

Bringing Color, Creativity to Knoles Elementary

February 5, 2025

Knoles Elementary School has been transformed into a vibrant, welcoming space thanks to the incredible artistic talents of Mia Brokaw. As a parent and paraprofessional at Knoles, Mia has left an indelible mark on the school through her stunning murals, which adorn the hallways, office spaces, and common areas. Her attention to detail and passion for design have made the school a sight to see, drawing admiration and praise from students, staff, and visitors alike.

Mia's journey at Knoles began three years ago as a paraprofessional. A proud mother of four, with two of her children attending Knoles, she has always been deeply connected to the school community. But her true passion lies in art and design, and she has embraced the opportunity to bring her artistic vision to life on the school's walls.

Her first major project was repainting the "KIND" mural in the front lobby, a task she eagerly took on at the request of Principal Pete Galvan and Administrative Assistant

Rosanna Lopez. Completing the mural just before the start of the school year, she realized how much of a difference art could make in creating an inviting and inspiring atmosphere. This led to a series of artistic projects completely transforming the school's environment.

She started with the art room entryway, decorating it with playful paint drips to spark students' creativity. She then extended her work to the hallways, adding flowing blue waves and soft pink mountains that bring energy and brightness to the space. However, her favorite transformation is the library corridor, where she turned an ordinary hallway into a



whimsical small town, complete with hand-painted storefronts such as a toy store, flower shop, fire station, café, powder room, and the school's library. What was once a dull and dark space is now filled with color, imagination, and charm.

Mia finds great joy in seeing how students interact with her

artwork. Children pretend to smell the painted flowers, honk the fire truck's imaginary horn, and marvel at familiar characters like Stitch and Grogu in the toy store window. These playful moments enhance the school's atmosphere and foster

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A message from our **SUPERINTENDENT**

We understand that you may be concerned about recent changes in federal policies and how they might affect our students and schools. We want to assure you that Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) is actively monitoring these developments and taking steps to protect the well-being and educational opportunities of every child in our district.

What's Happening?

The federal government has issued numerous new policies, some of which directly impact our schools. These include:

- **Immigration:** Changes affecting how we support undocumented students and their families.
- **Student Rights:** Adjustments to protections related to gender identity and sexual harassment.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** New directives concerning race-based policies and practices in schools.
- **Federal Funding:** Potential changes to the amount of federal funding our schools receive.

How FUSD is Responding:

Our top priority is to ensure a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students. We are taking the following actions:

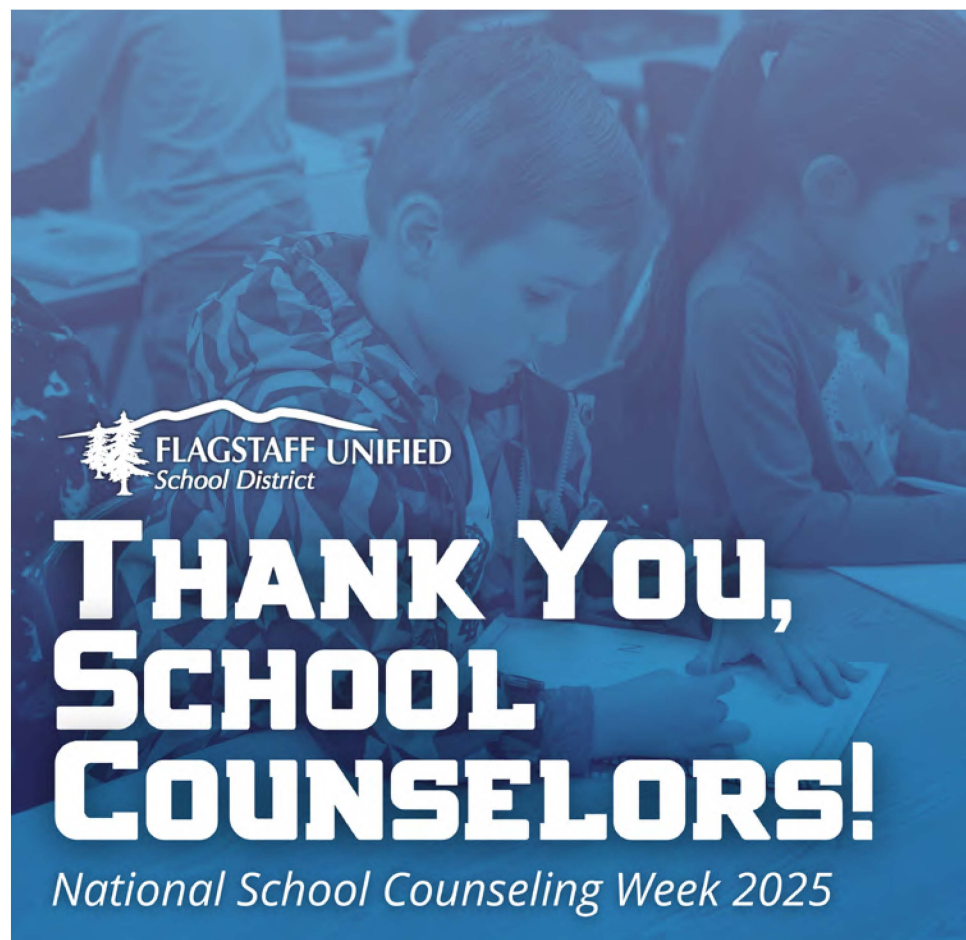
- **Protecting Our Students:** We have clear procedures in place to protect the privacy and rights of all students, regardless of their immigration status. We

