

**Minutes of the Special Governing Board Meeting
Amphitheater Public Schools
Tuesday, January 28, 2025**

A Special public meeting of the Governing Board of Amphitheater Public Schools was held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, beginning at 5:30 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. Patricia Harris, Member
Mr. Matthew A. Kopec, Member

Governing Board Members Absent

Ms. Deanna M. Day, M. Ed., Vice President
Ms. Vicki Cox Golder, 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. Scott Little, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. John Hasting, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Richard C. La Nasa, Executive Manager of Operational Support
Ms. Elizabeth Jacome, Director of Curriculum and 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 AND SIGNING OF THE VISITOR'S REGISTER

President Zibrat called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and invited members of the audience to sign the guest register.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Motion to Recess Open Meeting and Hold an Executive Session for

A. Consideration and Determination of Appeal of Long-term Suspension/Expulsion Hearing Officer's Decision Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-843(A), Regarding Student # 30046114

Mr. Kopec moved that the Board go into an Executive Session to address the matters identified in Item 2. of the Board's agenda and pursuant to the legal authorities listed on the agenda under Item 2. Ms. Harris seconded the motion. Voice vote in favor- 3. President Zibrat, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed-0.

President Zibrat proclaimed they were in Executive Session at 5:30 p.m.

3. RECONVENE PUBLIC MEETING

President Zibrat reconvened the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Harris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

President Zibrat announced that the next Regular Governing Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., at the Wetmore Center, 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson AZ 85705 in the Leadership & Professional Development Center.

6. INFORMATION

A. Review of Auditor General's School District Financial Risk Analysis Report-January 2025

Superintendent Jaeger thanked the administrative staff for attending the meeting for this important discussion. He asked Mr. Little to explain what the Auditor General's report means and he noted that this is the first time Amphitheater has been placed "At Risk" on any measure evaluated by the Auditor General.

Mr. Little stated that this data was just released by the Auditor General's office, so it was included in tonight's agenda as it relates to the next agenda item regarding enrollment. He spoke about the history of this report and its function of identifying and analyzing trends so school districts could be proactive in addressing issues. Mr. Little explained that the report is set up as an interactive website rather than a hard copy report. He went on to discuss the data for Pima County school districts as well as different measures the report explores including changes in student count, amount in capital reserves, capital monies transferred to maintenance and operations, and fund balance changes.

Mr. Little stated that Amphitheater is considered high risk in two measures, the first being Change in Weighted Student Count which is related to declining enrollment (a 4.5% drop). The second measure refers to a 40% drop in capital reserves. He explained that capital reserves were built up during the pandemic due to the ability to make expenditures out of ESSER funds provided by the federal government. Mr. Little noted that those reserves were spent in the last year on curriculum adoptions and roofing projects but were planned expenditures.

Mr. Little stated that the district's student count is the actual concern which leads to the next agenda item.

The Governing Board gave their approval to move on to the next item for the sake of continuity.

B. Review of Enrollment Projections and Actual Enrollment for Current (2024-2025) School Year

Mr. Little shared that enrollment numbers have been monitored for a long time and there have been consistent minor decreases in enrollment for the last twenty years. He referred to a table in his report illustrating Average Daily Membership (ADM) and the change in net student changes each year. Mr. Little noted the District was able to manage declines as they occurred, but there was a large drop in 2021 due to COVID and then a recovery and stabilization until 2023 which is when the Empowerment Scholarships began in Arizona. He stated that although numbers change daily, Amphitheater is looking at a 482 student drop from last year which represents a decline of 4.33% compared to FY2024. He went on to say that the concern is that the District operates on a current year funding model which means we don't know our revenues until the year is over with. Mr. Little stated we base our budget on projections, but the budget as we adopted it leaves about a \$3.6 million shortfall for the current year given the decline in enrollment. He explained that there are reserves to cover this shortfall on a short-term basis, but solutions for managing a long-term decline need to be explored.

Mr. Little showed birth rate data and how the trends in that data match what is happening in the District in regard to enrollment numbers. From 2007 to 2021, the birth rate dropped 33%. He stated that when Empowerment Scholarships first began, Amphitheater's enrollment was not greatly affected as they were mostly utilized by students already enrolled in private institutions. However, in the last year, the scholarships have begun to pull students away from public school.

Mr. Little went on to say that Amphitheater is not alone in this struggle and many other districts in Arizona are experiencing a drop in enrollment. He spoke about Mesa School

District's experience of declining enrollment and their completion of an intensive demographic study. Mr. Little also referenced the opinion news article that he included with his Board item which explores the enrollment issue state-wide. He stated that part of the reason Amphitheater is experiencing the decline more profoundly than other districts is our proximity to a number of private or alternative institutions that accept Empowerment Scholarships. Mr. Little noted that most recently Phoenix Elementary is looking at closing two more schools that have been kept open the past few years with ESSER funds.

Mr. Little said that this is the beginning of the conversation about where to go from here in terms of creating the equilibrium between revenues and expenditures given that the birth rate data a continuing decline in new student cohorts. He stated that data suggests the 2025 graduating class will be a peak, with a steady decline for each class thereafter.

