

FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED School District NEWSLETTER

May 2024

Smith Named Teacher of the Year, Cartwright Named Rookie Teacher of the Year

May 1, 2024

Several distinguished educators at Flagstaff Unified School District were honored for their outstanding educational contributions at the 2024 Teacher of the Year Awards hosted by the Coconino County Superintendent of Schools.

Jeremiah Smith from Coconino High School received the coveted Teacher of the Year title and was celebrated for his impactful work in history and leadership education and his role as the assistant athletic director. Smith will enjoy a one-year lease of a 2025 Toyota Rav4 courtesy of Findlay Toyota.

Emily Cartwright of Marshall Elementary was recognized as the Rookie Teacher of the Year for her dedication to students with intellectual disabilities in a specialized program. Additionally, the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Rick McEnaney, a music teacher from Flagstaff High School, to acknowledge his 37 years of inspiring students.

The ceremony, held on April 25,

2024, at the High Country Conference Center, spotlighted the excellence and commitment of these educators within Coconino County.

Congratulations to all the honorees. The Teacher of the Year finalists included Jeremiah Smith of Coconino High School, Jodie Brown, Desert View Intermediate School of Page Unified School District, and Sydney West of Mount Elden Middle School. The Rookie Teacher of the Year finalists were Emily Cartwright of Marshall Magnet Elementary School, Noah Cordova of Ponderosa High School, Kylie Haidet of Knoles Elementary School, Lauren Kimsey of DeMiguel Elementary School, and Madison O'Brien of Puente de Hózhó Elementary School. 🌲

Jeremiah Smith of Coconino High School is named the Coconino County Teacher of the Year and Emily Cartwright of Marshall Elementary School is named Rookie Teacher of the Year. Photos, top: Jeremiah Smith accepting his award. Bottom: Emily Cartwright accepting her award.



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A message from our SUPERINTENDENT

As we close the Flagstaff Unified School District's (FUSD) 2023-2024 school year, I'm filled with immense pride for all we accomplished together. Our students shined with persistence and ownership for their learning, and cultivated valuable skills for their future. This wouldn't have been possible without the support and partnership of our families. You strengthened our schools and fostered a sense of community that truly mattered.

Our incredible staff deserves a standing ovation! You consistently went above and beyond to create engaging learning experiences, nurture safe and supportive environments, and keep our schools running smoothly. Your passion and dedication have had a lasting impact on the lives of our students.

Let's take a moment to celebrate! It's time to reflect on the memories made, the knowledge gained, and the growth witnessed in our students – both academically and in character. A heartfelt thank you to our retiring staff for your years of dedicated service. To our graduating Class of 2024, your perseverance and talent leave an inspiring mark and provide us hope.

Whether you're moving on or returning next year, we appreciate you entrusting FUSD with your time and expertise. For those departing, we wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

For our returning students, enjoy

a relaxing summer break filled with family, friends, and don't forget the exciting extended learning opportunities offered by FUSD and our community partners.

As we turn the page to the next chapter, know that FUSD remains committed to providing the very best education and support for each student. We're dedicated to creating even more inclusive, innovative, and challenging learning environments. I look forward to reuniting with all of our FUSD school communities on August 7th for the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

2024-2025 Calendar and School Arrival & Dismissal Schedules

The Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) has adopted and established its 2024-2025 School Calendar and School Arrival & Dismissal schedules. We hope this assists for your advance planning for the coming year. See the School Arrival & Dismissal schedule displayed to the right.

FUSD Transportation 2024-2025

In recent years, several issues have factored into necessary changes to the Flagstaff Unified School District's (FUSD) transportation services — a shortage of qualified drivers, operating costs exceeding the district's transportation budget, funding from the state of Arizona,

and direction from the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) about loading capacities on school buses. This has resulted in reducing and combining routes, discontinuing some activity buses, and decreasing students' eligibility for transportation services.

FUSD will implement the following to determine student eligibility for bus transportation effective at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year on August 7, 2024.

