

FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED *School District* **NEWSLETTER**

December 2022

FUSD teachers receive grants from the Debbi Grogan Memorial Fund to support music programs

The Flagstaff Unified School District Foundation recently awarded seven FUSD teachers grants from the Debbi Grogan Memorial Fund.

The recipients include Karen Whitaker of Coconino High School with \$5,000; Jacque McGregor of Mount Elden Middle School with \$1,899.80; Annabelle Smallcanyon of Leupp Elementary School with \$300; Steven Busby of Kinsey Elementary School with \$170; Kaitlyn Leung of Sechrist Elementary School with \$3,264.50; Marie Zelenka of Killip Elementary School with \$500; and Rick McEnaney of Flagstaff High School with \$800.

In June, the FUSD Foundation partnered with Flagstaff Blues and Brews Festival at the Continental Country Club and raised nearly \$22,000 to support music education at FUSD. With these funds, the Debbi Grogan Memorial Fund was created to honor Debbi, the founder of the Flagstaff Blue and Brews Festival. 🌲

**Continued on page 8 /
Debbi Grogan Fund**



Photos, top Left: Assistant Principal Donna Natseway, Jacque McGregor, Principal Tammy Nelson, and Assistant Principal Lawrence Watson. Top right: Steven Busby and Ellen Herman, principal of Kinsey Elementary School. Bottom left: Karen Whitaker, Governing Board Member Carole Gilmore; Superintendent Michael Penca, and Stacie Zanzucchi, principal of Coconino High School. Bottom right: Ryan Chee, principal of Leupp Elementary School, and Annabelle Smallcanyon.

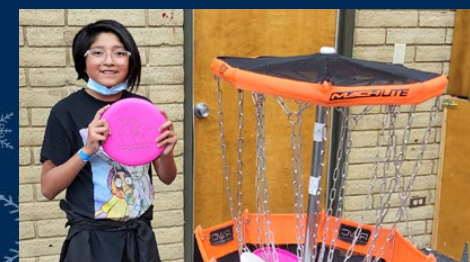
IN THIS ISSUE



Elizabeth Cervantes Roman wants to be lawyer... Page 3



Meet some great FUSD Team Members... Page 6



Discing4Kids hosting free event... Page 9



A message from our SUPERINTENDENT



On behalf of the Flagstaff Unified School District, we recognize Anne Dunno and Carol Haden in appreciation of their leadership and service as members of the Flagstaff Unified School District Governing Board.

Anne Dunno served on the Governing Board from 2018-2022. Carol Haden served from 2017-2022. Our district and communities are grateful for the perspectives and experiences each brought to our governance team — as FUSD parents, community leaders, and advocates for educational equity.

The Coconino County Board of Supervisors held a Special Session

on November 28, 2022, to canvass and certify the election returns of the 2022 General Election on November 8, 2022, and the results were declared official with the signing of the official canvas by the Governor, Secretary of State, and AZ Supreme Court Justice on December 5, 2022.

The Coconino County Superintendent's Office will provide Certificates of Election for Kristine Pavlik and Erik Sather noting their election to the Governing Board of the Flagstaff Unified School District #1 for the term of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2026.

The County Superintendent will facilitate the Oath of Office for



Photos, top: FUSD Governing Board Members Anne Dunno and President Carol Haden hold appreciation plaques for their service to the FUSD. Bottom: Incoming Governing Board Members Erik Sather and Kristine Pavlik.

these new members prior to the first regular meeting on January 10, 2023. The Superintendent and Board President met with the newly elected members to begin the onboarding

process, and both new members will be attending the ASBA New Board Member Orientation and Annual Conference on December 14-16. 🌲

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*Assistant Superintendent of
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Leandre Frank dreams of performing on Broadway

December 14, 2022

Leandre Frank, 17, is a senior at Flagstaff High School and he is a Navajo Nation tribal member. His clans are Táchii'nii (Red Running into the Water People), born to Honágháahnii (One Who Walks Around), his maternal grandfather's clan is Tódik'ozhi (Salt Water), and his paternal grandfather's clan is Tábaqhá (Water's Edge). He is originally from the Central Agency of the Navajo Nation near Tsaile, Arizona.

