



Navajo Hooghan Dedicated at Flagstaff High School

September 19, 2024

On September 18, 2024, Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) held a dedication ceremony and traditional Navajo blessing for a newly constructed Navajo Hooghan (Hogan) on the Flagstaff High School campus. This project has been in development since 2018 and was the

vision of 2019 Flagstaff High School graduate Justina Slim, who initially proposed the Hooghan as part of her senior Capstone project. Designed to foster student well-being and cultural education, the Hooghan will integrate Diné language, traditions, and ceremonial events into the school community.

"This has been a six-year process,

but after overcoming several obstacles, we are here to celebrate," said Dorothy Denetsosie Gishie, FUSD Governing Board member. "This Hooghan will be a space for cultural teachings and ceremonial events, giving Native American students a place to feel at home."

The structure was constructed by Kinney Construction Services (KCS)

and designed by Paul Bustamante Architects, featuring traditional log siding, a sand floor, and an east-facing door of cultural importance. The logs were sourced from Utah, with other materials supplied by Arizona vendors, ensuring an

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A message from our **SUPERINTENDENT**

Autumn is officially here — enjoy the changing leaves and crisp autumn air! During the month of October, families and teachers have the opportunity to connect to discuss students' progress during the first quarter of the 2024-2025 school year. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled at all FUSD elementary, middle, and high schools from Monday, October 7, 2024, through Wednesday, October 9, 2024. Please watch for ParentSquare communications from your school and teacher(s) regarding conference appointment sign-ups.

Conferences are a time for teachers to discuss school expectations and academic standards

and to review students' attendance, grades, and evidence of learning. Families are encouraged to come prepared with a list of questions they would like to ask during the conference and be ready to share about your students' interests, needs, and the ways your family would like to be engaged with our school communities. By working together, we can create a strong partnership that supports student success.

I hope FUSD's students, families, and educators enjoy the Fall Break on Thursday, October 10, 2024, and Friday, October 11, 2024, when all FUSD schools and offices will be closed. 🌲



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Celebrates CHS's Mini Auditorium Renovation

September 24, 2024

On September 6, 2024, Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of Coconino High School's newly remodeled mini auditorium. This exciting renovation, funded by the 2018 and 2022 bond dollars, represents a significant enhancement of the school's facilities.

The auditorium, revamped by CORE Construction, now boasts modern seating and cutting-edge audio-visual technology,

transforming it into a professional-grade performance venue. The DLR Group, responsible for the design, incorporated Coconino's black and red school colors, creating an inviting and inspirational space for student performances.

Outside the auditorium, the surrounding plaza has also been updated. Large stone slabs now provide a welcoming gathering space, and the renovation addressed long-standing drainage issues that

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September 15, 2024

Join the Flagstaff Unified School District as we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15! This month is dedicated to recognizing the invaluable contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans who have shaped and enriched our nation's culture, history, and progress. Throughout the district, we encourage students, staff, and families to participate in events, activities, and learning opportunities that highlight the impactful stories and legacies of Hispanic leaders, past and present.

Learn more at www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov. 🌿

...CHS/ From Page 1

affected the area. The project, which began in January 2024, also included site upgrades to improve safety, accessibility, and functionality throughout the campus.

Superintendent Michael Penca praised the project as a "huge upgrade" for the school community, noting that the auditorium would offer students a space to shine—whether performing music, comedy, or poetry.

The ceremony was attended by members of the FUSD Bond Oversight Committee, the FUSD Governing Board, and FUSD staff, all of whom played a critical role in overseeing the successful completion of the project. The new spaces are now open for students and staff to enjoy.

...Hooghan/ From Page 1

authentic and local construction.

"It was an absolute pleasure to be part of this project," said Callie Gabelman, project manager with KCS. "We got to learn about the tradition,

and to be part of something so special for the community is an honor."

Students from Flagstaff High School and Coconino High School expressed their appreciation for the project, reflecting on its significance for the Native American student body.