- FUSD will not provide bus transportation for elementary, middle, or high school out-of-boundary or magnet students.
- Please note these changes do not impact busing for Puente de Hózhó Elementary since it does not have an attendance boundary.

- Parents and legal guardians may request to have an elementary or middle school student who has been approved for open enrollment student transported from a pickup point designated by the District within the receiving school's transportation area.

Continued on page 3 / Superintendent

Click the QR Code to watch Superintendent Penca's End of Year Message



School Site	Arrival	Dismissal	Early Release Fridays
Cromer Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
DeMiguel Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Killip Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Kinsey Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Knoles Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Leupp Elementary	8:30 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Marshall Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Puente de Hózhó Elem.	7:50 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	11:35 a.m.
Sechrist Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Thomas Elementary	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Mount Elden Middle School	7:50 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	11:35 a.m.
Sinagua Middle School	7:50 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	11:35 a.m.
Coconino High School	8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	11:45 a.m.
Flagstaff High School	8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	11:45 a.m.
Summit High School	7:40 a.m.	2:10 p.m.	11:25 a.m.

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FUSD Workplace Campaign Raises \$7,852 for United Way

May 3, 2024

In a remarkable show of community spirit and generosity, participants in the 2023 Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) workplace campaign raised a substantial \$7,852 for the United Way of Northern Arizona. This contribution will support local organizations and KinderCamp, an initiative benefiting young children within the school district and community.

As a part of this year's campaign, participants were entered into drawings based on their levels of giving. The prize winners included staff members from various schools within the district.

Julia Cencioso of Thomas Elementary School, Heather Pierce of Sinagua Middle School, and Heather Ziegler of Flagstaff Unified School District were among the winners of the \$10 Dunkin Donuts gift cards.

"We are grateful these First Time United Way Contributors pledged support for our community," said FUSD Superintendent Michael Penca.

The winner of the Crumbl Cookies was Jessica Knott of Cromer Elementary School, who received a dozen cookies to share with colleagues, family, or friends.

Jordan Morales of Kinsey Elementary School won Trading Places with Superintendent Penca. Her unique prize involved swapping roles with Superintendent Penca for a day. While the Superintendent took on Morales' teaching duties, including recess and planning instruction, Morales spent her day in the Superintendent's office, engaging in meetings, school visits, and district-wide planning activities.

Reflecting on the experience, Superintendent Penca highlighted some memorable moments. He praised the school's vibrant

community and the engaging activities he participated in throughout the day, including morning drop-off duty, teaching coordinate grids, playing games during recess, participating in the Nail Club with Ashley, and helping with afternoon dismissal and pick-up.

Jordan Morales also shared her thoughts on the day, describing it as eye-opening and exciting.

"I think about leadership in my future at some point," she said, expressing how the experience gave her a new appreciation for the various professionals working in the district.

Morales recounted her day filled with meetings, school tours, and even a webinar on a new Supreme Court ruling.

"It made me feel like, as a teacher, really fortunate that everybody takes care of their own job so well that things just run so smoothly there," she added.

Valerie Angello of Coconino High School won the Pancake Breakfast served by Superintendent Penca and Cabinet administrators for her school staff, complete with generous servings of maple syrup.

Superintendent Penca expressed his gratitude and admiration for the staff.

"I appreciate the many ways Team FUSD is 'United in Purpose' with our communities!" he said.

This year's campaign not only brought together the FUSD community in support of a worthy cause but also fostered camaraderie and fun through these special prize giveaways. 🌲



Photos, top: Jordan Morales who was Superintendent for the day meets with Ginger Stevens, director of Finance and Business Services, in the Superintendent's Office to discuss the school district budget. Bottom left: Valerie Angello and staff at Coconino High School enjoy a Pancake Breakfast served by Superintendent Penca and members of the Cabinet. Right: Superintendent Penca helping a student in Ms. Morales' fifth grade class.

