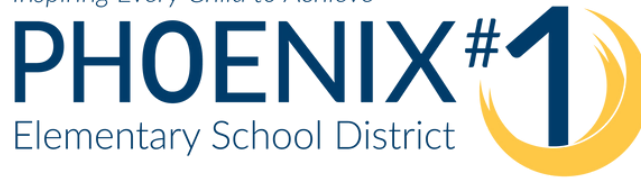


Inspiring Every Child to Achieve



JAN. 22, 2026 GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

»»» RECAP «««



GARFIELD 7TH AND 8TH GRADE STUDENTS PERFORM BEFORE THE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING ON JANUARY 22, 2026, LED BY MS. TINA CLARK.

»»» NEW GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS

During our January 15th public meeting, the Governing Board appointed a new president and vice president. Congratulations to new board president Erika Ovalle and new vice president Suanne Edmiston. These leadership appointments support the board's continued focus on service to students, families, and staff. The board's new officers will help guide its work as it continues to advance district goals and priorities.



ERIKA OVALLE
PRESIDENT



SUANNE EDMISTON
VICE PRESIDENT

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

DR. DEBORAH GONZALEZ

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We acknowledge the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his leadership in fighting for civil rights. We believe the right to a free, quality education is a civil right.

It's fitting that two leaders from the Superintendent Student Advisory Team attended our board meeting to share the feedback they've been receiving from 5th - 8th graders from across the district. Thank you to Garfield 8th grader Citlalin Oltehua and Garfield 7th grader Lenaija Anderson for sharing their experience of being involved, researching, collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Read their report below.



Hello, my name is Citlalin Oltehua, I currently attend Garfield, and I am in 8th grade. I hope to attend North High School. So far, for me, the biggest highlight of being part of the Superintendent's Student Advisory group has been going to places to represent our school.

Hello, my name is Lenaija Anderson, I currently attend Garfield, and I am in 7th grade. I hope to attend ASU Preparatory High School. So far, for me, the biggest highlight of being part of the Superintendent's Student Advisory group has been stepping out of my comfort zone and meeting new people.

The Superintendent Student Advisory Team is analyzing data from a Belonging feedback form that we created and is discussing how to present this same form to all of the 5th-8th-grade students across the district.

Of the 14 responses from our group, the data shows that:

- All respondents feel that everyone, most, or some people who come to our schools are welcomed.*
- There is a mixed response about how we feel students treat staff members.*
- Most respondents feel that staff treat students and other staff with kindness and respect.*
- 87.6% of us always feel safe at school. 21.4 % of us sometimes feel safe.*
- All respondents want our schools to be "No Place for Hate" schools.*
- Many ideas for projects were also shared through the feedback form.*

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

DR. DEBORAH GONZALEZ (CONTINUED)

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We will also be conducting focus groups with some younger students so that we include their voices in our research and have an opportunity to collect and analyze qualitative data. After we gain more feedback from all 5th-8th graders across the district, as well as from the younger student focus groups, we will analyze all of the data and use it to create a recommendation for a district-wide Belonging project. We are excited to continue sharing our progress with the governing board, cabinet, and community at future school board meetings.

This is School Board Appreciation Month, and we want to thank our board members for giving of themselves to serve our community. People do not always realize that governing board members are volunteering their time to serve, and the service is not just at the district board meetings - it is visiting schools, school events, attending meetings, advocating for the district and for public schools, listening to our community, and bringing the concerns and ideas they have to staff.

Our Governing Board members all have jobs that are demanding of their time. Taking on the role of a governing board member is a sacrifice for their families and loved ones, but I know each member would say they do so because they want to make a difference for our children and our community. Phoenix #1 observed School Board Recognition month by presenting governing board members with gifts curated by our schools and students. We appreciate everything you do!



ERIKA OVALLE, PRESIDENT

Gifts from: Bethune, Whittier, & Magnet Traditional



SUANNE EDMISTON, VICE PRESIDENT

Gifts from: Emerson, Faith North, & Kenilworth



JUSTIN GRAHAM, BOARD MEMBER

Gifts from: Herrera, Edison, & Lowell



CARMEN TRUJILLO, BOARD MEMBER

Gifts from: Garfield, Shaw Montessori, & Capitol

>>> DECEMBER S.T.A.R AWARDS

(SPECIAL THANKS AND RECOGNITION)



JENNIFER ADKINS
3RD GRADE TEACHER
MAGNET TRADITIONAL



GENESIS DE LOERA
INSTRUCTIONAL
ASSISTANT II
MAGNET TRADITIONAL



CAYLEE MCCUE
8TH GRADE MATH
TEACHER
GARFIELD

Not Pictured: Veronica Marin, Instructional Assistant II, Garfield

>>> ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

OUTSTANDING MATH GROWTH, TEACHERS



Congratulations to our teachers whose classes showed the highest amount of growth over this past quarter!