"This gives us Native American students a space and makes us feel like we're at home," said Madilynn Benally, a senior at Flagstaff High School and president of the Native American Club. "We're planning to hold our Native American Club meetings in the Hooghan, and it's a meaningful place for us to gather."

Westin Jones, a sophomore from Coconino High School who grew up on the Navajo Reservation, shared his appreciation.

"It's a big opportunity for kids like me, and I'm glad they pushed through for it to be completed," he said. "It has a lot of meaning to me because I grew up on the reservation, and there's a special significance to the Hooghan in our culture."

A private blessing ceremony was held in conjunction with the

dedication. The event, closed to the public due to the nature of the Navajo blessing, featured traditional songs, pollen, and cornmeal. Attendees included Flagstaff City Council members, Coconino County officials, and representatives from Native Americans for Community Action Inc., all showing strong support for the project.

"As a graduate of Flagstaff High and a lifelong resident of Flagstaff, I feel incredibly honored to have been part of these discussions," said Rose Toehe, Coordinator of Indigenous Initiatives at the City of Flagstaff. "To see such a sacred structure rise on this campus for our children and our future is one of the most heartfelt experiences."

Toehe hopes the Hooghan will foster cultural exchange among students, serving as a place for both Native and non-Native students to gather and learn.

FUSD Superintendent Michael Penca echoed the sentiment, emphasizing the importance of the Hooghan in supporting the cultural and educational needs of Native American students.

"The Hooghan is a living being, iina', that, when treated with respect, protects its inhabitants," said Superintendent Penca. "It brings harmony and a sense of welcome for our Native American students and staff, connecting them to their cultural traditions. This Hooghan reflects our ongoing dedication to providing meaningful learning experiences to all students and the community around our sacred San Francisco Peaks."

FUSD expressed deep gratitude to the many individuals and partners who brought the project to fruition, including Justina Slim's family, the Flagstaff High School Native American Club, the Native American Education Support Program, FUSD staff, and local construction teams. The Hooghan will now serve as a space for cultural events and educational activities, further enhancing the integration of Native American traditions within Flagstaff High School's curriculum. 🌿



FUSD Honors Five Legendary Teachers at Board Meeting

September 25, 2024

Five exceptional Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) educators were honored as Legendary Teachers during a presentation at the district's regular board meeting on September 24, 2024. These educators were recognized for their outstanding contributions to students, colleagues, and the Flagstaff community.

"This is a really exciting thing that we do each year," remarked Assistant Superintendent Lance Huffman as he opened the ceremony. "Thanks for being here to celebrate some of our local celebrities, legends, not just in the classroom, but in our whole district, in our community."

The 2024 honorees were Marilyn Dugi from Leupp Elementary, Kelly Graham from Flagstaff High School, Sarah Hendricks from Thomas

Elementary, Kathryn Lilly from Cromer Elementary, and Donna Natseway from Mount Elden Middle School. Each of these educators was celebrated for their ability to inspire students academically while also making a deep personal impact through their dedication, compassion, and innovative teaching methods.

One of the honorees, Marilyn Dugi, was recognized for creating a learning environment that integrates students' cultural experiences with their academic progress.

"Ms. Dugi creates a classroom environment where students are not only supported academically but also learn within the framework of their cultural experiences, helping her young students grow with confidence and pride in who they are," shared one of her nominators.

Kelly Graham, another honoree, was praised for her positive influence, not only on her students but also on her colleagues and school community.

"Kelly is one of those rare individuals who has that 'it' factor as a teacher and as a human being. Our school is the place it is because of Kelly Graham," remarked Libby Miller, principal of Flagstaff High School.

"Kelly is deserving of this award because she goes beyond the students to impact her colleagues that look up to her and her administration that learns from her," stated David Meyers about Graham.

Sarah Hendricks from Thomas Elementary was described as an extraordinary teacher who brings innovation and warmth to her classroom.