Mr. Little concluded with stating he wanted everyone to be as informed as possible about the realities of this situation and while Amphitheater is not alone in its struggles, the decline is severe enough to warrant action. He offered to answer any questions.

President Zibrat said that maybe the state needs to address Empowerment Scholarships and perhaps the funding formula should be changed. She thanked Mr. Little for keeping everyone informed.

Mr. Kopec said he suspected this would be the first of many conversations to be had in dealing with this new reality. He thanked Mr. Little for his clear and easy to understand presentation.

Superintendent Jaeger stated that recurring communication on this issue should be expected by the Governing Board and the community over the next several months. He reiterated that the District has to adjust spending in the short term as well as long term to ensure an equilibrium between revenues and expenditures. Superintendent Jaeger promised transparency in this process, sharing information in a timely way, and involving as many stakeholders as possible. He noted he has been sharing enrollment information in each of his Listening Tours at school sites and in the various advisory groups he maintains.

Superintendent Jaeger spoke about the history of enrollment from the late 90's when most schools didn't have the physical capacity to hold all of their students, but then the advent of charter schools began to impact public school enrollment. He noted that the sharp decline this year is most likely due to the use of Empowerment Scholarships and expressed some doubt as to whether the state fully understands the impact those scholarships are having. Superintendent Jaeger spoke about a proposed bill that would set some controls on the scholarships but would not have an effect on the current funding levels of them. He reiterated that short and long-term solutions are needed to address these trends. He concluded that the District has weathered previous crises and reiterated his commitment to take care of the people of this District by telling the truth in a timely way and bringing as many people to the table to explore solutions as possible.

Ms. Harris asked about the urgency in taking action during this fiscal year.

Superintendent Jaeger asked Mr. Little to summarize short-term actions versus long-term actions.

Mr. Little stated a lot of factors influence solutions such as the future of Empowerment Scholarships, the renewal of Prop 123, and the possibility of contingent revenues being frozen by the federal government. He noted that the District was in good shape for this

school year and if expenditure issues start being addressed he would feel comfortable about our financial situation through the next fiscal year as well, but it's hard to project much farther than that. Mr. Little concluded that there is a lot of work to be done.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

8. 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](#)

Mr. Kopec moved for Consent Agenda Items 8. A. -N. be approved as presented. Ms. Zibrat seconded the motion. Voice vote in favor – 3. President Zibrat, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. Consent Agenda Items 8. A.-N. passed.

A. Approval of Appointment of Non-Administrative Personnel

Non-Administrative personnel appointments were approved as listed in Exhibit 1.

B. Approval of Personnel Changes

Certified and classified personnel changes were approved as listed in Exhibit 2.

C. Approval of Leave(s) of Absence

Approval of Leave(s) of Absence were approved as listed in Exhibit 3.

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

Separations and terminations were approved as listed in Exhibit 4.

E. Approval of Stipend for Coaching Volunteers

Stipend for Coaching Volunteers were approved as listed in Exhibit 5.

F. Approval of Vouchers Totaling and Not Exceeding Approximately \$1,719,895.33

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 6.

Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount
1192	\$148,034.56	1193	\$187,507.83	1194	\$7,427.68
1195	\$134,519.96	1196	\$270,353.45	1197	\$312,485.13
1198	\$5,713.03	1200	\$108,880.97	1201	\$83,077.08
1202	\$5,178.98	1203	\$47,689.34	1204	\$210,347.45
1205	\$198,679.87				

G. Acceptance of Gifts

Gifts were accepted by the Governing Board as submitted in Exhibit 7.

H. Approval of Parent Support Organization(s) – 2024-2025

The Governing Board approved CDO OM Boosters for the 2024-2025 school year as submitted in Exhibit 8.

I. Receipt of December 2024 Report on School Auxiliary and Club Balances

The Governing Board approved Receipt of December 2024 Report on School Auxiliary and Club Balances as submitted in Exhibit 9.

J. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Governing Board approved the minutes from the December 10, 2024 and January 14, 2025 Governing Board meetings as submitted in Exhibit 10.

K. Approval of Arizona Department of Administration School Facilities Division Building Renewal Grants

The Governing Board approved the Arizona Department of Administration School Facilities Division Building Renewal Grants as submitted in Exhibit 11.

L. Approval of Revisions to Governing Board Policies 4-102.A (Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers), 4-106 (Professional Staff Reduction in Force), Professional Staff Reduction in Force Profile Form and 4-106.A (Professional Staff Reduction in Force)

The Governing Board approved Approval of Revisions to Governing Board Policies 4-102.A (Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers), 4-106 (Professional Staff Reduction in Force), Professional Staff Reduction in Force Profile Form and 4-106.A (Professional Staff Reduction in Force) as submitted in Exhibit 12.

M. Approval of the Removal of 6th Grade from Harelson Elementary Effective 2025-2026 School Year

The Governing Board approved the Removal of 6th Grade from Harelson Elementary Effective 2025-2026 School Year.

N. Approval of Out of State Travel

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

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

10. BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Zibrat moved to adjourn. Mr. Kopec seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Voice vote in favor – 3. President Zibrat, Ms. Harris and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

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

February 6, 2025
Date

Susan Zibrat, Governing Board President

February 25, 2025
Date