

**Minutes of the Regular Governing Board Meeting
Amphitheater Public Schools
Tuesday, June 10, 2025**

A Regular public meeting of the Governing Board of Amphitheater Public Schools was held on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 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
Ms. Patricia Harris, 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. John Hastings, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Richard C. La Nasa, Executive Manager of Operational Support
Ms. Kristin McGraw, Executive Director of Student Services
Ms. Michelle Valenzuela, Director of Communications
Ms. Elizabeth Jacome, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Ms. Julie Valenzuela, Director of 21st Century Education

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Zibrat called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Zibrat asked Mr. La Nasa to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

President Zibrat announced that the next Special Governing Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., at the Wetmore Center, 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson AZ 85705 in the Leadership and Professional Development Center.

4. RECOGNITIONS

A. Recognition of Canyon del Oro 2025 5A Softball State Runners-Up

Superintendent Jaeger asked Mr. Armando Soto, Director of Interscholastics, to come forward to introduce the recognitions. For the first recognition, Mr. Soto invited Ms. Kelly Fowler, Head Coach for the Canyon del Oro (CDO) Softball team to come forward and noted that Ms. Fowler was named the 5A Conference Coach of the Year.

Coach Fowler expressed her appreciation for Assistant Coach Maggie Morales and for the team's 34-4 record this season. She spoke about the 20-member team's consistent work ethic, kindness, respect for others, academic achievement, and focus in practice. Coach Fowler shared that 5 team members made the 5A State Team and all 11 seniors are headed to college. She extended thanks to Matt Munger for attending the State Finals to present the seniors with their diplomas and also thanked Principal Tara Bulleigh, Assistant Principal and Athletic Director, Marco Dominguez, Armando Soto, and parents Ted Herman and Casey Streuber for their support.

Coach Fowler introduced each of the girls in attendance and the three seniors present shared their plans for next year.

Ms. Cox presented certificates of recognition from the Governing Board to team members and coaches. A photo was taken of the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, team members and coaches to mark the occasion.

B. Recognition of Canyon del Oro 2025 Division II Girls Tennis Runner-up

Mr. Soto introduced Head Coach Linda Lucas and Assistant Coach Kathy Kang. Coach Lucas spoke about the very successful and competitive season with an amazing record of victories. She stated how proud she was of the team and appreciated the recognition.

Coach Kang spoke about each of the senior team members and their accomplishments this season and introduced senior Avery. Avery thanked the coaches and parents for their support during the season and noted that this was the first time in 38 years CDO tennis has competed in the state final match.

Mr. Kopec presented the team members and coaches with certificates of recognition on behalf of the Governing Board. A picture was taken with the team members, Coaches Lucas and Kang, the Governing Board and Superintendent Jaeger to mark the occasion.

C. Recognition of Amphitheater High School Track Division III State Champion

Mr. Soto introduced Amphi Track Coaches, Ms. Stileda Rose and Mr. Mateo Arrondondo along with student athlete, Monica Verrett.

Ms. Rose stated that she has seen Monica work extremely hard over the last three years and she has had the privilege of being both her coach and counselor. Mr. Arrondondo commented that this was Monica's first year trying the triple jump, but she was determined and worked hard.

Monica said she was grateful for the recognition and thanked her mom and brother who were in attendance. She shared that she has one more year on the team and she hopes to attend college after she graduates.

President Zibrat presented Monica, Ms. Rose, and Mr. Arrondondo with certificates of recognition. A picture was taken with the Governing Board, Superintendent Jaeger, Monica, Ms. Rose, and Mr. Arrondondo.

D. Recognition of Ironwood Ridge High School Track Division III State Champion and Arizona State Runner-up

Mr. Soto explained that each conference has its own set of state champions and the "best of the best" from those conferences are qualified to compete in the Open which is an all-conference state championship. He introduced Jett Merrill, a sophomore from Ironwood Ridge who placed in both and his coach and mother, Brittany Merrill.

Jett thanked his parents for their support, his Head Coach, Mike Smith, and teammate Kyle Bolthouse. He shared that he has been training for this event since November and it has been a long journey.

