

FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED School District NEWSLETTER

June/July 2023

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2023

Alternate schedule for kindergarteners on the first three days of school

July 7, 2023

FUSD kindergarten students will have an alternate schedule for their first three days of the 2023-2024 school year. Kindergarteners will attend school half days only during the first week on Wednesday, August 9; Thursday, August 10; and Friday, August 11, 2023, along with the entire elementary early release.

Bus transportation for kindergarten students cannot be facilitated on the first day of school on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, due to the early release of secondary students. As a result, families must make arrangements to pick up their kindergarten students on the first day of school.

Morning and afternoon bus transportation will be available for kindergarten students beginning on Thursday, August 10, 2023, and will continue for the rest of the school year. Kindergarteners will learn bus and bus stop procedures on Thursday, August 10, 2023. Lunch may be scheduled earlier for kindergarten students on

early release days, and FACTS programming will be available at the regular dismissal time of students in grades 1-5.

The early dismissal will impact families' work schedules and childcare arrangements, and clear and advanced communications will be sent to families before the first day of school as a reminder. Families with older siblings may need to return to the school for the regular dismissal of students in grades 1-5.

Kindergarten staff understand the significant transition 5-year-old students make at the beginning of school, and they want their first days to be a magical experience with as much support for their safety and success as possible. Students experience fatigue with the amount of new learning, so this schedule will allow the students to transition to full days of school gradually. Kindergarten students will experience the afternoon dismissal without other elementary students before the early release for all elementary students on Friday, August 11, 2023. 🌲



A couple of students are enjoying their time on the playground during KinderCamp at Kinsey Elementary School on June 26, 2023.

IN THIS ISSUE



Marshall students play violins at Heritage Square... Page 4



Super Summer at Kinsey Elementary School... Page 7



Katrina Collins-Hernandez, new Thomas principal... Page 12

A message from our SUPERINTENDENT



Superintendent Michael Penca helps a few pre-Kindergarteners with their projects during a visit to Thomas Elementary School's KinderCamp with United Way of Northern Arizona members and Coconino County Superintendent Cheryl Mango-Paget on June 20, 2023.

I hope it has been an enjoyable summer. It is hard to believe the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year will be here in just a few weeks. FUSD staff are busy preparing to welcome our students and families back to our school — hiring and onboarding new staff, preparing schedules and class rosters, making facility improvements, and cleaning our schools.

This newsletter includes information about enrollment verification and registration for returning and new FUSD students. If you haven't done so already, please take time to verify your child's

information and let us know if your child will be attending our schools so we can be ready for them on the first day of school on Wednesday, August 9.

FUSD has made adjustments in its Arrival and Dismissal times for the 2023-2024 school year to address instructional time requirements, staff schedules, and opportunities for them to prepare instruction and learn together, and to coordinate safe and reliable bus transportation services. **Please note the times listed in the chart to the right.**

I look forward to the successful school year ahead. 🌲

AUGUST 2023

8/7: In Service Day (Staff)
8/8: In Service Day (Staff)
8/8: Governing Board Meeting
8/8: Bond Oversight Committee Meeting
8/9: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
8/22: Governing Board Meeting

2023-2024 School Year - Arrival and Dismissal Times

School	Arrival	Dismissal	Early Release
Cromer Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
DeMiguel Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Killip Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Kinsey Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Knoles Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Leupp Elementary	8:30 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Marshall Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Puente de Hozho Elementary	7:50 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	12:00 p.m. (Wednesday)
Sechrist Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Thomas Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m. (Friday)
Mount Elden Middle School	7:50 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	12:30 p.m. (Wednesday)
Sinagua Middle School	7:50 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	12:30 p.m. (Wednesday)
Coconino High School	8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	12:40 p.m. (Wednesday)
Flagstaff High School	8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	12:40 p.m. (Wednesday)
Summit High School	7:40 a.m.	2:10 p.m.	12:20 p.m. (Wednesday)

ADMINISTRATION

MICHAEL PENCA
Superintendent

LANCE HUFFMAN
Assistant Superintendent of
Curriculum & Instruction

GOVERNING BOARD

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CONTACT

FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
3285 East Sparrow Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

(928) 527-6000 | www.fusd1.org

FUSD enrollment verification and registration now available

July 5, 2023

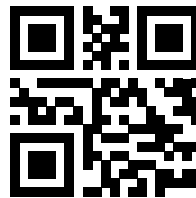
Families intending to register their children in Flagstaff Unified School District schools for the 2023-2024 school year can verify enrollment or register new students online. Parents and guardians of students currently enrolled or enrolled previously in an FUSD school can verify enrollment for the next school year and complete annual forms on ParentVUE by visiting www.fusd1.org/verification. Families who have not yet established their ParentVUE account to access the verification portal must contact their child's school office to receive an activation key.