...Superintendent / From Page 2

- FUSD will not provide bus transportation to high school students who live within the Flagstaff city limits.
 - This does not impact high schoolers living outside the city limits in areas such as Doney Park, Baderville, Parks, Bellemont, Kachina Village, Mountaineer, Cameron, Leupp, and so on will still be eligible for transportation.
- Yearly Mountain Line transit passes will be purchased by the

school district for middle and high school students and be available upon request.

Please note this does not impact busing for students attending Summit High School, students who receive special education, homeless (McKinney-Vento) services, or foster services and are eligible for transportation.

I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you or your family, and hope this advance information will assist in your planning for next school year. 🌲



NAU Basketball Players Visit Knoles for a Day of Fun, Learning

May 1, 2024

On April 19, kindergarten students at Knoles Elementary School were treated to a special visit from Northern Arizona University (NAU) women's basketball team members. The students had the opportunity to interact with the athletes, play games, and learn some basketball basics.

One of the visiting athletes was Ava Schmidt, a freshman at NAU. Schmidt, who plays small forward, shooting guard, and post, shared her

excitement about the visit.

"We're just here to help out with the kids and just have an impact on the community," she said.

Schmidt expressed her love for both basketball and children.

"I really like kids, and I like basketball, and got a little bit of both, so I feel like that'd be fun," she said. "I just like doing things with my teammates and helping out."

Another team member, Nyah Moran, also joined in on the fun. Moran, a guard with four years of playing experience and one more

year left due to COVID-19 eligibility, emphasized the importance of making a positive impact.

"I am here just to help out and make a difference in someone's life and make them confident in being who they want to be," Moran said when asked about her motivation for participating in the event.

The NAU players engaged with the kindergarteners through various activities, fostering an environment of encouragement and positivity. Moran offered heartfelt advice to the young students.

"Just be yourself no matter what," Moran said.

The visit was a hit with the children and served as a wonderful example of community engagement and the positive influence that student-athletes can have. The morning was filled with laughter, learning, and memorable moments that will likely inspire the young students for years to come. 🌲



DeMiguel Elementary School Launches Inaugural "Space Week"

May 14, 2024

DeMiguel Elementary School proudly launched its first "Space Week" from May 6-10, inviting K-5 students and staff to embark on an exciting space exploration journey.

To kick off Space Week, all students had the opportunity to tour the Walker Observatory. Under the expert guidance of Mary Lara, a former DeMiguel teacher and current Walker Observatory director, Michelle Weidinger, a 5th-grade teacher at DeMiguel, and Ed Anderson, an astronomer from Northern Arizona University (NAU), students peered through telescopes and witnessed the sun flares.

Lara has been instrumental in the observatory's activities. She led the tours during Space Week, with Weidinger facilitating the telescope viewing. Lara's dedication and passion for astronomy have been a driving force behind this initiative.

Walker Observatory houses a

14" Newtonian reflector telescope, originally willed by Kenneth Walker, an educator and amateur astronomer from Holbrook, Arizona. In 2001, the dome and telescope were moved from their original location to DeMiguel Elementary School, with the observatory foundation constructed entirely with donations and volunteer labor. The observatory has recently undergone a refurbishment project to ensure its usability for future generations.

Thanks to Lara's dedication to astronomy education, the DeMiguel community has experienced a significant impact. The week-long Space Week event has not only enriched the students' knowledge of space but also ignited their curiosity and passion for astronomy. This event has paved the way for a bright future for the young explorers at DeMiguel Elementary School, ensuring a continued interest in space exploration. 🌟



CHS, FHS Join Forces to Cultivate Sustainability and Community Engagement

May 20, 2024

In an inspiring display of cross-campus collaboration, Coconino High School (CHS) and Flagstaff High School (FHS) have embarked on a joint project aimed at promoting sustainability and agricultural literacy. The initiative, led by Francy Solarte, Spanish Teacher at CHS, and Nicole Taylor, ELL Specialist at FHS, focuses on the theme "sustainability requires accessibility."