Leandre is involved in many extra-curricular activities including theater, the Native American Club, and the marching band.

"I did theater since my freshman year, so I've been doing it for all

four years," he said. "I joined theater because growing up on the [Navajo] reservation, you don't really have a lot of interesting things to do. So, I chose [theater], and [I was not] sure what it was. I grew a huge connection to [theater], to the point where I looked into careers and colleges for it."

He is also involved with the Flagstaff High School's Native American Club.

"[I got involved] with the Native American Club my sophomore year online because I was really bored and I just wanted something to do, so I joined. I became an officer... sergeant-at-arms and then [in my]

***Continued on page 5 /
Leandre Frank***



Elizabeth Cervantes Roman wants to be a lawyer to help her community

December 14, 2022

Elizabeth Cervantes Roman, 17, is a senior at Flagstaff High School (FHS). She was born in Flagstaff, Arizona, and her parents come from Guerrero, Mexico.

Libby Miller, principal of Flagstaff High School, said Elizabeth is the president of the Hispanic Heritage Club, she is on Student Council, she is a Links member, a member of Prayze - Bible Club, and she is overall an incredible student. She also just got accepted with a full ride to Dartmouth College.

Elizabeth is excited to complete her last year of high school and reflects on the last four years. She explained that when she came to FHS during her freshman year, she was nervous, but she really wanted to get involved

and have a positive impact on her community.

She started in a few organizations during her freshman year, and she admitted some did not work out. She said she joined Prayze - Bible Club in her freshman year and has continued with the group throughout all four years, and she also joined the Humanities Club, the National Honor Society, and Upward Bound.

"I found [Prayze] was really important for me to have faith in something, and because when I get stressed out, that was always my place to go to," she said. "For the Humanities Club, I wanted to do something with human rights.

***Continued on page 5 /
Cervantes Roman***



Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert

Meet Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert, an advocate for Native American students at FUSD

Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert is the Native American Education Support Program Coordinator at Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD). She is a Hopi tribal member from the Village of Shungopavi on Second Mesa on the Hopi Reservation. She is the Snow Clan, Nuva'wungwa.

She possesses a master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University, and she also has degrees in elementary education and global business. Before coming to FUSD, she worked as a principal at Second Mesa Day School on the Hopi Reservation. She taught middle school math at Hopi Junior/Senior High School, taught third grade, served as a math coach, and was a teacher's aide.

Dianne explained that she also

worked in various fields before pursuing higher education. She worked in the fields of customer service and business before the education field.

"I started out early as a waitress, worked in convenience stores, [and] worked at Walmart. I did some work with Bank One... a lot of exploratory positions," she explained. "Then, I worked for Southwest Gas, Desert Schools Federal Credit Union, and then Vanguard, which is a broker-dealer institution. I was a broker right before I became a teacher. I had a great team there that supported me."

After exploring career choices, Albert decided to seek a degree in education. She eventually did her internship at Catalina Day Ventura in Glendale, Arizona.

The FUSD Native American Education Support Program

Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert helps to provide Native American students with support services and helps to oversee the Navajo Nation Johnson O'Malley Program and Title VI Indian Education funds. The ultimate goal of her program is to ensure that Native American students are successful in their educational careers.

"We [accomplish] this through supplementary funds, and [these funds] can be used for materials and resources that

students need," said Dianne. "It can also be in the form of the human relationship that they build with the advisors, which fund those salaries."

Dianne has 14 staff members within the program that act as support and advocates for students and eventually teach students how to advocate for themselves.

"I have five elementary educational interventionists, four secondary middle school and high school advisors [and] Native American advisors," she said. "We [also] have two homeschool liaisons who work at the secondary level with those advisors, and we have three staff members in operations - me, our data clerk, Terry Hostenez, and my administrative assistant, who really is the business person who does a lot of the reimbursements and procurement of services - that's Hannah Sandoval."

Dianne also explained that the staff have an important function, "they're boots on the ground... making connections with students

and families."

The staff review student grades, attendance, analyze and monitor student dropout rates, withdrawals, and graduation rates at the elementary and secondary levels. They can also talk to students about high educational opportunities and career planning.

"They're also there to look out for some of the other needs that they

might have in terms of social-emotional needs and supplies," she added. "They are the conduit between other resources and programs."