President Zibrat extended congratulations and noted that both of her daughters were track athletes at Ironwood Ridge, and she echoed Jett's praise of the program. She presented Jett and Coach Merrill with certificates of recognition from the Governing Board. A picture was taken with Jett, Coach Merrill, the Governing Board and Superintendent Jaeger.

5. INFORMATION

A. Superintendent's Report

For the Superintendent's Report PowerPoint see Exhibit 1.

Superintendent Jaeger began his report by sharing photo highlights of recent events in the District:

- Congratulations to the Class of 2025! More than 900 seniors graduated from the three

Amphitheater high schools. More than 700 are headed to post-secondary schools and were awarded over \$22 million in scholarship offers

- He noted a special thank you to Facilities Support Services who completed the set-up and breakdown of each of the graduation ceremonies, including Sunday work.
- 8th graders across the District celebrated promotions and the staff of Rillito Center celebrated their single graduate, Marcus
- Elementary schools celebrated milestones with preschool, kindergarten, and fifth grade promotion ceremonies

Superintendent Jaeger went on to speak about the status of the state budget noting that Amphi and other districts received notice from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) that their June remittance of funding to school districts would be “short” due to a state budget shortfall. The shortfall is due to the cost of Empowerment Scholarships which have cost the state over \$1 billion, far exceeding the \$360 million originally budgeted.

He shared that, last year, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne spoke about the surpluses in his department, arguing vouchers would not cause a budget deficit, however the Department of Education has now submitted a massive \$200 million supplemental funding request due to vouchers. Superintendent Jaeger explained that voucher funding is drawn down by ADE quarterly so it is disbursed before public school funding, which the state pays on a monthly basis, which essentially means public schools are left bearing the brunt of budgetary shortfalls.

Moving on to an update on the State legislature, Superintendent Jaeger shared both chambers are set to reconvene on June 16th to hopefully address the budgetary shortfall as well as the FY 26 state budget. He noted lawmakers are far apart as negotiations continue between the parties and resolution may well push up against the June 30th deadline or beyond.

Superintendent Jaeger spoke about the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools revoking the Charter of Primavera, one of the state’s largest online charter schools. The revocation comes after years of dramatically poor student performance and ratings as well as financial issues. Despite these issues, Primavera received nearly \$80 million in state funding last year alone and it has been reported that Primavera’s founder, Damian Creamer, has personally pocketed \$24 million in public money since 2016. Mr. Creamer is attempting to garner support from the Republican party and offering monetary scholarships to students who will write essays about how Primavera helped them succeed.

Superintendent Jaeger gave an update on the Federal Education Budget noting the FY26 Budget Summary calls for a \$12 billion cut in funding, however Title I, Part A would receive level funding. IDEA Part B would receive an increase in funding however the “increases” merely make up for reductions in other special education programs. He went on to speak about the implementation of a single State formula grant program which would cause a significant cut in education spending and cuts to other federally funded programs. Superintendent Jaeger noted the US House Ways and Means Committee approved the nation’s first federal voucher program which is embedded in President Trump’s “one, big, beautiful bill” which would cost US taxpayers a projected \$20 billion over the next four years. He noted that federal spending on vouchers for the entire nation would therefore be set at \$5 billion per year, whereas Arizona’s spending for vouchers is \$1 billion for just our state alone.

Lastly, Superintendent Jaeger spoke about the good work happening over the summer in the District including summer school offered at various sites, the availability of Clever which offers student access to digital curricula, and the Summer Institute which is providing professional development courses to staff with 67 distinct courses to choose from.

He offered to answer any questions.

President Zibrat thanked him for the report.

B. Status of Construction Projects

For the Status of Construction Project attachments see Exhibit 2.

Superintendent Jaeger said that Mr. La Nasa will give an update on District construction projects that utilize bonds and other funding sources. He asked Mr. LaNasa to present the report.

Mr. LaNasa showed photos which highlighted completed projects and some currently under construction:

- Amphitheater High School main gym floor resurfacing using bond funds
- Amphitheater Middle School fire alarm system replacement using Building Renewal Grant funds
- Canyon del Oro High School South Gym floor repairs using bond funds
- Coronado K-8 gym bleacher replacement using bond funds
- Ironwood Ridge High School erosion control & drainage improvements using bond funds
- Rio Vista Elementary school security fence painting using bond funds

Mr. La Nasa reported that the District's May 2025 grant funding was \$53,711 and the total grant funding for the 2024-2025 school year was \$6,461,998. He offered to answer any questions. There were none.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

7. 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 7. A.– N. be approved as presented. Mr. Kopec seconded the motion. Voice vote in favor – 5. President Zibrat, Vice President Day, Ms. Cox Golder, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. Consent Agenda Items 7. A.-N. 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 May 27, 2025 Governing Board meeting were approved as submitted in Exhibit 8.