Naomi Weeks – Edison
Catherine Vanders – Edison
Chelsea Perez – Shaw
Leisla Church - Shaw
Jessica Cuellar – Bethune
Magnhild Boyce – Magnet
Carlee Schram - Emerson
Fun Chan – Shaw
Roy Newton - Magnet
Michael Cox – Bethune
Danielle Johnson – Capitol
Thomas Sejen – Magnet
Ryleigh Bright – Whittier
Gyan Morales – Magnet
Jennifer Matthews - Shaw
Diana Olivarria – Capitol

AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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>>> ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

OUTSTANDING MATH GROWTH, STUDENTS

Congratulations to our students who showed the highest amount of growth over this past quarter!



**MACIAS ACEVEDO
SHAW**



**MATEO MENDOZA
GARCIA
BETHUNE**



**QUENTIN RYAN
SHAW**



**EMMA HERNANDEZ
MAGNET**



**JEREMY VALERO
HERRERA**



**ROBERT ROCHA
SHAW**



**ATHENA CASTILLO
CANEZ
EDISON**



**ATHENA VERMEER
SHAW**



**SERGIO VIGUERIA
GRADO
GARFIELD**



**LEONARDO
GARCIA
GARFIELD**



**LUCAS PANTLE
SHAW**

NOT PICTURED:

Aeryn Fuller – Shaw
Liam Barajas - Kenilworth

Bayley Lucas Perez – Whittier
Jorge Velazquez - Edison

Rowan Stravitz – Shaw
Theodore Rosenecker – Magnet
Walter Mejia Menchu – Whittier

>>> WINTER CONCERTS AND FESTIVITIES

Students across Phoenix #1 showcased their talents during the winter concert season and holiday activities held at several campuses. Events included Lowell's Posada celebration, Herrera's Winter Festival, Bethune's Reindeer Run, and more, highlighting student performances, creativity, and school spirit throughout the season.

**CAPITOL
WINTER CONCERT**



**HERRERA
WINTER CONCERT**



**LOWELL
WINTER CONCERT**



**EMERSON
WINTER CONCERT**



**BETHUNE
BAND WINTER
CONCERT**



**BETHUNE
REINDEER RUN**



**HERRERA
REINDEER RUN**



**WHITTIER
JINGLE JOG**



**HERRERA
WINTER FESTIVAL & LIGHT PARADE**



LOWELL POSADA



>>> KINDERGARTEN FOR A DAY

Phoenix #1 recently welcomed families from across the community for its first free 2026 Kindergarten for a Day event, giving families a preview of what it means to begin their educational journey in Phoenix #1, Where Every Bright Future Begins. Families experienced a day in the life of a kindergartener by riding a school bus, touring campuses, playing on the playground, and enjoying lunch in a school cafeteria. Thank you to everyone who helped make the event possible, including principals, teachers, bus drivers, and child nutrition staff, whose support created a welcoming and memorable experience for future students and their families. The next Kindergarten for a Day event is on Saturday, February 28th from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. [Learn more and RSVP here.](#)



DISTRICT SOCCER SEASON RESULTS

The district concluded a successful soccer season marked by strong teamwork, sportsmanship, and notable achievements across participating schools. Teams earned group recognitions, while individual players were honored with personal awards highlighting excellence. Congratulations to all student-athletes and coaches on an outstanding season.



»»» HALLWAY REFRESH AT WHITTIER

Whittier Elementary students were welcomed back to newly refreshed 7th and 8th-grade hallways. The renovation was completed over the holiday break through a partnership between McCarthy Building Companies, Inc. and School Connect AZ. We are thankful for community partners who continue to invest in school environments.



»»» LEADERS FOR LITERACY LUNCHEON

Phoenix #1 attended the recent Leaders for Literacy Luncheon hosted by Valley Leadership. The event highlighted the power of collaboration in supporting student success and advancing literacy initiatives. The district expressed its appreciation to Valley Leadership for bringing community partners together in support of education.



»»» APS DONATES BOOKS TO BETHUNE

Bethune recently received a generous donation of free books from the APS Book Drive. The donation provides students with new reading materials and supports the school's efforts to encourage a love of reading across all grade levels. The school community expresses its gratitude to APS for helping make these resources available to students.