"Sarah's commitment to her

students is nothing short of extraordinary. Her teaching methods are both innovative and nurturing, resulting in students who are confident, capable, and ready to take on the challenges of elementary school," a colleague shared.

Katelyn Lilly from Cromer Elementary was recognized for her ability to create a supportive and enriching classroom while fostering strong relationships with students and their families.

"Mrs. Lilly has created a learning environment that meets all her students' needs and strives to share that knowledge with other staff members," stated her nominator, but no name was provided. "Families

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Legendary Teachers*



...Legendary Teachers / From Page 2

desire for their students to be in her program because she works diligently to cultivate relationships that go beyond the classroom."

Rounding out the group of honorees was Donna Natseway, assistant principal at Mount Elden Middle School, whose long career was marked by compassion, patience, and dedication.

"Donna's tenure is not just a testament to her longevity, but a testament to her remarkable character," stated a former colleague. "She is the epitome of patience and kindness, embodying the values of compassion and selflessness in everything she does."

Nicholas Clement, who has long championed the Legendary Teacher Day program, spoke at the ceremony about the importance of honoring educators who shape the future of their students and their communities.

"This is a very special night," Clement reflected. "Ten years ago, I retired as a superintendent [of Flowing Wells School District], and I needed to do something to recognize

some teachers in my life that really put me on the path."

Clement emphasized the role of Northern Arizona University in supporting the program, both financially and through their commitment to elevating the teaching profession. Clement gave each honoree a \$500 honorarium to have funds used on the honorees for personal enjoyment and not classroom supplies.

"We know it's not a lot... The only rule is you've got to spend it on yourself," he said.

The evening celebrated more than just the academic success of these teachers—it was a recognition of their lasting influence in the lives of their students, colleagues, and community. As Huffman noted, "These teachers are legends not just in their classrooms but in the hearts of everyone they've touched."

The Legendary Teacher Honors program continues to reflect FUSD's commitment to recognizing educators who go above and beyond in fostering relationships, engaging deeply with students, and setting high expectations that drive academic and personal growth. 🌟



Killip Elementary School Earns Prestigious Cognia Accreditation

September 1, 2024

Killip Elementary School proudly announces that it has earned certification status through Cognia® Accreditation. This esteemed accreditation was granted by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) following a rigorous evaluation process. The Cognia Global Commission formally approved the certification on June 27, 2024.

Cognia is a globally recognized nonprofit organization committed to providing quality assurance for schools, school districts, and educational service providers. Killip Elementary's accreditation is a mark of excellence, underscoring the school's dedication to fostering an engaging and equitable learning environment for its students.

Cognia accredits schools worldwide that meet its rigorous standards, which focus on fostering productive learning environments, allocating equitable resources, and promoting effective leadership. Schools seeking accreditation must go through an extensive process, including both internal and external reviews. Achieving accreditation from the Cognia Global Commission indicates that Killip Elementary School meets these high standards and maintains an ongoing commitment to school improvement.

Dr. Mark A. Elgart, President and CEO of Cognia, congratulated Killip Elementary.

"Cognia Accreditation is a rigorous process that focuses the entire school and its community on ensuring that students can thrive in environments that are equitable and conducive to learning," said Elgart. "We commend Killip Elementary School for their

*Continued on page 11 /
Accreditation*



FUSD Artwork Showcased at the Coconino County Fair!

September 6, 2024

We are proud to share that many of our talented students had their incredible artwork displayed at the Coconino County Fair from August 30 to September 2, 2024. Their works

spanned a wide range of styles and mediums, reflecting the amazing creativity and dedication of our young artists. A big thank you to everyone who came out to support and celebrate our students' artistic achievements! 🌲





Tie-Dye Fun at Cromer Elementary

September 6, 2024

At Cromer Elementary School, creativity took center stage during a recent school-wide tie-dye event organized by the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The activity brought a burst of color and a sense of unity as every student had the opportunity to create their own unique Cromer T-shirt. The tie-dye project, spearheaded by PTO President Jes Suzuki, aimed to ensure that every student could take home a piece of school pride – no matter their circumstances.