are working closely with our legal counsel to ensure we are following all applicable laws and regulations.

- **Supporting Gender Identity:** We are committed to providing a respectful and inclusive environment for all students and are ensuring access to single-use restrooms and other necessary accommodations.
- **Maintaining Equity:** We are conducting a thorough review of our equity and inclusion policies to ensure they are legally sound and continue to promote fairness and opportunity for all students.
- **Planning for Funding Changes:** We are carefully monitoring potential changes to federal funding and developing contingency plans to minimize any impact on our students and programs.
- **Clear Communication:** Administration is providing regular guidance to staff and stakeholders, emphasizing our commitment to equity and access for all.
- **Legal Expertise:** We are working closely with our district attorney and national organizations to understand and respond to these policy changes.

What's Happening?

- We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for every student, regardless of their background or



- identity.
- We are working to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.
- We will continue to prioritize the well-being and academic success of all our students.

We are dedicated to working together with our parents and community to ensure that FUSD remains a strong and supportive school district for all our children. 🌲



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Ever wonder what teachers do after early dismissal on Fridays? At Killip Elementary, teachers come together to collaborate, learn, and grow. The team focuses on student writing by sharing strategies, goals, and samples across grade levels and specialty areas—from PE and Art to Music, STEM, Special Education, and ELL. Collaboration in action strengthens their teaching and benefits the students.

Empowering Families, Enhancing Learning: The Killip Academic Parent-Teacher Team

February 21, 2025

Empowering families and enhancing student learning is at the heart of the Academic Parent-Teacher Team (APTT) initiative at Killip Elementary School. This innovative approach transforms traditional parent-teacher conferences into engaging, data-driven conversations that extend learning beyond the classroom.

The APTT model is grounded in the idea that students thrive when families and teachers collaborate as true partners. In these meetings, classroom teachers share grade-level priorities, review progress data, and discuss effective strategies that

families can implement at home. The goal is to create a meaningful dialogue where both educators and families work together to support student success.

Killip Principal Joe Gutierrez recently shared insights about the program, noting that the first round of APTT meetings was held in October during parent-teacher conferences, with subsequent sessions on January 28 and 29.