Families registering their child in an FUSD school for the first time need to create a new account at www.fusd1.org/register to begin the

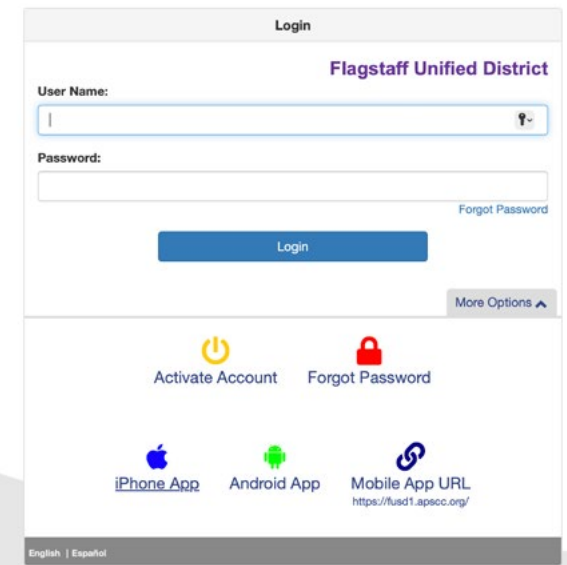
registration process. New accounts require families to submit several documents, including required forms and student records. Families who have not established their ParentVUE account to access the registration portal must contact their child's school office to receive an activation code.

For more information, visit www.fusd1.org or contact your child's school.

Scan the QR code to access information about enrollment verification and registration.



ParentVUE Account Access



2023-2024 SECONDARY STUDENT REGISTRATION DATES

- Tuesday, July 25, 2023 | MEMS, Sinagua Grade 8
- Wednesday, July 26, 2023 | MEMS, Sinagua Grade 7
- Thursday, July 27, 2023 | MEMS, Sinagua Grade 6
- Friday, July 28, 2023 | MEMS, Sinagua All Grades
- Monday, July 31, 2023 | CHS Grade 9
- Tuesday, August 1, 2023 | CHS Grade 10; FHS Grades 10-12
- Wednesday, August 2, 2023 | CHS Grade 11; FHS Grades 10-12
- Thursday, August 3, 2023 | CHS Grade 12; FHS Grade 9/New Student

Summit High School | Contact the school for registration at 928-773-8198

Marshall students flood Heritage Square with their violins

July 7, 2023

Heritage Square in downtown Flagstaff was flooded with a sea of hundreds of Marshall blue t-shirts on May 11. The Marshall students were there to showcase their hard work and talent at the 23rd Annual Marshall Magnet School Suzuki Violin concert.

The concert featured hundreds of Marshall students in kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 2nd Grade to celebrate the accomplishments of more than 200 students. This year's event was the first one held post-COVID-19. The event was canceled for three years during the pandemic.

Janelle Reasor, principal of Marshall Magnet Elementary School, explained that Marshall's mission is to provide relevant and integrated art and science opportunities that support each student's academic and social-emotional development while embracing equity and diversity and promoting high expectations.

"We integrate the arts and sciences with academic standards across subject areas in all grades K-5 to improve student learning and achievement," she said. "One of our cornerstone programs to facilitate our mission is the High-Altitude Suzuki Violin Program."

Reasor explained that the program helps to foster creative and critical thinking, individual and group performance/creation, increased artistic skills, teamwork, a positive sense of self, empathy for others, and academic success for every student at Marshall at no cost to families.

The violin program provides violin and Suzuki Violin instruction to more than 230 children annually. The instructors provide rich and strategic academic musical education. Students are provided instrumental lessons in one of the following

formats throughout the academic school year: two 30-minute weekly lessons for K-2 or a 60-minute weekly lesson for Grades 3-5 through the Magnet Monday program.

Reasor said the program has operated since 2000. The violin program owns more than 370 violins and is more self-sustainable than ever, cutting project costs by 39.8% in the past 10 years while simultaneously expanding in 2013 to include Grades 3-5.

"Marshall, a Title 1 school, assures participation at no cost to families. Consistent with research showing early instrumental music instruction is correlated with student achievement in reading, language, and math and along with an association which builds positive citizenship skills, this project provides a foundation for future opportunities in music to students, regardless of background," said Reasor. "This program truly furthers our mission by infusing the arts into every student's learning and benefits the whole child. This project is one of a few similar programs nationwide and is currently assisting in spreading the violin instruction program to other public and private schools."

