten a teacher of his caliber with such vicious, evidence-free rumors is unworthy of a public hearing and runs counter to fairness and truth. If I were in James's shoes, I would use every legal resource available to defend my good name, protect my livelihood, and hold those responsible for these false accusations accountable. False witness must not go unanswered. And I thank you for putting this into your record.

7. Becky Koek

My husband and I were teachers for 70-plus years together. We know the challenges of keeping our students interested in school. Our ATORT department does that—it's open and welcoming to all students, thanks to Mr. Ball. He was voted Theatre Teacher of the Year in 2014 and 2023. We taught here in 1980 and returned in the 2020s, and we kept hearing about the ATORT department—and I'm not easily impressed—but our ATORT students blew me out of the water. If I even had the slightest thought of, "Oh, they'll never be able to do that," oh yes they will—and they did it amazingly. Award-winning—*Something Rotten* was just... it was phenomenal. The show premiered in 2017 and had already received 10 Tony Award nominations. Let's keep providing opportunities for our students to set goals, work hard on them, and change the world for the better. The one concern I have—only read for *Something Rotten*—was how can I get my kids to learn to tap dance? Maybe ask Mr. Ball. Please support every student program that we can.

8. Ralph Fobair

I met James Ball in 2007. I was Technical Director here at that point in time. I couldn't support his program with grant funds, but in 2014 that changed when we had the stagecraft program. James is amazing. He reminds me of Walt Disney—like, "If you can dream it, you can do it"—and that's what he did. He replaced a speaker system from the 1970s that sounded terrible, and now it's immersive—things, all the sound, all the lights, the laser, the smoke, the digital microphones—it just goes on and on because he teaches these kids about state-of-the-art technology. Oh, and he's kind, he's honest, he's wonderful. He imparts skills into students like

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

leadership and responsibility. I retired in 2023, so I decided I'm going to substitute—I want to stay connected with these kids. Just as recently as May, I filled in for him, and those kids were amazing. I got to hear three different one-act plays—the dedication, the spirit—I say he is one of my heroes.

9. Aileen Green

I had three children go to Mingus—one is here right now to honor this amazing man. Actually, one of my kids is now a music competition director, inspired by Mr. Ball. If you know where our kids are, they're in here, where they're engaged and busy and productive with the guidance of a man who gives so much of his personal passion and love for his work, together to provide music and dance and laughter, to provide a sense of dedication and perseverance—of love, not hate and discrimination. This allows us to create community—a safe place where everyone can be who they are. The irony in this whole situation is that these children feel safe here, and some of the churches, as they're condemned and judged—not by God, not by my God—but by the self-righteous, holier-than-thou who flock to persecute fellow souls. So to hear the accusations of people calling Mr. Ball a groomer makes me physically sick. How dare they slander such a beautiful man. To sum up, Mr. Ball is one of the best things to ever happen to Mingus. He supports parents and provides a place for all students who want to come and be part of the best high school productions in Arizona, allowing students to earn multiple awards they can add to their resumes as they graduate and move into their own lives. Does this sound like someone who is indoctrinating children in a negative fashion? I think not. So one quote from my favorite creator, Oscar Wilde: “Those who find ugliness in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming... Those who find beauty in beautiful things are the cultivated...”

10. DK Green

Thanks to Mr. Ball's years of dedication and personal sacrifice, countless former students have gone on to become confident, successful members of society. Regarding the individuals spreading ignorance and bigotry in a public setting—it is bad enough—but to thinly disguise it is especially concerning. Accusing Mr. Ball of grooming simply because a high school musical included humor that some in the community did not like is absolutely sickening. It is reckless, and it is defamatory. And to you, sir—that young man in the dress—that was my son. This program is more than an extracurricular activity. For many of these kids, it is a safe place. When they do not find encouragement or acceptance at home, they find it here. They find it in your program. You now have a responsibility to condemn the hateful remarks that have been made. If the Board is silent to these personal attacks on Mr. Ball, they can only be interpreted as acceptance of that behavior. Make it loud and clear that personal attacks, hateful rhetoric, and baseless accusations against faculty will not be tolerated.

11. Katie Ventura

I'm here as a mom, my son attended Mingus several years back and was involved with theater with James Ball throughout his years here, and with all his amazing experience, there was no surprise when my daughter, this year as a freshman, decided she wanted to be a part of this amazing leader of the community. Excluding students or teachers to appease specific groups violates educational equity and non-discrimination policies. Mr. Ball, as a professional with excellent student engagement, adheres to educational standards of equity and inclusion. Theater requires stepping into different perspectives, which directly combats prejudice. Allowing outside groups to dictate who is welcome in a classroom, or whether Shakespeare—or any other play for

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

that matter—is appropriate, actively harms our children. Not supporting an amazing teacher is detrimental to our school, our children, and this community.

12. Paula Herald

I understand clearly there's been a lot of online chatter about public comments made at the last board meeting—comments based on hearsay about the theater production. I was on the committee which approved the play, we discussed in detail the appropriate content and language and how to modify it, and I am confident Mr. Ball took those actions.