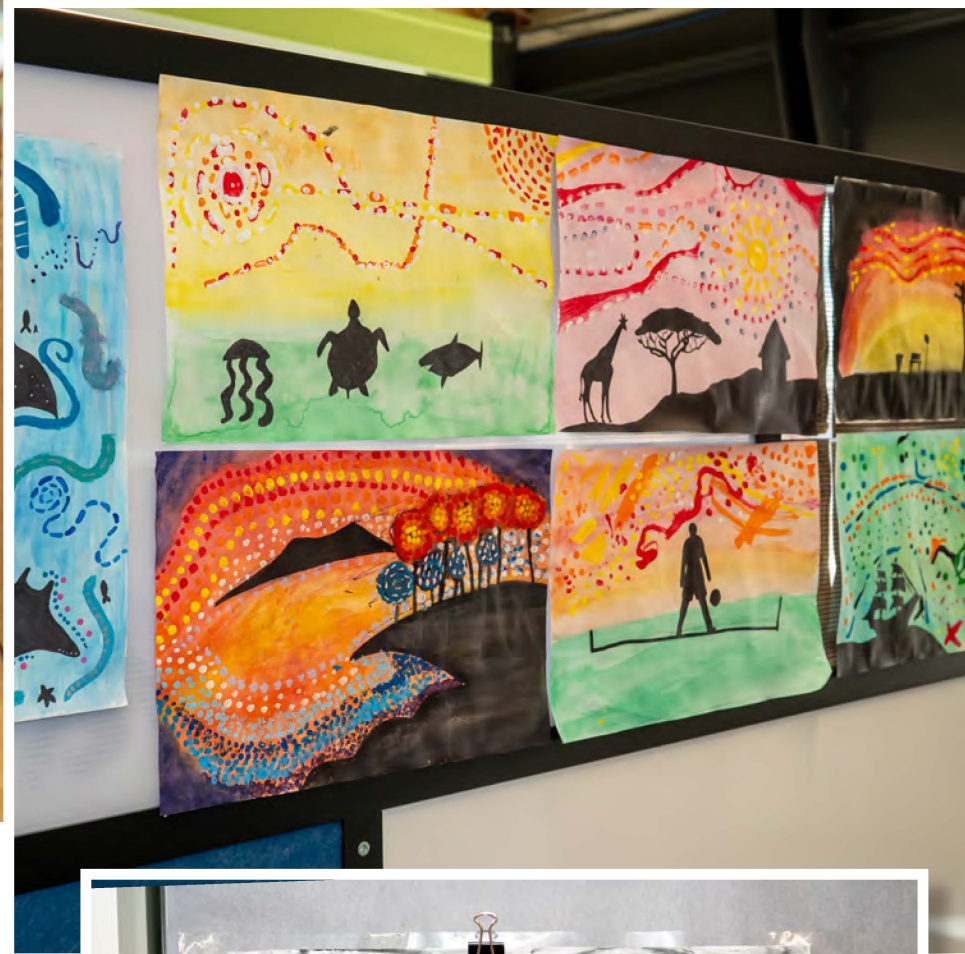
"The Academic Parent Teacher Team meetings provide our classroom teachers and our families an opportunity to discuss what is being taught," he explained. "We

compare data to determine how our students are doing, our students and parents have an opportunity to write a goal in ELA and Math, and at the end of the quarter the teacher and families check to see how much student achievement growth has been made. The teachers also share activities that can enhance student progress at home. This methodology is an example of Family Efficacy."

This comprehensive method informs families about classroom activities and equips them with practical tools to promote continuous academic improvement. The initiative includes annual individual sessions

where teachers meet with each family for a 30-minute personalized discussion, further deepening the partnership between home and school.

Killip Elementary School is proud to be part of this innovative approach that bridges the gap between educators and families. By working together, they are setting the stage for continued academic growth and a stronger, more engaged school community. 🌲



MEMS Students Transform Recycled Materials into a Vibrant Street Corner Art Display

February 18, 2025

At Mount Elden Middle School, art teacher Laura Abrams is leading a project that recycles iPad boxes to create a street corner art display. Her eighth-grade students have completed a project focusing on the work of local artist Chip Thomas.

Chip Thomas is a black artist who has worked as a physician on the Navajo reservation for his whole career. He began putting up murals all over northern Arizona, many of which show his perspective of the beauty of the Diné (Navajo) culture, as well as social issues that impact the community.

The eighth-grade students created a street corner out of boxes from the school's iPads and were then asked to use mixed media to create a social impact message of their own. The issues they chose to represent included topics such as immigration, water rights, women's rights, kindness, positivity, and environmental issues.