Reasor also explained, in addition to music education training, teachers include Suzuki elements through the Music Mind Games curriculum.

"Nationally, other programs focus on a select group of students rather than including all, and often don't begin until Grade 2 with instruction once a week or less," she said. "This project provided an advanced curriculum, designed by Dr. Karin Hallbert, in comparison and was published internationally."

**Continued on page 5 /
Marshall students**



Marshall Elementary School students play their violins during the 23rd Annual Marshall Magnet School's Suzuki Violin concert at Heritage Square in downtown Flagstaff on May 11, 2023.

Trojan Trot Celebration at Sechrist Elementary School

June 7, 2023

Sechrist Elementary School Principal John Albert had to endure the embarrassment of wearing a silly-looking suit with a tutu and jumping on a small bouncy house, all while being sprayed with spray string and water by hordes of students, and not to mention having pies smashed in his face but it was all for fun and to raise money.

Albert explained Trojan Trot is their only yearly fundraising event.

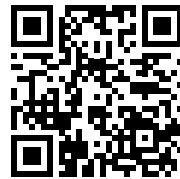
"The event was once outsourced to an outside vendor that took 52% of our profits. For the past 10 years, the PTO has organized and run the event with only about a 15% overhead," he said. "The funds support academic achievement."

Albert also said the actual run is

conducted in late April to celebrate the state testing for all students.

"The students, each year, try and achieve a set goal in order for Mr. Albert to participate in an outlandish event that contains various disgusting substances," he said. "This year, the goal was \$40,000, and the students were able to raise over \$50,000. Parents and community members participate in this event as well."

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Sechrist Elementary School Principal John Albert is plummeted with spray string, water, and pie by students and staff as part of their annual fundraiser, Trojan Trot, on April 28, 2023.

...Marshall students/ From Page 5

"In 2018, Marshall's research study was presented at two conferences in Minnesota and Athens because of the program's unique protocol and collaborative qualities. The findings support instrumental music instruction early in a child's education due to a statistically significant outcome showing that attentional control was enhanced through 15 hours of violin instruction, compared to a group that received no instruction," said Reasor. "Attentional control is associated with academic achievement and memory. Students who learn to attend and redirect focus develop skills necessary for future learning and classroom instruction. Dr. Hallberg's 2019/2020 follow-up study shows similar results."

Reasor said Marshall has other great extracurricular magnet

programs as well, they include: chess, disc golf, painting, building, gardening, makerspace, coding, STEAM, crossfit, Native American Student Council, Live Your Native Life, outdoor explorers, Lego League Robotics, band, choir, musical theater, dance, and more.

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NAU Women's Basketball Team visits Knoles Elementary School

June 7, 2023

Kindergarteners at Knoles Elementary School had a unique opportunity to learn some basketball fundamentals from the Northern Arizona University Women's Basketball Team on April 27.

Danielle Donaldson, a Kindergarten teacher and coordinator of the team visit, explained in kindergarten, one of their units is community.

"Myself and my team noticed the interest that our students had in basketball and realized there was a perfect connection between their interests and our community," said Danielle. "I reached out to the Northern Arizona University (NAU) Women's Basketball team, and they loved the idea of meeting our students."

"The team set up in our gym and each class, about 80 students total, had the opportunity to meet them," she added. "The team introduced themselves, talked about teamwork, taught the students how to dribble, shoot, and pass, and played a few games with the students. Every player took the time to interact with each student and made sure they all felt successful while playing."

Danielle said it is her hope, the experience provides the students with an opportunity to engage in our community, as well as the things that interest them.

"My students talked about the team for the rest of the school year," she said. "Some even signed up for their summer basketball camp. It was such a wonderful event, and I hope we are able to do it again in the future!" 🌲



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Knoles Elementary School Kindergarteners having fun learning basketball fundamentals from the Northern Arizona University's Women's Basketball Team on April 27, 2023.

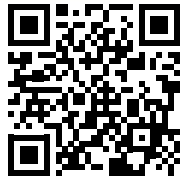
KinderCamp Bridging Over Ceremony

June 29, 2023

More than 150 Pre-Kindergarten students participated in the KinderCamp Bridging Ceremony on June 29 at Thomas Elementary School and Kinsey Elementary School.

KinderCamp students are now ready for kindergarten come August.