Staff help high school juniors and seniors maneuver and communicate with Navajo Nation Scholarships, Hopi Tribal grants and scholarships, and other tribal scholarship programs. They help students

make those connections so that they can benefit from them.

Dianne also said they have partners in the community as well, such as the Native Americans for Community Action (NACA).

"During this time of COVID, they've been able to provide families with PPE. When people have those needs, they'll make those connections," she explained. "There are other things that might [arise], such as health and safety... nutrition. We try to get [the students] connected with all of the other programs that we have here at the school district, like our food pantries, clothing, and the family

**Someone
needs to be
here for
them.**

— Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert

***Continued on page 8 /
Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert***





...Leandre Frank/ From Page 3

junior year, I [became] secretary, [and] this year, [I am] the vice president," he added. "I did Native American Club because I wanted to make Native [American] students here feel welcome."

He also helps other Native American students learn about the various programs that can assist them within the high school, such as programs that can help them learn about future career opportunities. He enjoys this work and he especially likes that he can be more engaging

with other students.

Leandre is also involved in the color guard, which is part of the marching band.

"I didn't know what it was... I had no clue what it was until [my] freshman year," he said. "[One day], we were doing a choreography [exercise] for theater and then they brought in a color guard in person [for a demonstration] and it was really fun and I decided to join it for my sophomore and junior years, but I didn't get in. And then [in my] senior year, I actually got into it."

Leandre is enjoying his last year in

high school and he is looking forward to graduating in May 2023.

"It hasn't hit me yet... half the [school year] is over. It came too fast," said Leandre.

He explained when he was growing up, he was always encouraged to finish high school and if he chose to, he could further his education by going to college. Although the end of his high school career is coming to a close, he is feeling a bit sad because he does not know what the future holds just yet. His tentative plan, for now, is to continue his education in general studies at Diné

College and work toward obtaining a bachelor's degree, and he is thinking of New York University (NYU) or the University of Cincinnati.

"[The] University of Cincinnati has [a great] music [program that includes] theater," he said. "I've heard it's a really good program."

As for a future career, Leandre said he hopes to finish college and start a career in teaching and conducting workshops, and he has dreams of performing on Broadway.

For now, Leandre is focused on his studies and will be looking forward to May. 🌲

...Cervantes Roman/ From Page 3

Therefore, I wanted to impact my community by giving back. We have an event called Battle of the Bands, which I generally love hosting it with everybody in the club... it's a lot of fun. Mr. Askew is the advisor, and he had a lot of impact on me."

She is also active with the National Honor Society.

"I love giving back to my community. [The National Honor Society] is a great club for me to [give back]. As the vice president [of the National Honor Society], I felt that I could give back in a way and help inspire others," she said. "And then we have Upward Bound... I joined in my freshman year. [Upward Bound] is for first generation [college students], and I've changed a lot because I joined that program."

Elizabeth explained that Upward Bound had made a huge impact on her, and it has provided her with many opportunities.

"I spent most of my summers in the Summer Academy at [Northern Arizona University]," she said. "Some [summers] were online because of COVID but I got the opportunity to meet people from Hopi, Williams, Coco, and Winslow. I wouldn't have

had this opportunity without Upward Bound... so that was a lot of fun."

She explained she enjoys participating in these organizations, but paramount to her purpose and the "Why" factor and reason is her heritage and her family because they suffered a lot to get her to where she is now and to have her experience opportunities that they did not have.

"I don't do it for myself," she added. "It's not all about me... it's for my community... it's for my family... it's for my ancestors that didn't have the opportunity to be where I am."

Elizabeth said Dartmouth College is part of her future plans, and it was really intense to get here. She said she got the opportunity through QuestBridge. She learned about QuestBridge in her freshman year, and she joined. By her senior year, she was really fascinated, and she decided to try for it, and she submitted her application, and she became a finalist out of 17,000 applicants nationwide.

"I was really nervous... I'm like, 'Wow! What if I don't get in?'" she said. "And if I didn't get in... I'm like, 'Okay, it's no big deal...' And then, I made it as a finalist out of the 17,000 [applicants and] only 5,000 got

selected. Then we had a week to do our college applications [and] writing essays. I was writing three essays per night for the schools... so it was pretty intense, but I had an amazing woman help me... her name was Jeenah Park. She really helped me to stay on top of it, and she reviewed my essays, which I think had a huge impact, and I am really thankful for everyone in my life."