The project, which began last school year, received an FUSD Foundation grant that facilitated the purchase of seeds, plants, and indoor starter kits. This year, the collaboration expanded to include new garden beds, made possible by donations from Terra Birds and Restoration Soils, with additional support from community partners like Blocklite.

Nicole Taylor expressed her enthusiasm for the project.

"Last year Francy and I created a project that focused on 'sustainability requires accessibility' where students from the Transition from School to Work Program (TSW) worked with students in the Spanish for Spanish Speakers and IB Spanish classes at CHS. We also collaborated with the woods teacher and students in the woods class to create an ADA-accessible garden bed. Community outreach also led to Blocklite donating all of the pavers for an ADA-accessible pathway in the garden."

Continuing their efforts, Taylor moved to FHS as the ELL Specialist but maintained her commitment to the project.

"We decided to extend the lens of accessibility to focus on language this year and agricultural literacy. A cross-campus collaboration was begun, still around 'sustainability requires accessibility' but this time through language," explained Taylor. "We want to share a unit of inquiry in which multilingual students at

both schools would collaborate to inquire, research, and discuss topics of sustainability."

On May 10, Taylor and her students visited CHS, where they worked together with CHS students to fill the new garden beds, transplant plants, and beautify the garden.

"It was a rewarding experience that showcased the power of teamwork and project-based learning," Solarte said.

The collaboration has received positive feedback from students at both schools.

"It was fun to work with other people who are not in the same school and learn from them and how they work," said CHS Student Yuliana.

Another student, Areli, added, "We worked together, and thanks to that, the garden is now very beautiful."

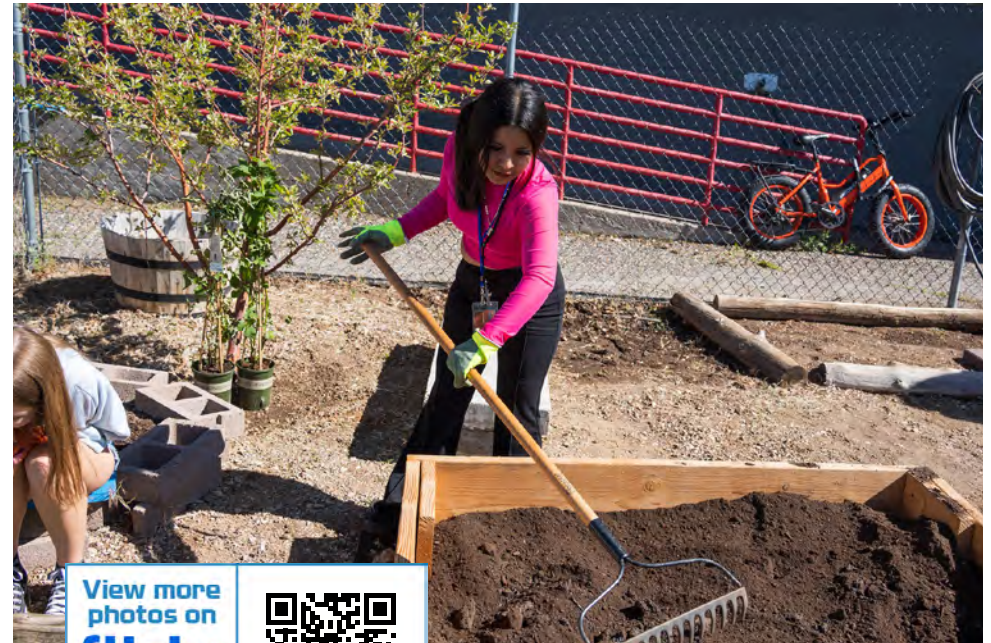
FHS student Jie appreciated the teamwork as well.

"I liked that everyone worked together, that we made different groups, and that every group worked on different jobs," he said.

Ximena valued the opportunity to use her native language, stating, "I liked that I could speak my native language with new people."

The project fosters environmental stewardship and cultural exchange and enhances the educational experience by providing hands-on learning opportunities. As Solarte and Taylor continue to nurture this collaboration, they lay the groundwork for a more sustainable future, one garden bed at a time.