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Super Summer at Kinsey 2023

June 26, 2023

More than 200 elementary school students participated in the Super Summer Enrichment Program at Kinsey Elementary School.

The summer program is essentially summer school and it serves students who need extra support in reading instruction.

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7th Graders visit Northern Arizona University

June 7, 2023

More than 400 Flagstaff Unified School District 7th Graders descended on the campus of Northern Arizona University for NAU Day on May 3.

Patti Pastor, Career Exploration Coordinator and instructor at Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD), explained the idea for NAU Day began when she and Dr. Rima Brusi, a professor in the Department of Anthropology at NAU, met with Superintendent Michael Penca to create NAU Day.

"Our hope was to expose our rising 8th Graders from Mount

Elden Middle School and Sinagua Middle School to all the possibilities NAU can hold for them, as well as actually touring the campus," she said.

"So many of our students have never been on the NAU campus."

Pastor said the visit went very well for a first-time event.

"We had a little more than 400 students attend several sessions on career possibilities, NAU programs, and life

on campus," she said. "They were then treated to lunch, which was the culmination of the day."

FUSD students were split into three groups for campus activities and escorted around the campus by NAU students. The sessions included Jack Chats, a game of Seek & Find, and the End in Mind Presentation at the Kitt Recital Hall.

The Seek & Find activity required students to use a campus map and

visit several locations, including Old Main/North Quad, the University Union, Cline Library, the Health and Learning Center, the NAU Bookstore, the Aquatic and Tennis Complex, the Native American Cultural Center, and the Union Fieldhouse.

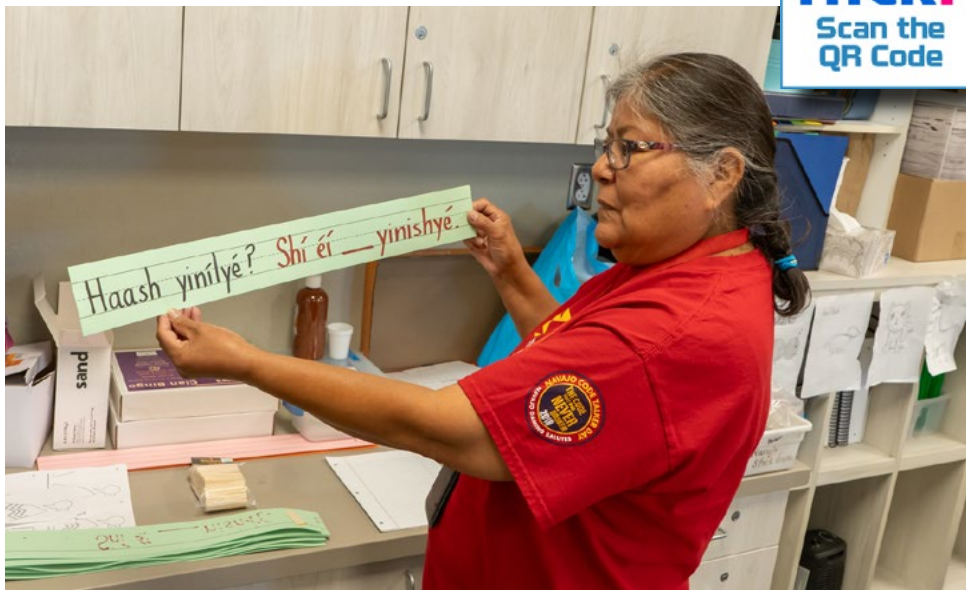
Pastor explained that they hope to grow this event a little more each year and create a connection between FUSD and NAU so students can realize the opportunities they have right in their hometown. 🌲

**So many of
our students
have never
been on the
NAU campus.**

— Patti Pastor



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Students attend Navajo, Hopi Language and Culture Camp

June 28, 2023

Students in Grades 2-8 attended a free Summer Navajo and Hopi Language and Culture Camp held at Killip Elementary School from June 6-30.

Students had the opportunity to learn Navajo or Hopi in several

structured curriculums, and they also learned about the cultures of both tribes.

The program had a class size of 25 students per class. The Navajo culture and language instructor was Annabelle Smallcanyon, and the Hopi culture and language instructor was Debbie Onsae. The

program was coordinated by FUSD's Native American Education Support Program. 🌲

Students participated in the Summer Navajo and Hopi Language and Culture Camp at Killip Elementary School on June 28, 2023. Photos, top left: Navajo language and culture students pose with their instructor Annabelle Smallcanyon. Top right: Hopi language and culture students pose with their instructor Debbie Onsae. Bottom left: Smallcanyon shows a banner used to teach the Navajo language. Bottom right: Onsae shows off some of the artwork the students worked on.