During Black History Month, sixth-grade students learned about David Driskell, and eighth-graders also learned about Lisa Whittington. These projects are currently on display in the library. 🌟





Knoles Elementary Celebrates the Work of Laura Lauzon

February 9, 2025

Knoles Elementary School is fortunate to have dedicated individuals who bring culture and creativity to our community, and Laura Lauzon is one such exceptional contributor. As both a parent and Kindergarten Aide, Laura has played a significant role in ensuring that the school's cultural representations are meaningful and beautifully crafted.

Laura has designed and created four impactful bulletin boards that honor diverse cultural celebrations, including Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Heritage Month, and most recently, Black History Month. Each display reflects her dedication to authenticity, ensuring

that the essence of these important observances is captured with care and respect.

Her artistic vision and commitment to cultural representation have made a profound impact on Knoles Elementary, offering students and staff an engaging way to learn about and appreciate different heritages. Her work fosters an inclusive environment where students can see their cultures reflected and celebrated within their school.

Thank you, Laura, for your dedication and creativity. Your contributions enrich our school community and inspire those around you. 🌟



Ivette Alvarez Honored with OELAS Award

February 4, 2025

Flagstaff High School junior Ivette Alvarez has been recognized by the Arizona Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS) as a Student Success Story honoree. This prestigious recognition is awarded to English learner students who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in language acquisition and academic achievement.

Ivette arrived at Flagstaff High School (FHS) in January 2024 and immediately embraced the challenges of a new language and academic system. With near-perfect attendance and a strong growth mindset, she has maintained honor roll status every semester. In addition to excelling academically, Ivette has shown incredible leadership and generosity by volunteering as a peer tutor in the after-school Language Alliance, where she shares her own language acquisition strategies to help other multilingual learners succeed.

Reflecting on her award, Ivette shared her excitement.

"I was super excited because Ms. Nicole didn't tell me until I won, so it was a big surprise," she said. "I was open-mouthed!"

Ivette expressed that winning the OELAS award is deeply meaningful to her, as she has made tremendous progress since arriving in the United States from Mexico. Ivette hopes her journey inspires other students to persevere and do their best.

Looking ahead, Ivette aspires to study architecture in college, with



UC Berkeley as her top choice. She has long been passionate about architectural design, viewing it as a form of artistic expression. When asked about her experience at FHS, Ivette said, "I enjoy everything. Everyone here is really nice and kind."

The OELAS award recognizes the hard work and determination of English learners across Arizona. Ivette had the honor of sharing her story at the annual OELAS Conference in December, where she joined other outstanding students in inspiring educators, administrators, and families.

Congratulations to Ivette Alvarez on this well-earned recognition! Her dedication, perseverance, and passion for learning make Flagstaff High School and FUSD proud. 🌟



Marshall Choir Shines at Prestigious State Music Conference

February 8, 2025

The Marshall Magnet Elementary School Choir recently achieved a distinguished honor by performing at the Arizona Music Educators Association (AMEA) Annual Inservice Conference on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at the Mesa Convention Center. This marked a significant achievement, as it had been nearly a decade since a choir from Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) was invited to perform at this highly respected conference.

The AMEA conference is the premier gathering for music educators in Arizona, providing an exceptional platform for students to showcase their talent and dedication to the arts.

According to Linda Stamer, choir director, this selection reflected the students' outstanding musical abilities and the dedication of FUSD music educators to fostering

excellence in music education.

Under the leadership of Director Linda Stamer and Accompanist Jenn Harris, the choir delivered an exciting and diverse selection of pieces. Their performance featured songs such as This Old Man by Greg Gilpin, Al Shlosha D'Varim by Allan E. Naplan, One Foot/Lead with Love by Melanie DeMore, conducted by guest director Stephanie Galloway from Flagstaff High School, Reflection of a Lad at Sea: The Ghost Ship by Besig/Price, Ode to Pluto (You'll Always Be a Planet to Me) by Mark Burrows, and A la Cart by Judith Watson, with guest conductor Katelyn Mason from Cromer Elementary.