"Then, I found out that I had been accepted to Dartmouth, which was my first choice, and I got a full-ride [scholarship] there," she added. "And out of those 5,000 kids, only 1,000 kids matched getting full-ride [scholarship]. That's nationwide... so it was pretty intense."

As the months quickly go by and graduation in May approaches, Elizabeth said she could not help but feel nervous.

"I'm nervous just because I feel like I'm leaving behind [Flagstaff High School] and I'm leaving behind my hometown," she said. "But I'm also really encouraged and motivated to finish this year strong because I feel like I'm excited to graduate [and] for new things to happen... because there are times when I feel exhausted... when I'm drained out...

but I always have to remember what am I doing it for. So that's [my] motivation."

As she embarks upon her college career, she plans to major in political science, and she plans to help her community by becoming a human rights lawyer.

"That's so far, the plan... it might change. The reason I want to do this is because I've seen how people of color have been discriminated and I also thank Mr. Brown, my AP History teacher from last year, who really opened up my eyes and told me, 'Here's all the bad things in our history that people tend to forget...' And I'm like, 'Okay, now I need to fix this... try to fix it,'" she said. "Mr. Marks, throughout high school, he's been amazing and has given me so many opportunities to learn about my culture. I want to become a human right lawyer to impact my culture, impact my communities, [help] people who are underrepresented, and allow them to have these opportunities that [serve as] barriers."

For now, Elizabeth is concentrated and focused on finishing her last few months strong, and she is looking forward to graduating in May 2023. 🌲



Stephen Chrusciel



Peter M. Baxter

Meet some of our great FUSD staff members

Stephen Chrusciel is a maintenance specialist at Flagstaff Unified School District and has been with the school district for a year and a half.

He is enjoying his job with FUSD. "I am motivated by being part of a team that ensures children learn," he said. "I enjoy being part of educating kids and young adults."

Stephen was born in Flagstaff, and his parents are both NAU alumni. Before coming to FUSD to work, he lived in Lake Havasu City, where he retired from the Arizona Highway Patrol as a state trooper. Before that, he served in the U.S. Marines stationed in California.

He is married with children, and he has two sons and a daughter that are

all grown, ages 22, 20, and 18. In the spring, he is looking forward to taking his wife to Paris.

His hobbies include traveling and restoring classic Chevrolet automobiles. He is currently restoring a 1972 "clone" big block Chevy Nova.

Peter Baxter teaches English 12, Dual Enrollment English 12, and AP English Literature & Composition at Flagstaff High School. He is in his eleventh year of full-time teaching and has been teaching at FUSD for seven years.

He earned his undergraduate degree in English from the College of William and Mary. He also earned his master's degree in English (Secondary Education) from Northern Arizona

University, and he is certified to teach in the state of Arizona.

Peter is looking forward to the remainder of the school year.

"I've looked forward to many things during the 2022-2023 school year... not least a calmer... more predictable daily educational environment... especially at Flagstaff High School," he said. "We have all been impacted by the [COVID-19] pandemic, which disrupted our routines and stability, our learning, and our connecting and communicating with each other. Within my own classroom, I've looked forward to time with my students... their quirks, their curiosity... their vitality. I also love the literature that I teach in English 12 classes, so that's a perennial plus."

He is motivated to teach by the belief that education leads us all to better personal and professional opportunities and to richer [and] more textured lives.

"In addition to the knowledge that we gain via education, we also get the invaluable opportunity to develop our critical thinking and communication skills, which are crucial to being successful in all aspects of life," he added.

Peter is originally from Durango, Colorado. His daughter, Amalia, attends the FUSD cooperative preschool at Puente de Hózhó.

"When [Amalia is] not keeping busy, I devote my time and energy to being active outside, especially

**Continued on page 7 /
FUSD Staff**



Rose Lane

...FUSD Staff/ From Page 6

running, cycling, and skiing," he said. "Flagstaff is a great location for all those activities. I also enjoy reading, music, and movies."