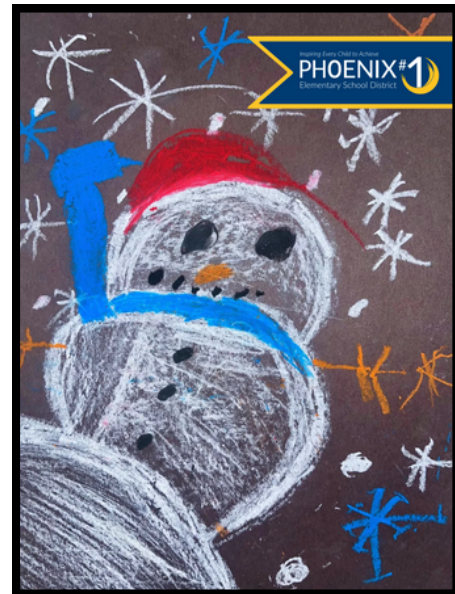


>>> PHOENIX #1 HOLIDAY CARDS

Dr. Gonzalez recognized two Bethune students for their artistic achievements after their work was selected to appear on the Phoenix #1 holiday cards. District leadership chose artwork by eighth grader Vicente Felix and second grader Eric Soleto, highlighting student creativity and talent across grade levels.



**ARTIST: VICENTE FELIX, 8TH GRADE
TEACHER: ANNE ARMBRUSTER
BETHUNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**ARTIST: ERIC SOLETO, 2ND GRADE
TEACHER: ANNE ARMBRUSTER
BETHUNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



>>> HOLIDAY SURPRISE AT GARFIELD

Garfield Elementary fifth graders received a special holiday surprise thanks to volunteers from the Snell & Wilmer law firm. As part of their annual gift donation, volunteers personally delivered wrapped presents to each fifth grader, creating a memorable and meaningful experience for the class.



>>> GREAT AZ PUPPET THEATER AT CAPITOL

Students in kindergarten through third grade at Capitol Elementary enjoyed a special educational performance thanks to the Great Arizona Puppet Theater and the Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation. The presentation taught students the importance of dental health and proper oral hygiene.



100TH DAY OF SCHOOL

Edison marked the 100th Day of School with a schoolwide celebration that brought smiles across campus. Students and staff dressed as if they were 100 years old, adding a playful touch to the milestone day. To encourage reading and celebrate participation, every student who took part went home with a new book.



HERRERA ATTENDS D-BACKS WINTER FEST

Herrera Elementary students enjoyed a special opportunity after being invited to the Arizona Diamondbacks Winter Festival at Chase Field. During the event, students received free shoes, sweaters, toys, and backpacks, making the day both memorable and meaningful for families.



KENILWORTH ROBOTICS COMPETITION

Kenilworth's afterschool robotics club is celebrating a major achievement. Through their hard work and teamwork, the students qualified for a Robotics Competition in San Tan Valley, where they earned first place. A special thank you to Ms. Dev for her guidance and support in helping make this success possible.



>>> FAITH NORTH CITY CENTER AWARD

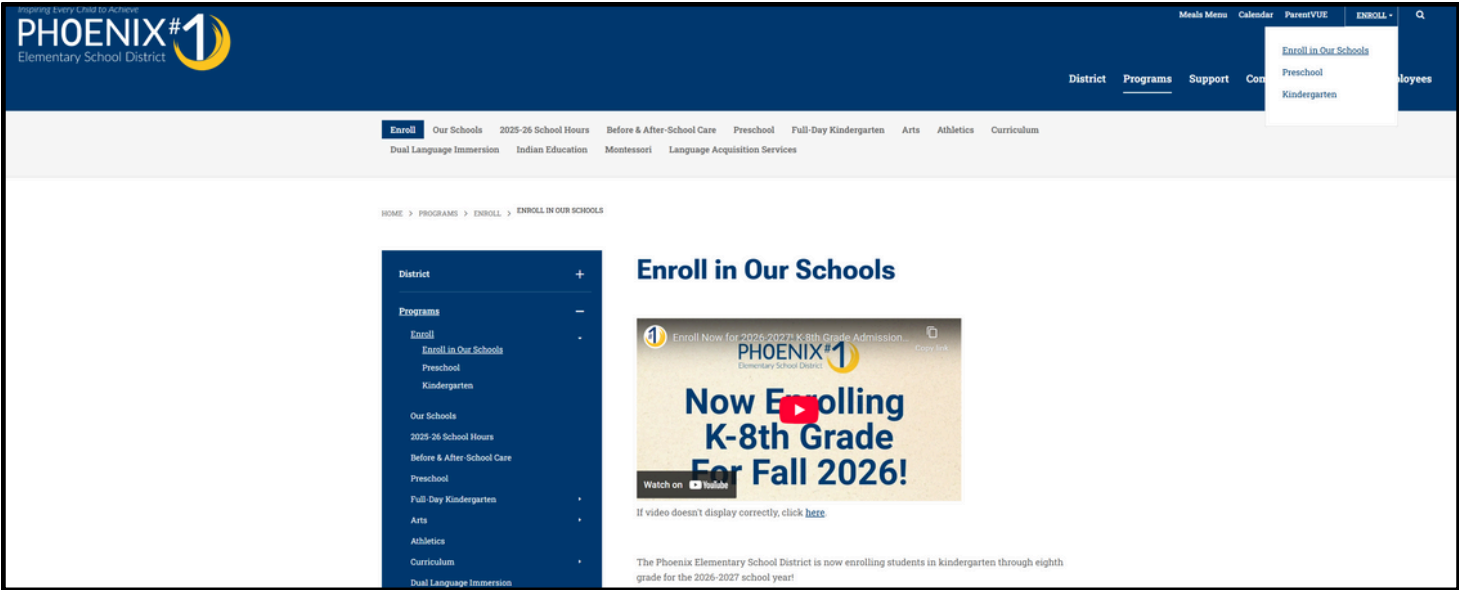
Faith North Early Childhood Center has earned the BusinessRate Award and been named the Best of 2025 Central City Award Winner in the School category. The honor reflects the dedication, care, and commitment to excellence demonstrated daily by staff and families at the school.