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



Tadd Ragan, new principal at Coconino High School

July 10, 2023

Tadd Ragan is the new principal at Coconino High School, filling the role previously held by Stacie Zanzucchi who retired at the end of the last school year. Tadd was previously one of the two assistant principals at Coconino High School (CHS).

Tadd shared some information about his background and explained as a child, they moved about every four years because his dad served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force which required them to move frequently.

"I was born in Del Rio, Texas, and shortly after that, we were stationed in Germany. From there, we moved to Gila Bend and then eventually Victorville, California,"

he said. "Both of my parents were raised in the Phoenix area, so upon my dad's retirement, we moved back to the Valley. I graduated from Red Mountain High School in Mesa, Arizona."

In 1996, he started working at CHS as a volunteer football coach while working on his undergraduate degree. He has been working at Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) for 23 years. He has served as assistant principal at CHS for two years and as an assistant principal at Sinagua Middle School for five years.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Studies and German

*Continued on page 15 /
Tadd Ragan*



Ninon Wilson, new assistant principal at Coconino High School

July 5, 2023

Nino Wilson is now one of the assistant principals at Coconino High School. Wilson fills the position previously held by Tadd Ragan, who is now the principal, after the retirement of Stacie Zanzucchi at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. A second assistant principal position is still being advertised after the resignation of Les Hauer, who is now the principal at Ponderosa High School in the Coconino County Accommodation School District.

Wilson said she is looking forward to beginning her 16th year in leadership at Coconino High School (CHS) on July 1. She possesses a Bachelor's degree in psychology

with a post-degree certification in elementary education from the University of Missouri and a master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University.

"I have served in Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) for the last 16 years with 15 years as the proud principal of DeMiguel Elementary School," she said. "Before my tenure in FUSD in 2007, I taught in Williams, Arizona, and St. Louis, Missouri."

She also graduated from the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) in 2022 and is trained in cognitive coaching, adaptive schools, Professional

*Continued on page 14 /
Ninon Wilson*



Chris Koenker, new principal at Sinagua Middle School

July 7, 2023

Chris Koenker is the new principal at Sinagua Middle School, a position previously held by Tari Popham who retired at the end of the last school year.

Chris was previously the principal of Summit High School and he has been with Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) for 22 years. He worked at Leupp Elementary School, Mount Elden Middle School, Sinagua Middle School, and Summit High School.

"My whole career has been with FUSD," he said.

He has a Bachelor's degree in social studies education from Northern Arizona University and a Master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University.

"As principal, I am responsible for school operations," he said. "I coordinate curriculum, manage staff, and make sure that Sinagua has a safe and productive place for students and staff to learn in."

"My goal as the new principal is to listen to students, families, and staff," he added. "I want to hear what is working and where we have areas to grow."

Chris is excited about his new role as principal at Sinagua Middle School.

"I look forward to working with our staff, students, and families to help our students prepare for high school and beyond," he said.

Chris is married to his wife, Candice, for 12 years and he has

**Continued on page 14 /
Chris Koenker**



Ginni Biggs, new principal at DeMiguel Elementary School

July 10, 2023

Ginni Biggs is the new principal of DeMiguel Elementary School, previously held by Ninon Wilson, who is now an assistant principal at Coconino High School. Ginni was previously the principal at Thomas Elementary School.

She has been an educator and school administrator for 25 years, and has taught in Kusatsu, Japan; St. Joseph, Missouri; Page, Arizona; and now in Flagstaff, Arizona. She has been with Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) for 18 years and worked at Leupp Elementary School, Killip Elementary School, Kinsey Elementary School, and Thomas Elementary School.

"I joined Flagstaff Unified School District in 2005 and have served as a principal at Thomas Elementary

School for the past five years," she said. "Prior to that, I worked as an instructional coach at Leupp, Killip, and Kinsey Elementary schools. I love working in schools and directly supporting our greater educational community."

"I am committed to supporting the academic growth and development of our students, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment, and collaborating with parents, teachers, and staff to create and maintain an exceptional educational experience for all students," she added. "I am deeply honored to serve our students and to carry on the great traditions and the culture of excellence at DeMiguel."