“One of our goals was to really focus on the kids and doing stuff for the kids to make sure that everybody

had something,” explained Suzuki. “So, this year, we wanted to make sure that every student had a Cromer T-shirt.”

To ensure inclusivity, the PTO provided shirts to students who were unable to bring their own, and they supplied all the tie-dye materials.

“We provided the tie-dye and the details that were going to be put on the shirts,” said Suzuki, describing how each student was given a chance to rubber-band their shirts before heading out to the field for the colorful fun.

The entire school participated in this event, with students tie-dyeing their shirts in shifts by grade level. The atmosphere on the field was

filled with excitement as students expressed their creativity by splashing vibrant colors onto their shirts. Local firefighters even joined the fun, lending a helping hand to the kids with their tie-dye projects, adding an extra special community touch to the event. This hands-on activity was not just a fun way for students to spend time together but also a memorable way for them to showcase

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Flagstaff Unified School District Governing Board Election

September 24, 2024

Voting is one of the most important ways for community members to shape the future of education in our district. The decisions made by the FUSD Governing Board directly impact the quality of education, school policies, and the overall well-being of our students, staff, and families. Every vote counts, and your participation ensures that your voice is heard.

In the upcoming election, seven candidates are running for four-year seats on the FUSD Governing Board. These candidates are:

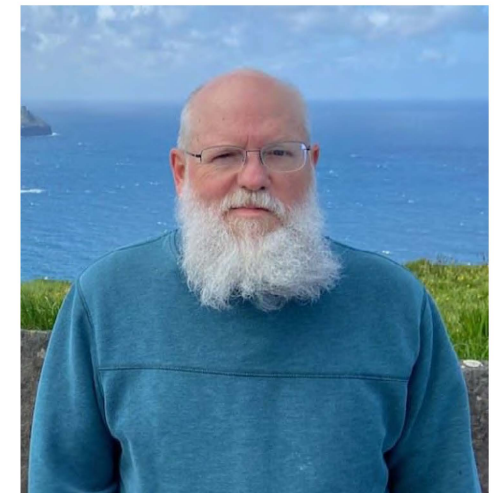
- Carolyn A. Kidd
- Melissa Kirk
- A. Kathryn (Kate) Kozak
- Darris Palmer
- Jim Parks
- Scott Walmer
- Kortney Zesiger

One candidate, Aaron Cirzan is running for a two-year seat. According to Coconino County Superintendent of Schools Cheryl Mango-Paget, Cirzan is running unopposed and will be appointed to the seat, and he will not appear on the ballot.

You can read more about each candidate and their statements by visiting the Coconino County Website.

The voter registration deadline is October 7, 2024, and Election Day is November 5, 2024. It's quick and easy to register online at [servicearizona.com/VoterRegistration](https://www.coconino.gov/1820/Election-Services). Be sure to register, stay informed, and make your voice heard on Election Day to help shape the future of education in our community.

Make sure you take the time to participate in this crucial election and help shape the direction of education in Flagstaff. 🌲



Photos, Top Row: Aaron Cirzan, Carolyn A. Kidd, and Melissa Kirk. Middle Row: A. Kathryn (Kate) Kozak, Jim Parks, and Scott Walmer. Bottom Row: Kortney Zesiger. Not pictured is Darris Palmer because there was no photo available. Photos are from the Coconino County Election Services website, <https://www.coconino.gov/1820/Election-Services>

Learn more about the governing board candidates. Read their 500-word Statements on the Coconino County Elections Services website. Scan the QR code.



SCAN ME!



Angela Waltner

Angela Waltner, FUSD's New Director of Bilingual and English Language Services

Flagstaff Unified School District is excited to welcome Angela Waltner as the new Director of Bilingual and English Language Services. With nine years of experience within FUSD, Angela is a familiar face to many but now steps into a critical leadership role supporting Bilingual and EL teachers and students across the district.