This partnership between CHS and FHS exemplifies how schools can work together to create meaningful learning experiences while addressing important issues like sustainability and accessibility. The positive impact on students and the community highlights the importance of such initiatives in fostering a sense of responsibility and cooperation among young learners. 🌱





CocoNuts Achieve Top Honor with 2024 FIRST Championship Impact Award

April 23, 2024

The CocoNuts, the robotics team of Coconino High School, secured the prestigious 2024 FIRST Championship Impact Award, entering the FIRST Hall of Fame after a competitive event from April 17-20.

Led by coaches Christine Sapio, CHS science teacher, and retired NAU Teach Professor Dave Thompson, the CocoNuts distinguished themselves amongst a field of over 1,000 FIRST Robotics Competition, FIRST Tech Challenge, and FIRST Lego League teams of students from 58 countries in front of 50,000 attendees at the FIRST Championship in Houston.

This season, out of nearly 5,000 FIRST Robotics competition teams from across the globe, only 600 reached the FIRST Championship. The CocoNuts were honored as one of six Impact Award finalists, signifying their outstanding commitment to the FIRST mission of inspiring innovation and fostering impactful STEM education.

The FIRST Impact Award is the apex of recognition within the FIRST

Robotics Competition, celebrating teams that exhibit sustained excellence and influence both within the FIRST community and their local regions. It applauds teams that act as role models, extending their reach beyond the realm of robotics to mentor and shape the influencers of tomorrow.

The CocoNuts earned this prestigious award through their work starting new FIRST teams on the Navajo Nation in a program they call "RezBotics," running the FIRST Tech Challenge program for the entire state of Arizona, and their extensive advocacy for STEM education both at the state and national levels.

Flagstaff Unified School District, Coconino High School administrators, and the Flagstaff community at large have been instrumental in nurturing the CocoNuts' success. The CocoNuts also have numerous sponsors and partners that help make their mission possible. Their unwavering

*Continued on page 11 /
CocoNuts*



Flagstaff Unified School District Honors Teachers Completing LETRS Program

May 21, 2024

Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) recently hosted a celebratory event for 86 teachers who completed the two-year comprehensive professional development program, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), on May 14.

Nancy Pierce, a literacy coach with FUSD, emphasized the importance and impact of the LETRS program.

"LETRS is an evidence-based professional development program designed to provide educators with the essential knowledge and skills necessary for teaching reading and spelling effectively," she said. "The program's goal is to ensure that every student receives the highest quality literacy instruction."

"Over the past two years, FUSD

sponsored a cohort of teachers who participated in this transformative training," added Pierce. "These educators demonstrated an unwavering commitment to their professional growth and to improving literacy skills among students."

Pierce expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the teachers for their dedication and hard work.

"Your dedication to improving literacy skills among our students and your hard work doesn't go unnoticed. I am grateful for each of you," she said. "You are my why... Why I continue to learn and align my practices more closely with research-based methods for reading instruction, address our structures and systems within FUSD to align with research, and my commitment to each of you to support you in all you do for our students." 🌟



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CCC Honors Breannah Harvey with Prestigious Dual Enrollment Award

April 20, 2024

Coconino High School celebrates the outstanding achievements of senior Breannah Harvey, who has been honored with the Dual Enrollment Student of the Year award by Coconino Community College (CCC). This remarkable recognition highlights

Breannah's dedication to excellence in her academic pursuits.

In her nomination form, Donna Lyons, CAVIAT's career guidance coordinator, shared her admiration for Breannah.

"Breannah Harvey is an accomplished academic who is soon to graduate with her

AGEC, followed by her high school graduation," said Lyons. "She comes from a family of like-minded women, and [she] smiles as she talks about the competition for [college] degrees between her mom, her sister, and now herself."

"Breannah credits her mom as her inspiration for pursuing her Associate's degree while completing her high school graduation requirements," added Lyons. "She earned a Lumberjack Scholarship, and [she] plans to study criminology at Northern Arizona University (NAU), following [in] her sister's footsteps. Her combination of dual and concurrent enrollment is earning her the degree that will allow her to enroll at NAU as a junior."