**Continued on page 15 /
Ginni Biggs**



Katrina Collins-Hernandez, new principal at Thomas Elementary School

July 10, 2023

Katrina Collins-Hernandez is the new principal at Thomas Elementary School, a position previously held by Ginni Biggs who is now the principal at DeMiguel Elementary School.

Katrina grew up in Flagstaff and attended Knoles Elementary School, Mount Elden Middle School, and Sinagua High School. She attended Northern Arizona University and earned a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and began teaching at Kinsey Elementary School in 2007.

"I completed my graduate degree in 2010 in Educational Administration from the University of Phoenix," she said. "I spent 11 years in the classroom prior to becoming an instructional specialist. I have found a true love for educational leadership

and have had many incredible mentors along the way."

"It is an honor to introduce myself as the new principal of Thomas Elementary School and to join this amazing school community," she added. "The 2023-2024 school year marks my 17th year in education, all as an educator with Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD)."

Katrina explained she stepped into the new role as principal on July 3 and she has enjoyed meeting many individuals and gaining valuable insights into what makes the Thomas community so incredible.

"My number one priority upon joining the Thomas team is developing relationships and getting to know each staff member, student,

*Continued on page 15 /
Katrina Collins-Hernandez*



Kalvina Belin, new coordinator of the Native American Education Support Program at FUSD

July 12, 2023

Kalvina Belin is the new coordinator of the Native American Education Support Program at Flagstaff Unified School District, a position previously held by Dianne Lomahaftewa-Albert who resigned and is now the principal at First Mesa Elementary School in Polacca, Arizona, on the Hopi Reservation.

Kalvina is a Navajo Nation tribal member. Her clans are K'aahanaanii Tódich'ii'nii (Living Arrow Bitter Water), born to Ma'ii deeshgiizhinii (Coyote Pass), her maternal grandfather's clan is Ta'neesahnii (Tangle People), and her paternal grandfather's clan is Tódich'ii'nii (Bitter Water). She is originally from Pinon, Arizona, in the Navajo Nation,

and has lived in Flagstaff for 13 years.

Her primary role is to implement programs designed to meet the educational and cultural needs of Native American students within the Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD).

Before coming to FUSD, Kalvina worked in the college and university setting at Diné College and Northern Arizona University. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health with a minor in Indigenous Health Studies, and she has a Master's of Public Health in health promotions with an emphasis in Indigenous Health Track. She earned both degrees from Northern Arizona

*Continued on page 15 /
Kalvina Belin*

MEET SOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Jackson Carranco

Jackson Carranco, new Camp Colton director

Jackson Carranco is the new director of Camp Colton, a position previously held by Mary Giannola, who retired. Jackson was previously the program coordinator at Camp Colton.

Jackson has lived in Flagstaff for 12 years and is from California. He earned his credentials, an undergraduate degree and a Master's degree from Northern Arizona University. He has worked at Camp Colton for seven years.

He said he was attracted to work at Camp Colton.

"It becomes more important with each passing year to invite kids outdoors and leave behind phones and other distractions for a week," he said. "Camp Colton gives kids and their teachers an opportunity to connect with one another in a safe



John Shirk

space and explore this special place we call home."

He explained that Camp Colton helps youth awaken and connect over the wonders of nature and themselves and to realize what they are capable of.

"At camp, a new part of our camper's blossom. They become sensitive to the world around them, develop a more positive relationship with learning, and are empowered with feelings of confidence and self-value that many have never experienced," he said.

In his new role, Jackson explained he is responsible for pretty much everything from the curriculum to the kitchen, cultivating community partners, and working alongside Friends of Camp Colton on large-scale community events, making sure Camp Colton grows into what it can be and ensuring it remains a gem in



Cecil Prado

our community.

"To expound on the last point of [remaining a gem in our community], consider that even beyond all the ways Camp Colton benefits the community by directly helping our youth be stronger, kinder, and wiser stewards of our land and resources, Camp Colton is also helping our community indirectly," said Jackson. "Camp Colton helps teachers become better educators, empowering them to get outdoors and make their classroom teaching more powerful through professional development opportunities, unique teaching experiences, fostering connections to local STEM experts, and simply by hosting a space where teachers can connect with their students in new ways outside of the classroom."

Jackson also explained that Friends of Camp Colton works alongside them to support disadvantaged



Vicki Passalacqua

youth within FUSD and others by financially supporting their camp visit, which helps break down walls and create a more equitable town where all are welcome and invited to create a better future together.

Jackson has some immediate goals.