Angela, a third-generation Phoenician, began her career in education with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Arizona State University. She later earned her Master's degree from Northern Arizona University. Her passion for language development is evident in her certifications, which include SEI and Reading Endorsements.

Before joining FUSD, Angela worked for eight years in the Peoria Unified School District as a Title 1 Specialist and five years in the

Cartwright School District as an EL Teacher. Her varied experiences helped her develop a strong understanding of bilingual education.

"I am responsible for supporting the Bilingual and EL department's professional development, budget, data analysis, and instructional support," she explained.

Angela's goals for the upcoming year include developing a comprehensive scope and sequence that aligns English Language Arts (ELA) with EL curriculum at the elementary level. Additionally, she plans to use data to design professional development for teachers.

Outside of her professional life, Angela is a proud mother of a freshman in FUSD and serves as secretary for her local road association. She also enjoys community involvement, particularly through youth football, and has a passion for adopting dogs. 🐾



September 27, 2024

The Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) will have early release for parent-teacher conferences on October 7, 8, and 9, 2024. Please see below for the early release schedule for each school site.

School Site(s)	Monday, October 7, 2024	Tuesday, October 8, 2024	Wednesday, October 9, 2024
Elementary All sites except Puente de Hózhó	12:45 p.m.	12:45 p.m.	12:45 p.m.
Elementary Puente de Hózhó	11:35 a.m.	11:35 a.m.	11:35 a.m.
Middle School MEMS/SMS	11:35 a.m.	11:35 a.m.	11:35 a.m.
High School CHS/FHS	11:45 a.m.	11:45 a.m.	11:45 a.m.
High School Summit	11:25 a.m.	11:25 a.m.	11:25 a.m.

Parent-teacher conferences are being offered in-person and virtually this year. Please look out for a communication from your child(ren)'s teacher(s) on how to sign up for conferences.

There will be no activity buses or 21st Century buses running on these days so please plan ahead for transportation for your student. Also, there will be no special education preschool services for the entire week of October 7, 2024.

Lastly, there is no school on Thursday, October 10, 2024, and Friday, October 11, 2024, following parent-teacher conferences. This is a designated Fall Break for all FUSD students and staff.

If you have any additional questions, please contact your child's school site.



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AZ529 Essay Writing Contest

September 18, 2024

The AZ529, Arizona's Education Savings Plan, along with the Arizona State Treasurer's Office, is excited to announce the 5th Annual AZ529 Essay Writing Contest! This is a fantastic opportunity for you to share your dreams and win \$529 toward your future education.

How to Enter: Write an essay answering the question: "What is your dream job, and how do you plan on achieving it in the future?"

Contest Highlights:

- 20 winners will be chosen from across the state.

- At least one winner will be selected from each of Arizona's 15 counties, including public, charter, private, tribal, and homeschool students.

Deadline: Submit your entry between August 26 and October 6, 2024.

For contest details, rules, and more information about AZ529, visit: az529.gov/what-is-a-529-plan/. If you have any questions, contact Jeffrey Ong at jeffreyo@aztreasury.gov.

Teachers, please encourage your students to participate and explore their dreams! 🌟



15th Annual
FLAGSTAFF OKTOBERFEST
Saturday, October 5 2024
10:00am - 9:00pm at Wheeler Park
visit flagstaffoktoberfest.com for more information



Flagstaff Oktoberfest 2024

September 24, 2024

On Saturday, October 5, 2024, the 15th Annual Flagstaff Oktoberfest will take place at Wheeler Park from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The FUSD Foundation is thrilled to partner with Flagstaff Oktoberfest to raise funds for the Debbi Grogan Memorial Fund, supporting Music Education in FUSD schools.

This is a great opportunity to support music education in our schools while enjoying a day of festivities. For more information, visit flagstaffoktoberfest.com. 🌟

...Cromer/ From Page 7

their school spirit.