That is not the problem here tonight, though. The Board, when addressed during open comments, cannot respond—they are not allowed. That was just read to you. Just because a community member, any of us, makes a statement does not mean the Board agrees, and it does not mean they condone it. It is a public person making a statement. To put all of this on the Board is disgusting. I understand many of you in the room have taken this to Facebook to further discuss the situation. You likely think you're supporting Mr. Ball, but in my opinion, you are only drawing more attention to the comments and giving them credence where they may not deserve it. The Board heard the comments, but just because they did not take action, they are not allowed to speak during the meeting. Random opinions do not make something true. So here we are again, with all this misinformation, anger, and time spent on drama, when we should be focusing on the betterment of students and their futures. It is time for all of us to look in the mirror and recognize how we may be contributing to this divisiveness. I want to thank the Board for volunteering their time and being patient when anyone can get up to speak, even when those comments may be antagonistic. Finally, I encourage administration to hold a more training session for MUHS teachers and staff so everyone understands the laws that the Board is constrained by. Personally, I am very disappointed that you all voted to add the comments to the meeting record. Elevating those comments gives them credence, and I am not sure that is what we want. Now this creates a precedent for every single public comment at each meeting.

Call to the Public concluded after the allotted 30-minute time period.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS – CONSENT

Approval of Routine Vouchers

Expense

Voucher 1040

Voucher 1041

Voucher 1042

. Payroll

Voucher 30

Bookstore Activity—Account Summary

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Personnel - HR Report

HR Report-v1.2 May 14, 2026

PA-1

PA-2

PA-3

PA-4

PA-5

PA-6

PA-7

PA-8

Donation

VIII.3.1. Hope Center Report

Agreements

Sole Source -- Sole Source procurement requirement for FY2026. Sole Source list for FY2026 and FY2027 with updated template for each vendor and if applicable Sole Source letter from vendor. Submitted for approval for FY2026 and FY2027.

Job Description — Board Approval of the following job descriptions:

- English Language (EL) Teacher
- Assistant Coach

Policy Second Read-- Policy Advisory Volume 38, Number 2

FY2027 VACTE and MUHS CTED --Board approval for FY 26-27 CTE courses offered by MUHS and VACTE

Approval of Classified Employment Renewals-Attachment

2026-2027 Board Approval Classified Hourly and Salary Revised CTED.

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda as presented by **President Bell**, and seconded by **Member Chavez**

- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 5-0

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

IX. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

IX.1. MUHS Academic Senate-- Updates on work completed during FY2025-2026 (Staff: Director Wesbrock).

Attachments: (1)

The Academic Senate presentation provided an overview of its purpose as a student-led group that serves as a channel for student voice, allowing students to share classroom experiences and provide input on school practices and initiatives.

Student senators representing each grade level include:

- Seniors: Lana Booth, Emma Chapman, Cade Coughlin, Zach Myers, Quinn Wright
- Juniors: Ashlynn Cooper, Cristian Vargas
- Sophomores: Lane Armstrong, Maebel Badger, Rachel Rudert
- Freshmen: Payton Maldonado, Gracie Wesbrock

The program emphasizes gathering feedback, making recommendations to improve instruction and school culture, and promoting student engagement and ownership of learning.

IX.2. Yavapai College Early College Academy - Current students will present to the Board their experience with the YC Early College Academy (Staff: Ms. S. Garcia and MUHS Students.)

The Early College Academy (ECA) presentation highlighted a partnership with Yavapai College that allows MUHS seniors to enroll full-time in college courses and earn approximately 25–30 college credits during their senior year.

The program provides a supportive environment with access to college resources and workshops, while offering a smaller learning community and affordable cost for students.

It was noted that students who complete the program are still considered first-year college students after graduation, providing advantages for scholarships and future academic opportunities.

X. ACTION ITEMS - DISTRICT BUSINESS

Final FY2026 Budget Revision - Consideration and possible approval of the final FY2026 budget revision (Staff: Lynn Leonard).

The FY2026 Budget Revision was presented, noting a decrease in student enrollment (ADM) by 23 students, resulting in a slight reduction to the Revenue Control Limit.

Overall revenue increased by approximately \$125,110 due to adjustments including override funding, carryforward funds, and one-time state aid and FRPL funding.

District Additional Assistance (capital) increased by \$37,503, and teacher salary data showed MUHS remains competitive within Yavapai County.

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Additional notes highlighted that state budget information is pending, Arizona ranks low in per-pupil spending compared to national averages, and funding levels significantly impact district resources.

Finance Director Leonard

The beginning of the year we do produce budget we do an adoptive budget and then throughout the year change your locks and I keep track of them and I do give you updates I don't think there's anything surprising in this presentation, you know that means we lost money but we have a strong carry forward we also have the one time saving and the FRPL so we ended the year at \$125,000. Any questions?