"As I move into the role as director, I am looking forward to building up and supporting our staff, ensuring the quality of our existing programs is exceptional, and working alongside Friends of Camp Colton to maintain a healthy vision of the future for camp as we work to expand access, design and implement new exciting programs, and realize our master plans for wonderful new camp facilities," he said.

Jackson's hobbies include trail

***Continued on page 14 /
New Staff Members***

**...New Staff Members/
From Page 13**

running, biking, backpacking, and water sports. He also enjoys reading, playing the piano, pressing and framing flower collections, photography, and more.

**John Shirk, the new
director of Student
Support Services at FUSD**

John Shirk is the new director of Student Support Services at Flagstaff Unified School District, a position previously held by Cathy Cox, who retired.

He started in his new role on June 3 and will be responsible for the general direction and oversight of Student Support Services. He will also oversee counselors, social workers, and nurses.

"I am the new director of Student Support Service, a.k.a. the new Cathy Cox," he said. "I will help facilitate support between staff, students, and the community, as well as provide overall direction in areas such as student behavior, crisis response, counseling services, health services, restorative practices, prevention, and other related areas. I'll also oversee 504 plans and Title IX."

"I would like to help foster a healthy, supportive culture and climate across the [school] district, help to integrate our community and schools into a cohesive partnership, and develop systems to help facilitate all areas of student support so that they function smoothly and effectively when students and staff need assistance," he added.

John has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Cognitive Science, a concentration in computer science from the University of Virginia, and a Masters in Educational Leadership from Arizona State University.

He explained that his first job post-college was in 2002 at New

Dominion School in Dillwyn, Virginia. New Dominion was a therapeutic residential wilderness school for at-risk teenagers, and he lived there five nights out of the week at a campsite.

"After that, I realized I loved working with youth on making better choices, but wanted to be able to go home at night, so I moved out to Phoenix to get my teaching certificate," he said. "I worked at Compadre High School as a paraprofessional in 2005 in their Emotional Disabilities: Private Placement (EDP) program. Three years later, I became the math teacher in that same program."

In 2015, he moved to Marcos de Niza High School as a resource/inclusion math teacher.

"Halfway through the 2017-2018 school year, I became the Student Services Coordinator at McClintock High School," he added. "In this position, I oversaw special education services for the site, including the EDP and Cross-Cat Behavioral programs located there. In 2022, I moved to Apache Junction Unified School District as the Special Education Coordinator, which was based in the district office and supported all sites."

John shared some personal information. He was born in Chicago, Illinois, but grew up in Alexandria, Virginia.

"It's just outside of Washington, D.C. Our house was actually on what used to be one of George Washington's farms," he said. "I lived in central Virginia for a few years after graduating from college and moved out to Tempe in 2004. I bounced around the Phoenix area for a little bit, eventually ending up in Chandler. We just moved up to Flagstaff at the very end of June."

He has a 5-year-old child that will be starting kindergarten, and he also has two older children that already graduated high school.

As for hobbies, he said he loves the outdoors, especially backpacking and skiing.

"I play soccer and was on a few rec league teams in Phoenix," he said.

"I like playing all sports, but that's the primary one. I also enjoy playing strategy board games a lot."

He is very excited about the upcoming school year.

**Cecil Prado, new Human
Resources Coordinator**

Cecil Prado is the new Human Resources Coordinator, filling the role of Wanda Billing-Reber, who retired last month.

Cecil has lived in Flagstaff since 2018. He has Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and a Juris Doctorate from UCLA's School of Law.

Before joining Flagstaff Unified School District, he worked at Coconino County in the Sheriff's Office, Health and Human Services, and at the Education Service Agency.

His hobbies include tabletop role-playing games, reading, and spending time with his son.

"My wife, my son, and I enjoy the generous people and beautiful places of northern Arizona," Cecil said.

"I'm excited to serve the [school] district in the HR Coordinator position, as I appreciate collaboration and value serving our community," he added. "I look forward to supporting education in the district through my work in human resources."

**Vicki Passalacqua, new
department secretary
for College and Career
Development/CTE**

Vicki Passalacqua is the new department secretary for College and Career Development, and CTE Department, a position previously held by Grace Jiron who retired.

Vicki is not new to Flagstaff Unified School District, she previously worked at Sinagua Middle School as the attendance secretary. In her new role, she will be assisting the CTE department.

She has lived in Flagstaff her entire life and has worked in various office positions, mostly in the medical field. She is a graduate of Flagstaff High School and attended Northern Arizona University.

She currently has three grandchildren attending FUSD schools and she said, "More to come!"