"When circumstances lend themselves to traveling, I relish doing so, whether that's regional travel to national parks or international travel. I've been lucky to have lived in and traveled to many places, from Virginia to Spain to Italy to Turkey, as well as many others," said Peter. "I always try to encourage my students to take advantage of chances to travel. Since visiting new places and learning about new cultures... [it] presents a unique means of expanding our perspectives on the world that we inhabit."

Rose Lane is new to Flagstaff Unified School District and is the new accounts payable technician in the Finance and Business Services

Department at the district office.

Rose is originally from Dilkon, Arizona, and is a Navajo tribal member. Her clans are Tsé'íjíní (Honey Combed Rock People Clan), she is born to the Tótsohnii (Big Water Clan), her maternal grandfather's clan is Honágháahnii (One Who Walks Around Clan), and her paternal grandfather's clan is T'ííí lání (Many Goats Clan).

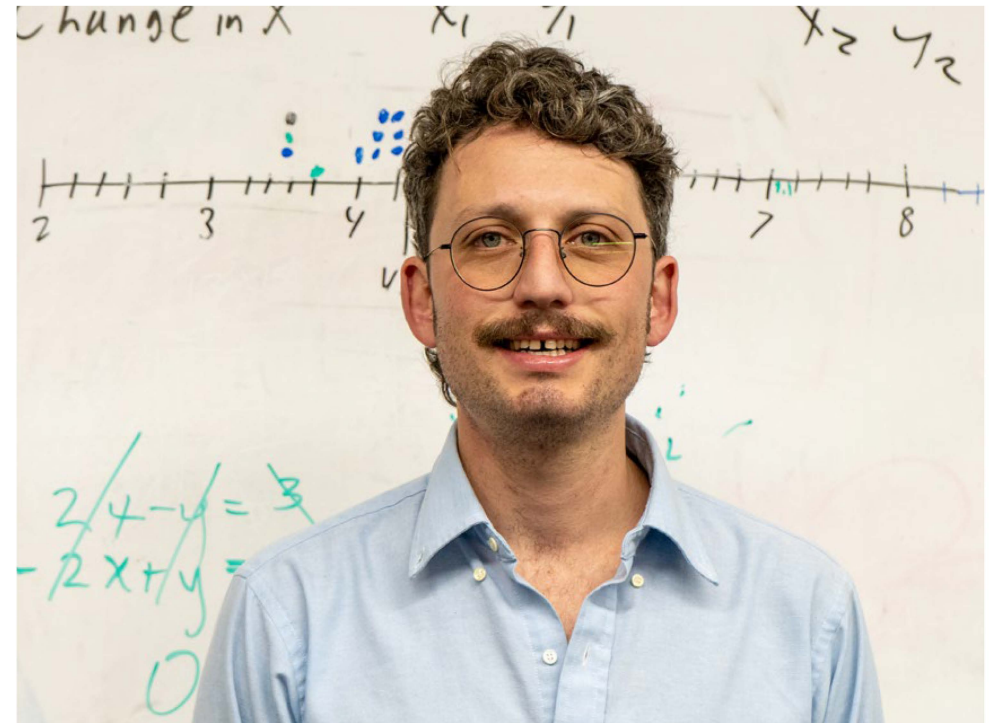
Before coming to FUSD, Rose worked at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort in the accounting/finance and compliance departments.

Rose will be responsible for reviewing and inputting invoices for payment processing for district-wide transactions.

"[I am] always looking forward to learning [and making] improvements as needed," she said.

In her spare time, she enjoys her hobbies.

"[I like] being outdoors... hiking...



John Mistler

running... [and I] enjoy sewing and crafting... sash belt weaving, and possibly rug weaving if time allows," she said.

John Mistler is a math teacher at Coconino High School (CHS), and he has been teaching for six years and three years at CHS.

John explained that he started college at Scottsdale Community College and moved to Northern Arizona University (NAU) to finish school.

This school year, he is looking forward to spending time with his students.

"They make each day exciting and new," he said. "No two days of work are the same for me, and that's one of my favorite parts of the job."

He is motivated to teach by former teachers.

"I think back to several teachers that really made a difference in

my life, and I aspire to be there for students the way they were for me," he said. "That's what motivates me."