After the tie-dye process, the shirts were sent off to be adorned with the Cromer Wildcat logo, a special touch that added even more pride to the students' creations. The finished shirts were returned to students throughout the week, and Suzuki mentioned that several teachers have already had their students wear the shirts for class activities.

The tie-dye event exemplified the school's commitment to fostering creativity and building a sense of community.

"We're so excited about it. The kids had a great time, and it's something they can keep as a reminder of their time at Cromer," Suzuki said.

This project highlights how Cromer Elementary, with the help of its

dedicated PTO, supportive staff, and local community members like the firefighters, creates engaging activities that bring the school together while allowing students to express their individuality. The personalized tie-dyed Cromer T-shirts are more than just clothing — they represent the students' connection to their school and each other.

As the school year progresses, these colorful creations will serve as a reminder of a special day filled with laughter, creativity, and school spirit at Cromer Elementary. 🌟

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Join Us at the 2024 College and Career Expo!

September 24, 2024

The Flagstaff Unified School District is excited to present the 2024 College and Career Expo! This free event will take place on October 2, 2024, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Sinagua Middle School.

The Expo will be a fantastic opportunity for middle school and high school students, along with their families, to explore a wide range of career paths and educational opportunities. With over 50 business and industry representatives and 20 college representatives attending, you will have the chance to meet experts, discover FUSD CTE programs, and explore post-secondary education and job opportunities.

In addition, Fratelli's food truck will be on-site, and both Flagstaff High School and Coconino High School's Culinary students will be preparing and selling food, making it a wonderful evening of learning and community.

For more information, please contact: Patti Pastor at ppastor@fUSD1.org (Career Expo), or Jenny Bland (FHS) at jbland@fUSD1.org or Giselle Viera Soto (CHS) at gvierosoto@fUSD1.org (College Expo)

We hope to see you there! 🌲

The Flagstaff Unified School District presents

COLLEGE & CAREER EXPO 2024

October 2, 2024
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Sinagua Middle School

Free Entry!

The 2024 College & Career Fair will be an exciting opportunity for middle school and high school students and their families to explore various career fields, learn about FUSD CTE programs, meet representatives from colleges, and discover post-secondary education and job opportunities.

For additional questions on the Career Expo, please contact Patti Pastor at ppastor@fUSD1.org. For additional questions on the College Expo, please contact Jenny Bland (FHS) at jbland@fUSD1.org or Giselle Viera Soto (CHS) at gvierosoto@fUSD1.org.



School Lunch Payments Made Easy with MySchoolBucks

September 24, 2024

As the new school year kicks off, it's a great time to check your student's meal account balance online through [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com). If the balance is running low, you can easily and securely fund their account using a credit/debit card or e-check. You can also set up AutoPay to automatically reload their account when the balance drops below a specified amount, ensuring they never miss a meal.

If you don't have a MySchoolBucks account yet, sign up today at [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com)! For assistance, check out their how-to videos, FAQs, or contact their support team at (855) 832-5226. 🌲

...Accreditation / From Page 5

continued progress on key indicators that positively impact student learning."

Through its affiliation with Cognia, Killip Elementary joins a global network of over 36,000 schools and systems across more than 90 countries that are dedicated to

advancing teaching and learning through continuous improvement efforts. This achievement not only highlights Killip's commitment to quality education but also affirms its role as a leading institution within the Flagstaff Unified School District.

Cognia's global reach provides Killip Elementary with additional resources, support, and

opportunities to continue enhancing the quality of education offered to its students. The certification stands as a powerful symbol of the school's commitment to providing the best learning environment for Flagstaff's youth.

Parents and community members interested in learning more about the significance of

Cognia Accreditation or the school's continuous improvement efforts are encouraged to visit Cognia's website at www.cognia.org. 🌲



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Check your registration status or register to
vote in the upcoming General Election on
November 5, 2024. For assistance, contact
the Coconino County Election Administration.



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