The senior excels academically and contributes significantly to her community.

"Breannah is very proud of her heritage," said Lyons. "She volunteers with the Native American Club at CHS when time allows. She is reading Lakota Woman in her DE English 12 class and [is] enjoying learning from a cultural perspective."

Breannah shared insights into her educational journey, reflecting on the balance between her high school and college coursework since the summer of 2022.

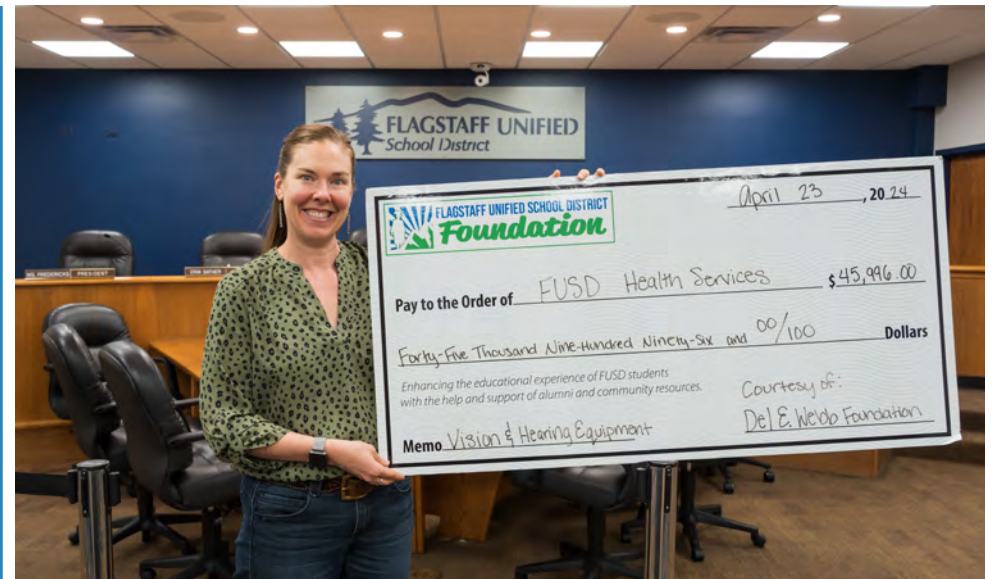
"My mom said that I could graduate with my associate's degree if I did well in high school, which I thought was pretty cool," Breannah stated with humble pride.

Despite a demanding schedule, she finds time for rest and is looking forward to a celebratory trip to Hawaii for her sister's wedding.

The young scholar also revealed her career aspirations, emphasizing her interest in cybersecurity—a field she regards as intellectually stimulating and rewarding. She eventually wants to obtain a doctorate degree, and she envisions a future prosperous in academic accomplishments. She aspires to continue the friendly family rivalry of attaining the highest number of degrees.

The Flagstaff community will gather to honor Breannah and her fellow award recipients at the awards ceremony on CCC's Lone Tree campus on May 29, 2024, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. This event will recognize the

Continued on page 11 / Harvey



FUSD Receives Grant for New Health Screening Equipment

May 20, 2024

The Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) has been awarded a generous grant to enhance its health services with new hearing and vision screening equipment. This significant contribution will benefit all health offices within the district and the preschool evaluation program.

The grant application was spearheaded by McKenzie Bevirt, the FUSD Health Services Coordinator, with support from the FUSD Foundation. The funding was provided by the Del E. Webb Foundation, which supports initiatives in Arizona, California, and Nevada. Their mission is to create or enhance opportunities, primarily focusing on students and health initiatives.

Bervit expressed her gratitude for the grant.

"We are incredibly grateful for the financial support from the Del E. Webb Foundation," said Bevirt. "This updated equipment will help our nurses better support student health and wellbeing through routine

hearing and vision screenings."