Stamer explained this incredible achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the FUSD Governing Board, Superintendent Michael

Continued on page 7 / Choir



Photo, standing L-R: Cheryl Wells from Killip Elementary School, Rachel Perugini from Flagstaff High School, and Jillian Hernandez from Puente de Hózhó Elementary School.

FUSD Celebrates National Board-Certified Teachers

February 21, 2025

The Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) is proud to recognize three outstanding educators for their achievements in the National Board Certification process. Jillian Hernandez has earned her first National Board Certification, while Sheryl Wells and Rachel Perugini have successfully recertified, demonstrating their continued dedication to excellence in teaching.

According to Yvonne Parent, a second-grade teacher at Knoles Elementary School, earning National Board Certification is a demanding three-year journey.

"Teachers must complete four components," she explains.

"Component 1 is a test, and Components 2, 3, and 4 are written. Each component requires teachers to reflect on different aspects of their practice based on National Teaching Standards and the five core propositions of what teachers should know and do," she said. "Only 4% of teachers are National Board Certified, and must recertify every five years."

For Rachel Perugini, a National Board-Certified Teacher at Flagstaff High School, the experience has been transformative.

"National Board Certification is the best professional development you can go through! It gave me the chance to push myself as a teacher and reflect on what I'm doing in the

classroom and why I'm doing it," said Perugini. "My favorite part of this process is meeting accomplished teachers from around the state of Arizona. I am so proud of the other National Board teachers in Flagstaff this year, and I hope we continue to grow our NBCT numbers in FUSD. I look forward to working with new National Board candidates in the future."

Congratulations to Jillian Hernandez on her new certification and to Sheryl Wells and Rachel Perugini on their recertifications. Their achievements exemplify FUSD's commitment to fostering high-quality education and professional growth.

Knoles / From Page 1

a sense of pride and community among students.

"It's incredibly rewarding to hear parents comment on how welcoming and beautiful the school feels," Mia shared. "Every day, I watch students engage with the artwork, and it brings me so much joy to know that my work helps create a space where creativity thrives and everyone feels a sense of belonging."

Knoles Elementary is indeed fortunate to have Mia Brokaw as part of its community. Her murals have beautified the school and inspired joy, creativity, and connection among students, staff, and families. 🌲

Choir / From Page 6

Penca, Principal Janelle Reasor, dedicated chaperones, and the families who encouraged and nurtured the musical growth of these talented students. Their contributions made this experience a reality, ensuring that the Marshall Choir could shine at the AMEA conference.

Following their state-level performance, the Marshall Choir was invited to perform Ode to Pluto at the I Heart Pluto Festival on February 17. This additional opportunity further showcased their musical excellence and brought their talents to yet another prestigious event. Congratulations to the Marshall Elementary School Choir on this well-earned recognition. Their dedication, hard work, and passion for music made FUSD proud. 🌲

Kinsey Celebrates Success with Bridges Mathematics Curriculum

February 13, 2025

Kinsey Inquiry and Discovery School have proudly implemented the Bridges Mathematics Curriculum, yielding remarkable results in student proficiency, engagement, and overall classroom dynamics. Principal Ellen Herman shared insights into this structured, inquiry-based program's positive impact on their students and teachers alike.

"Implementing Bridges as our structured and inquiry-based mathematics curriculum has significantly enhanced students' mathematical proficiency and engagement," said Principal Herman. "We have had some positive outcomes from adopting the Bridges curriculum, which emphasizes hands-on, visual learning and encourages active student participation."

Herman explained that following the faithful implementation of Bridges, Kinsey has observed notable increases in test scores related to concepts and applications, including logic, reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

"The majority of students achieved proficiency in these areas, a success attributed to the curriculum's inquiry-based approach," she said.

Beyond the improvement in test scores, students have exhibited a significant enhancement in their mathematical vocabulary and their ability to articulate mathematical concepts. Classroom activities such as the Number Corner and various interactive workplaces offer students numerous opportunities to explore and discuss their learning in engaging and accessible ways.

"This approach has fostered a sense of agency and ownership over their educational journey," Principal Herman added.