John moved to Flagstaff from Phoenix 10 years ago to attend NAU, and he never left. He said his biggest hobbies are playing guitar, drums, and bass.

"I have a home studio where I record songs of different genres ranging from acoustic southern rock to doom metal," he said. "Right now, I am in a psychedelic metal band playing guitar, and we are almost done recording our first album. I'm really excited about that."

He enjoys working at Coconino High School and for Flagstaff Unified School District.

"I'd love to give a shout-out to the math department at Coco," he said. "They are absolutely wonderful to work with and provide amazing support. Cheers!" 🌲



...Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert/ From Page 4

resource center.”

Dianne also mentioned that her staff members are part of the school community.

“Our program is inclusive, and we are just as part of the school district as any other program out there,” she said.

Dianne estimates that the FUSD has more than 2,500 Native American students in the school district, which is about one-third of the total FUSD student population, about 90% of that population are Navajo tribal members, and 3% are Hopi tribal members. The rest is made up of different tribal members other than Navajo or Hopi.

“Our school district has over 25 different tribes represented,” she said.

Dianne explained that communication is key with their families, and they host monthly Native America Parent Organization meetings. The meetings can be attended in person or via Zoom. The program also uses technology as a means to communicate with its families, and they use Zoom, Blackboard Mass Communication, Synergy, a website, and social media.

Dianne has a commitment to her work in this program and the positive impacts it has on Native American students at FUSD. The children and students are her driving force to do her best work.

“Someone needs to be here for them. Although I’m not in-person with them as much as I would love to be,” she said. “These grants [and education plans] cannot move forward unless someone does that. At the base of all my decision, I have them in mind [and] their families and what needs they have.”

Learn more about the FUSD Native American Education Support Program at <https://www.fusd1.org/Domain/67> or call the program at (928) 527-6164.

JANUARY 2023

1/2: FUSD Classes
Resume

1/3: Bond Oversight
Committee

1/10: Governing Board
Meeting

1/16: Martin Luther King,
Jr. Day - No School

1/24: Governing Board
Meeting

Photos, top: Marie Zelenka with Joe Gutierrez, principal of Killip Elementary School. Middle: Kaitlyn Leung and John Albert, principal of Sechrist Elementary School. Bottom: Libby Miller, principal of Flagstaff High School and Rick McEnaney.



Discing4Kids hosting free events beginning January 13

December 4, 2022

Discing4Kids is holding Friday Night Fun Night, a free event series beginning January 13, 2023, at the Mount Elden Middle School gym from 5-7 p.m. for six consecutive weeks.

Eddie Diaz, popularly known as "Mr. Eddie," is the executive director of Discing4Kids, and he explained that there is no cost to anyone for this event. Kids from 5th to 8th grade are welcome, and parents are encouraged to attend. All family

members can participate and the equipment is provided free of charge.

"We'll play five different games simultaneously and rotate the kids through at set intervals," said Diaz. "Each game earns the kids points, and then at the end of the evening, prizes are given out to the different age groups. Raffles will also occur, and each participant will get one ticket. A drawing is held after the games are finished. Kids have the chance to win discs and other items."

Christopher Robbins, a local

professional disk golfer with multiple tournament wins, will help run the event and will provide advice to the kids.

"This event series provides families a chance to get together inside during the colder months and have fun," said Diaz. "We've held these events before, and Friday night was the preferred night. Kids and parents only need to show up, no preparation. After a long week, families need time to get together without worrying about cost and

logistics."

Discing4Kids is supporting the community thanks to generous donations from local businesses that help to sponsor the series. The program is always looking for parents or teachers to assist them with after-school programs in elementary and middle schools. If you are interested, contact Eddie Diaz at discing4kids@gmail.com or call (928) 600-2127. ❄️



Preschoolers traveled to the North Pole

Preschoolers from Ms. Haynes' class at Knoles Elementary school had an amazing opportunity to do the North Pole Experience on November 14, 2022. The students rode the trolley to the North Pole, where they helped to build toys, attended Elf University, and ate some Yetti-Os.

View more photos at <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAfsDr>





**Flagstaff High School Band Members
play Holiday music at FHS Staff Luncheon**



**Flagstaff High School Choir members
sing Holiday songs at Bond Oversight
Committee Meeting**



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