The awarded funds will be utilized to purchase new audiometers for each health office and the preschool evaluation program. Additionally, the grant will cover the cost of otoacoustic emissions (OAE) equipment, which will be used district-wide when students do not pass traditional hearing screenings. Furthermore, the district will acquire two portable vision screeners to detect vision problems in students.

The new equipment will enable FUSD nurses to conduct more effective and comprehensive health screenings, ensuring that students receive the necessary support to thrive academically and personally. The improved tools for hearing and vision assessments are expected to lead to early detection and intervention, which are crucial for addressing health issues that could impact learning and development.

With this grant, FUSD is poised to make significant strides in promoting student health and well-being, thanks to the invaluable support of the Del E. Webb Foundation. 🌲

FUSD to Sponsor Summer Food Service Program Starting June 3

May 20, 2024

The Flagstaff Unified School District will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program to ensure all children in the community, ages 18 and under, have access to nutritious meals during the summer months.

Under the program, meals will be provided to all children at no charge. These meals will be the same for all children, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. The district is committed to ensuring there is no discrimination during meal service.

The summer meals program is a federal initiative. Due to changes at the federal level, there will be no Grab 'N Go meals, parent pick-up of meals, or multi-day meals. Meals must be consumed on-site.

Meals will be provided at the following sites, dates, and times:

Cromer Elementary School

June 3 – June 28
Monday – Friday
Lunch: 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Flagstaff High School

June 4 – June 28
Monday – Friday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Killip Elementary School

June 4 – June 27
Monday – Friday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Kinsey Inquiry and Discovery School

June 4 – June 28
Monday – Friday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 10:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Leupp Elementary School

June 3 – June 28
Monday – Friday
Breakfast: 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



Marshall Elementary School

June 3 – July 19
Monday – Friday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Thomas Elementary School

June 4 – June 28
Monday – Friday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

To find meal sites near you, text FOOD or COMIDA to 304-304. For more information, call FUSD Food Service (928-527-6090).

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...Harvey / From Page 10

hard work and success of students who have excelled in their dual enrollment journey.

Breannah Harvey embodies the spirit of determination, and she serves as an inspiration to her peers.

As time winds down at CHS, she admitted she is nervous about the upcoming graduations. She also revealed that her favorite subject in high school was math because, in her junior year, she took dual enrollment for pre-calculus and college math. She also said her favorite teacher was Mr. Jonathan Edwards, her math teacher.

Shaunicey Begay of Page High School was the other Dual Enrollment Student of the Year, and Levi Kelch of Flagstaff High School was the CAVIAT Student of the Year. 🌲

...CocoNuts / From Page 7

support is now echoed in the halls of the FIRST Robotics Hall of Fame, with Flagstaff, Arizona, becoming its newest member. Only 36 FIRST Robotics Competition teams have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The FIRST Robotics Competition, a branch of FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a not-for-profit organization, has catapulted young people into the future through its suite of team-based robotics programs. FIRST participants and alumni are equipped with STEM learning, interest, and skill-building that extend well into their post-high school careers. Founded by Dean Kamen in 1989, FIRST has made a profound impact, evidenced by the enthusiasm and advanced technological ingenuity showcased at their international competitions.

The CocoNuts exemplify the pinnacle of FIRST's vision—turning a passion for STEM into tangible success and fostering a community spirit that transcends the competition arena. 🌲



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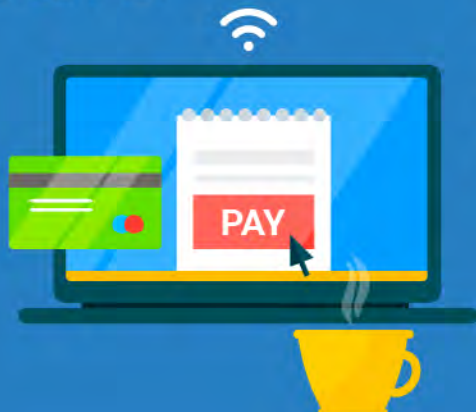
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