>>> ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN!

The Phoenix Elementary School District is now enrolling new students in kindergarten through eighth grade for the 2026-2027 school year!

For more information, visit: <https://www.phxschools.org/enroll>



1. Request Approval or Ratification of Payroll Vouchers in the total amount of \$8,516,103.24 (Policy: DKA)
2. Request Approval or Ratification of Expense Vouchers in the total amount of \$8,775,062.09 (Policy: DKA)
3. Request Approval of Gifts, Donations and Grants (Policy: KCD)
4. Request Approval of Financial Reports for Student Activity Funds (Policy: JJF-R)
5. Request Approval to Sell Surplus, Damaged, or Outdated Technology and Equipment (Policy: DN)
6. Request Approval or Ratification of Employment of Administrative, Certified and Support Staff (Policies: GCF, GDF)
7. Request Approval or Ratification of Employee Contract/Work Agreement Adjustments for Changes in Position (Policies: GCF, GDF)
8. Request Approval of Uncompensated Leave of Absences (Policy: GCCC)
9. Request Approval of Separation of Employment, Resignations and Retirements (Policies: GCQC, GDQC, GDQB)
10. Approval of School Out-of-District/County/State or Overnight Field Trips (Policy: IJOA)
11. Request Approval of School Out-of-District/County/State or Overnight Field Trips (Policy: IJOA)
12. Request Approval of Consent Agenda (Policy: BEDB)

>>> GOVERNING BOARD APPROVES FY 2025 AUDIT

Our Chief Financial Officer, Aaron Whittle, and an independent auditor, Advisent, presented the district's required [FY 2025 financial audit](#). This annual review looks at how the district manages its finances, including state and federal funds. The district received a clean audit, the highest rating possible, with no major financial issues identified. The auditor reviewed approximately \$22 million in federal funds, including Child Nutrition and ESSER programs, and found everything to be in compliance. While a few minor state reporting items were noted, these were fewer than last year, showing continued improvement. Importantly, no serious financial concerns were found. The auditor commended district staff for their cooperation and strong financial practices. The governing board approved the FY 2025 audit.

>>> GOVERNING BOARD POLICY UPDATES

The Governing Board reviewed the revised fiscal and governance policy recommendations from the Arizona School Boards Association during a second reading of Policy Advisories 876–905. The Board voted to move the proposed policy revisions to a third reading to allow additional review before final consideration.

- [Policy DA](#) - Fiscal Management Goals/ Priority Objectives
- [Policy DB](#) - Annual Budget
- [Policy DBF](#) - Budget Hearings and Reviews / Adoption Process
- [Policy DBJ](#) - Budget Transfers
- [Policy DD](#) - Funding Proposals, Grants, and Special Projects
- [Policy DFA](#) - Revenue from Investments
- [Policy DG](#) - Banking Services
- [Policy DGD](#) - Credit Cards
- [Policy DI](#) - Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
- [Policy DIB](#) - Type of Funds / Revolving Funds
- [Policy DIC](#) - Financial Reports and Statements
- [Policy DID](#) - Inventories
- [Policy DIE](#) - Audits / Financial Monitoring
- [Policy DJE](#) - Bidding / Purchasing Procedures
- [Policy DJG](#) - Vendor / Contractor Relations
- [Policy DK](#) - Payment Procedures
- [Policy DN](#) - School Properties Disposition

FUTURE OF THE FILLMORE PROPERTY

Mrs. Sara Sims, Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives, gave a brief [presentation](#) on the future of the Fillmore Property located at 735 N. Fillmore Street in Phoenix.