G. Approval of Vouchers Totaling and Not Exceeding Approximately \$2,421,927.49

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 9.

Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount	Voucher #	Amount
1321	\$78,973.29	1322	\$12,209.67	1323	\$45,086.36
1325	\$86,624.72	1326	\$587,934.80	1327	\$59,957.50
1328	\$32,915.44	1329	\$85,499.01	1330	\$529,259.52
1331	\$485,620.15	1332	\$157,346.52	1333	\$9,397.62
1334	\$183,386.81	1335	\$67,716.08		

H. Acceptance of Gifts

Gifts were accepted by the Governing Board as submitted in Exhibit 10.

I. Approval of Facility Rental Program Fees

The Governing Board approved the Facility Rental Program Fees as submitted in Exhibit 11.

J. Approval of Revision to the 2025-2026 Governing Board Meeting Schedule

The Governing Board approved the Revision to the 2025-2026 Governing Board Meeting Schedule as submitted in Exhibit 12.

K. Approval of Revised District Calendar for the School Year 2026-2027

The Governing Board approved the Revised District Calendar for the School Year 2026-2027 as submitted in Exhibit 13.

L. Approval of Intergovernmental Agreement for Dual Enrollment with the University of Arizona

The Governing Board approved the Intergovernmental Agreement for Dual Enrollment with the University of Arizona as submitted in Exhibit 14.

M. Approval of the Amphitheater Teacher Performance Evaluation System for the 2025-2026 School Year

The Governing Board approved the Amphitheater Teacher Performance Evaluation System for the 2025-2026 School Year as submitted in Exhibit 15.

N. Approval of Out of State Travel

The Governing Board approved Out of State Travel as submitted in Exhibit 16.

President Zibrat called for a break at 7:04pm. The meeting reconvened at 7:15pm.

8. STUDY/ACTION

A. Study of Senior Honors Recognition System

For the Study of Senior Honors Recognitions System PowerPoint see Exhibit 17.

Superintendent Jaeger stated that many high schools celebrate their high school seniors each year by honoring one or two students, typically the valedictorian and salutatorian, but noted that schools are reexamining this practice as it denies recognition to so many other students who are worthy of the same. He went on to explain the emergence of students “gaming the system” and other reasons that are leading the administration to recommend replacing the limitations of current recognition system. He asked Matt Munger, Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education to present the information and recommendation.

Mr. Munger began with a history of recognizing valedictorians and salutatorians which has the effect of diminishing the diverse ways students succeed and contribute to their school communities.

He went on to explain the challenges with the current honors system noting it recognizes only two students, the differences often come down to miniscule GPA differences, it encourages a narrow course selection, and promotes a hyper-competitive atmosphere.

Mr. Munger spoke about the current system not embodying Amphitheater's Mission, Vision, and Beliefs or fully embracing the Promise of a Graduate which promotes holistic student development.

Mr. Munger explained an alternative to honoring two students with the two single-highest grade point averages with a Cum Laude system of honors, similar to what is utilized at the collegiate level. Such a system would recognize many high achieving students across GPA ranges, and would potentially encourage students to explore broader course options including Career and Technical Education and Fine Arts courses, rather than incentivizing a focus on only weighted courses. He noted this can foster a healthier academic environment, enhance consistency, and can further the District's reputation for academic excellence as this system is widely used in higher education.

He offered an example of what the GPA breakdown for the various distinctions of Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum laude courses would have looked like over the past few years at each school. With a table showing how many students from the District's three high schools would have received one of the three distinctions in each of the last two school years. He went on to argue the system reduces academic stress and toxic competition, encourages more meaningful learning, and is better aligned with the District's mission and Promise of a Graduate.