Member David

one question, it looks like that you know we have these supplements that came yes and it seems like that really made a difference so we had the free lunch you know supplement we have the state aid supplement right all that right and that seems to to be larger than the number of revenue that we got I'm watching I'm looking at the state budget right now and and it's not obviously we're in the approval window who knows whether that's actually going to happen are we postured for the first part of the year absent from the national budget area really good for the new year absent having the state actually hit the past month? Secondly are we too reliant on these one off you know free lunch program and supplemental and things that we're going to that one time?

Finance Director Leonard

It should be permanent supposed to be permanent and I have been told I go to business meetings throughout the year and we have been told to expect again this time so if it does not like yeah it's gonna have an impact but as I mentioned last board meeting with the Nutrition, we have we're going to have a large buffer so we're poised we're going to be OK we're probably that's one of my slides later on points out that it's not likely to be set from the time that I'm going to be proposing so I'll be posting on the old forms with the old base level probably increase our ADM on board anticipate because I wanted to capture that tax we're not capturing taxes this will be the third year we grow if we propose a budget and our tax rate is based on the proposed budget so this coming year although we are going to use that 1100 I'll probably do it a little bit higher to make sure that we capture the taxes that we need to capture Next, district additional assistance this is our capital we adopted at 1.166 million the actual budget for 1.2 million up by about 37 and we're fine with capital and we're going to have it average teacher salaries so I just thought it was interesting based on some comments that were made last board meeting and this comes from the Auditor General Classroom Spending Report and it pretty much shows that we are in the top 20 this year and we have been for three out of five years, now you have to take some of this with a grain of salt because everybody codes differently but if you've ever seen our chart of accounts it's about this thick and the opportunity to miscode on purpose or by accident is very easy and so the Auditor General has tightened that down and this year 2025 is probably more accurate than previous years because they really

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

restricted how we can report teacher salaries and there's not as much flexibility as it used to be so I believe that we're now comparing apples to apples rather than apples to oranges

Member David

My concern with these numbers even apples to apples is the following so my research is specifically the National Education Association partnered with various state departments and what they concluded is that if you look at year over year salaries have in fact increased and that looks great on paper here's the reality a 2026 salary because of inflation equates to a 2017 baseline and that is lost when we constantly say look it's rising, it's rising but it's not keeping pace with inflation we're actually losing we are 5% lower there's only one state in the union that has beaten us and that's Washington state has pegged salaries for teachers to inflation rates so yes it sounds good but I just want to make sure everybody understands we're losing this fight even though the reporting shows salaries increasing.

Finance Director Leonard

On the positive note we are 20th out of 205 schools in the state and we are competitive for classroom site funds and in Yavapai County only Clarkdale and Seligman pay more and by the way the average salary for 24-25 was \$72,710.

Next, so we've already talked about this we're not anticipating the budget for the state until after June 1st so pretty much when I propose I'm using the base level and then I always love to bring this up the Census Bureau 2024 average per pupil spending is \$17,619 in Arizona the average is \$12,000 only ahead of Idaho and Utah based on current ADM if we received just the average we would get another \$6 million What we need to do with that is to support teacher salaries and stay above inflation and the other thing that we struggle with which isn't always talked about is minimum wage which has gone up significantly over the last 20 years but our problem is even though we place staff on a salary schedule based on experience they often remain in the same placement relative to the schedule because minimum wage keeps rising and that creates challenges and concerns from staff

Member David

Do you have any recommendations, is there a solution?

Superintendent Herne noted that while there is a protocol in place there is not currently a formal policy guiding this issue and that may need to be developed moving forward

Financial Director Leonard

My final thing is just if you have any questions on the budget and I just want to remind everybody that this is a tool this is to make sure that we get as much revenue as possible we can I try to prepare it with integrity at the beginning of the year but when I'm preparing I don't always know what staffing levels will be so this is my best estimate and the most important part is capturing the revenue the annual financial report in October will reflect actual spending

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Member David

Noted that declining enrollment is primarily due to lower birth rates and in-migration patterns not loss to other schools and that the available student pool is shrinking

Superintendent Herne

Yes, you are correct, there are still people out there that think it's something else, and I showed the data — it's not something else. It is exactly what you have said. And so, okay, if there are things that we have talked about, items as we roll out our strategic plan that we're going to be very strategic about, but you know, we only have the pool that is here to select from

President Bell

Any other questions or comments

Motion to Approve The Final FY2026 Budget Revision as presented by President Bell, and seconded by Member David

- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 5-0

XI. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member Babcock

I would like to request for all public comments that they should be in the record here and forever and I also think we need to tighten up that people state their name and their full address for the record.

Member David

Asking about status of AP courses and testing — where are we, where do we think we're going to get an assessment of that so we can, you know, rationalize our approaches to different aspects. We got great programs — how do we make that full threat against both smart and not wishing it actually targets others. And this is, and to echo Board Member Babcock, I think at some point we're going to have to agendize the Call to the public protocol discussion,

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 PM

Motion to **Approve Adjournment** as presented by **Member Babcock**, and seconded by **Member Chavez**

- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 5-0

Meeting Ended at 8:34

Board President

Board Vice President