Mrs. Sims explained that through the Reimagine Phoenix #1 process, families, staff, and community members identified shared priorities — strong arts programs, sustainable funding, and vibrant learning spaces. District leaders believe the Fillmore Property can help bring these goals to life for current and future students.

The Fillmore campus includes more than 170,000 square feet of academic and arts space, featuring a 600-seat auditorium, dance studios, band and orchestra rooms, a gymnasium, and outdoor courtyards. The long-term vision includes a family-friendly, walkable neighborhood anchored by a fine and performing arts campus. Partnerships with arts and community organizations could expand student programming, while responsible development on part of the site could generate ongoing revenue to support classrooms, programs, and staff. This is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue. Phoenix #1 is committed to transparency and continued community engagement as plans for the Fillmore Property move forward.



Exterior photo of the North side of the Fillmore Property



Proposed development area of Fillmore Property (approximately 6–7 acres) highlighted in red

FILLMORE PROPERTY SNAPSHOT

Location: 7th St. & Fillmore

Site Size: 14+ acres

Building: 170,000+ sq. ft.

Auditorium: 600+ seats

Future Development Area:

Approximately 6–7 acres

Community Input: 240+ community members, 289 staff

GOALS FOR THE FILLMORE PROPERTY

- Maintain the school to serve K-8 and services for exceptional learners
- Work with partners to provide unique programming for our students
- Use the back half of the parcel to leverage opportunities to generate \$3 million annually by 2030
- Attract new families to Phoenix #1
- Create housing for staff and young families with children by creating a walking neighborhood around the school

Process of Private Placement as a Continuum of Special Education Services

Phoenix #1 Director of Exceptional Student Services, Alicia Zelvis, explains how the district decides when a student attends a private school as part of special education services. She explained that the district educates students with disabilities in general education classrooms first, whenever possible. District staff provides support and specialized programs on district campuses and considers private school placement only when those options do not meet a student's individual needs. A student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team makes all placement decisions with parent involvement and bases those decisions on what best supports each student.

Steps to Placement:

- IEP team notifies the Director of Exceptional Student Services
- Student learning/behavioral/health data review
- Gather private placement options
- IEP meeting with the parent to discuss the options
- IEP team establishes exit criteria
- District coordinates placement
- School district monitoring and involvement continue

For the 2025–2026 school year, nine students attend private placements. The Governing Board reviewed general cost information and noted lower overall expenses due to enrollment changes.

Placement	Budgeted Total	Price Per Student	OT, PT, SPL, & Counseling Extra?
Beyond Autism	\$131,900.00	\$65,950.00	Yes, but included
ACCEL	\$57,262.25	\$51,795.00	No
The ACES (Austin Centers for Exceptional Students)	\$417,971.00	\$51,840.00	Yes and not included in price per student

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS



ERIKA OVALLE
PRESIDENT



SUANNE EDMISTON
VICE PRESIDENT



JUSTIN GRAHAM
BOARD MEMBER



CARMEN TRUJILLO
BOARD MEMBER

The Phoenix #1 Governing Board has a focus on student outcomes. The framework is built around six research-informed competencies that describe school board behaviors and the degree to which they create the conditions for improvements in student outcomes:

Vision & Goals, Values & Guardrails, Monitoring & Accountability, Communication & Collaboration, Unity & Trust, and Continuous Improvement.

The January 22, 2026 meeting focused on the following Board Goals and Superintendent Guardrails:

Board Goal #2

The percentage of 3rd-grade students with a pass rate in reading, as measured by AASA, will increase from 25% in August 2023 to 40% by August 2028.

Board Goal #5

The percentage of 8th-grade students with a pass rate in math, as measured by AASA, will increase from 13% in August 2023 to 38% by August 2028.

Superintendent Guardrail #5

The Superintendent shall not allow the District to operate without implementing a community focused plan to mitigate student enrollment barriers.

**VIEW THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA, ALL
DOCUMENTS, AND STREAM MEETINGS ONLINE:
[PHXSCHOOLS.ORG/BOARD](https://phxschools.org/board)**