Mr. Munger shared current trends in other Tucson and Phoenix school districts that have eliminated valedictorian and salutatorian honors and have embraced a more broad system to recognize student achievement. He explained that instead of students with the highest GPA's automatically speaking at graduation, the audition system, currently employed to select student speakers, would be extended.

As for a timeline of this proposed system, Mr. Munger stated if approved and adopted, the new honors system would begin with the Class of 2028, and communication would begin in the fall of 2025, to permit design plans for foil diploma seals, and other graduation regalia.

Mr. Munger offered to answer any questions.

Ms. Harris stated that it is time to end the current recognition practice and while it is seeped in tradition, it has seen it's time and a new system would better serve students. She asked President Zibrat if she was free to make a motion. President Zibrat affirmed she could.

Ms. Harris moved that the District end the practice of recognizing the class valedictorians and salutatorians and utilize site administrations to help develop a new recognition system. She also noted that she would like to see the current Scholars programs retained.

Mr. Munger stated that the Scholars systems would not be changed. The Cum Laude system would further broaden recognitions from two students to potentially hundreds of high achieving students.

Ms. Harris reiterated her desire to repeal the current recognition system but allow the high schools to establish a new system. President Zibrat noted the motion on the floor. Ms. Cox Golder seconded the motion. President Zibrat opened the floor up for discussion.

Ms. Cox Golder questioned if the motion should be split into two parts.

Superintendent Jaeger shared that discussion can occur about the motion itself, but also discussion about the content of the motion itself. He asked for clarification about the second half of Ms. Harris' motion regarding the use of site administration to develop the new system.

Ms. Harris clarified that her intention was to get more school personnel involved in helping develop the system.

Superintendent Jaeger stated he appreciated studying the replacement system in the future as there is no imperative to finalize those details immediately and wanted to make sure the intention of the motion wasn't for each site to develop their system of recognitions separately.

Vice President Day shared her agreement with Ms. Harris in terms of site based management and as it stands each one of the high school graduation ceremonies is a little bit different, particularly in regard to commencement speakers.

Mr. Munger affirmed that Amphitheater High School has not always reserved the right to speak at graduation to the valedictorian and salutatorian.

Mr. Kopec agreed that the current practices can be somewhat unhealthy for students in principle and supports moving on from that system to something else. He also felt further discussion on what the new system would look like is reasonable.

President Zibrat shared her support for a new recognition system and that each high school has their own traditions in place. She echoed Vice President's Day point that we have a site-based administration model that is valuable.

Superintendent Jaeger stated he appreciated Ms. Harris' proposal in obtaining further input on a recognition system from site administrators, but he wants to advocate for a consistent standard while still preserving the existing traditions that each site currently has. He shared that he appreciates that the Cum Laude system is embraced in academic circles and would reinforce the District's reputation of excellence and strong academic performance.

Vice President Day stated that the current motion could still capture that sentiment, but the Board is asking for more time and broader input to determine what the recognition system will look like.

Ms. Harris moved that the District repeal the current practice of recognizing each high school's valedictorian and salutatorian starting with the Class of 2028 and elicit feedback from site administration in the design of a new recognition system to be brought forth for future Governing Board approval. Ms. Cox Golder seconded the motion. Voice vote in favor-5. President Zibrat, Vice President Day, Ms. Cox Golder, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed-0. Item 8. A. passed.

9. ACTION

A. Approval of the 2025-2026 Code of Conduct

For the Proposed 2025-2026 Code of Conduct see Exhibit 18.

Superintendent Jaeger stated that the Code of Conduct was studied at a previous meeting. Since that time, a new state law was passed banning the use of cell phones during the school day. The passing of this law was anticipated and the Code of Conduct has language reflecting this change. He noted that the Administration is recommending it be approved as presented.

Vice President Day moved to approve the 2025-2026 Code of Conduct. Ms. Cox Golder seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Voice vote in favor-5. President Zibrat, Vice President Day, Ms. Cox Golder, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. Item 9. A. passed.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

11. BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Kopec asked for an update on the conversations with the City of Tucson regarding use of the Amphi Pool.

12. ADJOURNMENT

President Zibrat asked for a motion to adjourn. Vice President Day 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, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Kopec. Opposed – 0. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Jen Anderson

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

June 23, 2025

Date

Susan Zibrat, Governing Board President

June 24, 2025

Date