"I am very happy to be here and to have the opportunity to work with such an amazing team!" she said. "I am anxious to learn and grow in this position." 🌲

...Ninon Wilson/ From Page 10

Learning Communities (PLC), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Student Agency in Learning (SAIL).

"I am passionate about ensuring all students are successful in their education, and I am excited to continue my work in FUSD in a new leadership role supporting students and staff at CHS," she said. "Along with loving to hike, I am a life-long learner in areas that support students, especially how students learn."

"I am passionate about our students, our community, and colleagues, which drives my desire to begin my tenure in an integral role at CHS," she added. "I am enthusiastic about being a part of the future success of FUSD as the assistant principal of CHS. Go Panthers!" 🌲

...Chris Koenker / From Page 11

three children, a 20-year-old stepson, and 9-year-old twins. His hobbies include fly fishing, camping, and working around the house. He has lived in Flagstaff for 25 years.

...Tadd Ragan/ From Page 10

Education, and he also has a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University.

Tadd explained his new role as a leader at CHS is to create and maintain classroom support systems.

"Along with the other two members of the CHS administrative team, it is our responsibility to create a safe school environment that supports students and teachers," he said. "We set performance goals for students and teachers, and ensure those goals are met."

Tadd added that his goal as the new principal is to continue to build upon the foundation that Mrs. Zanzucchi built and to make CHS the home of an A+ school.

"I want to increase the opportunities for students to participate in... like performing arts at CHS. Find creative ways to continue the upgrading of our facilities... and upgrading our athletic facilities," he said.

Tadd and his wife, Alison, have two sons, one is a graduate of CHS and the youngest is a current student. His hobbies include all things related to

family time.

"We enjoy watching our sons participate in athletics, travel, and hopefully some more camping," he said. "Alison and I enjoy live music concerts, and I also enjoy golfing and barbecuing."

A fun fact, Tadd spent one academic year studying in Germany during his junior year in college, and the summer prior to that, he spent two months working at a BMW factory in Munich. 🌲

...Ginni Biggs/ From Page 11

Ginni has a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, and a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, Science, and Mathematics. She attended Western Michigan University and Northern Arizona University to obtain her credentials.

Her hobbies include hiking, mountain biking, gardening, reading, and camping with her family. She grew up in Petoskey, Michigan. 🌲

...Katrina Collins-Hernandez / From Page 12

and family on an individual basis," she said. "I am aware of many of the amazing things taking place at Thomas and I am excited to assist in keeping the momentum going by supporting what is needed."

Katrina's children have all attended FUSD schools and two of them graduated recently.

"My family is definitely my biggest hobby! We love being together, whether it is traveling, playing sports, celebrating, or hiking," she said. "I also love crafting, finding DIY projects around my home, and playing volleyball."

"I am so excited to join the Thomas Team! Go Tigers!" she said. 🌲

...Kalvina Belin / From Page 12

University.

As for her goals in her new position, she explained she pursued a Public Health degree to promote the health and well-being of Native American and Indigenous community members.

"With that in mind and heart, my primary goal is to uplift and support our students here at FUSD in any way possible," she said.

She has a daughter going into 8th Grade and a sister attending Coconino High School, and her toddler is in daycare. Her hobbies include hiking in northern Arizona, she recently learned how to sew and she is learning how to make three-tiered Navajo skirts, and she enjoys learning how to roller skate. 🌲



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3150 N Alta Vista Dr., Flagstaff, AZ
June 5 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Lunch 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Coconino High School

2801 N Izabel, Flagstaff, AZ
June 6 – June 30, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Cromer Elementary School

7150 E Silver Saddle, Flagstaff, AZ
June 5 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Flagstaff Middle School

755 N Bonito St., Flagstaff, AZ
June 6 – July 28, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Killip Elementary School

2300 E 6th Ave., Flagstaff, AZ
June 6 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Kinsey Elementary School

1601 S Lone Tree, Flagstaff, AZ
June 6 – June 30, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Knoles Elementary School

4005 E Butler, Flagstaff, AZ
June 12 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Leupp Public School

Leupp Road, Leupp, AZ
June 5 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Breakfast & Lunch
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Marshall Elementary School

850 N Bonito St., Flagstaff, AZ
June 5 – July 28, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Mobile Haven Park

4280 N Hamblin, Flagstaff, AZ
June 5 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Lunch 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Thomas Elementary School

3330 E Lockett, Flagstaff, AZ
June 6 – July 21, Monday - Friday
Breakfast 7:30 am – 8:30 am
Lunch 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

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