Educators at Kinsey have noted transformative changes within their

classrooms. Cortney Peavy, a second-grade teacher, enthusiastically shared her experience.

"I have been so amazed by how much one great program can change the entire way math is received in my classroom. Bridges has done just that. Bridges has allowed the students to see and try math in a very hands-on visual way. Every day I am preparing something new for the students to use to help them understand the math world around them," said Peavy. "The best thing about Bridges is that students see all types of math curriculum daily. In one day, the students will work with addition, subtraction, yards, inches, feet, and clocks. The students are constantly being exposed to math language that is, in most ways, kid-friendly. I have watched this program take all of my second graders to a new level in math. It is a lot of work on the teacher's end, but watching the students' excitement and the growth has all been worth it!"

Similarly, Ava Miller, a third-grade teacher, observed significant progress among her students.

"With the implementation of Bridges this year, students have made so much progress in their ability to talk about math, they have access to far more strategies to solve problems, and I have witnessed more student-identified success than ever before," said Miller. "My learners are able to feel successful no matter their academic background. I have students leading the 20-minute Number Corner each day, and it is such a joy to see them take pride and ownership of their learning."

These testimonials highlight the Bridges curriculum's transformative impact, fostering mathematical skill development, confidence, and enthusiasm for learning among Kinsey students. 🌲



Second graders in Ms. Peavy's class are fully immersed in their Bridges Math lesson on February 25, 2025, at Kinsey Inquiry and Discovery School.



Pictured, L-R: Pronouncer Stephanie Hammond, Judge Bryan Wood from the Williams Rotary, Judge Laura Trout from the Flagstaff Rotary, Winner Tyla Hoffa from Maine Consolidated School, Runner-up Daphne Hammer from San Francisco de Asis, Third Place awardee Erin Ebers from Mount Elden Middle School, County Superintendent Cheryl Mango-Paget, and Judge Troy Troutman from Realty 85 Williams.

How to Prevent Norovirus Transmission

January 12, 2025

As Norovirus cases continue to rise across the United States, it is essential for FUSD families and staff to take precautions to prevent the spread of this highly contagious virus. Norovirus can cause symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea and can affect individuals of all ages and health conditions. Currently, there is no vaccine available to prevent Norovirus, making preventive measures even more critical.

To help protect yourself and others, consider the following preventive steps: wash Hands Frequently—use soap and water to wash hands for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is not effective against Norovirus; avoid sharing food and drinks—this minimizes the risk of spreading the virus through contaminated surfaces or utensils; clean and sanitize surfaces—use soap and water for cleaning, followed by a 10% bleach solution to effectively disinfect surfaces; and stay home when sick. If you experience symptoms, avoid attending school or work until you are fully recovered to prevent spreading the virus to others.

For more information on Norovirus prevention, please visit the CDC website: <https://bit.ly/CDCNorovirusInfo>.

By following these simple yet effective measures, we can work together to keep our schools and community safe and healthy by following these simple yet effective measures. 🌲

FUSD Students Shine at the Coconino County Spelling Bee

February 1, 2025

The 2025 Coconino County Spelling Bee, hosted by Coconino County School Superintendent Cheryl Mango-Paget, was a thrilling competition that brought together 17 of the brightest young spellers from across the region. Held at Flagstaff High School's Cromer Auditorium on February 1, 2025, the event showcased the dedication and hard work of students representing public, charter, private, and home schools in Coconino County.

Among the top finishers was Erin Ebers, a Mount Elden Middle School student who secured an impressive third-place finish. Erin's strong performance earned her a \$100 prize from Realty 85 Williams. She was among the outstanding finalists, including students from multiple

FUSD schools: Adeline Eskuchen, Puente de Hózhó Elementary; Tennyson Hatch, Cromer Elementary; Juliet Howard, DeMiguel Elementary; Remi Rae Lucero, Marshall Magnet Elementary; Ellie Tun-Bird, Sechrist Elementary; Joe Varela, Killip Elementary; Aiden Watson, Kinsey Elementary; and Cameron Wright, Knoles Elementary.

The champion of this year's spelling bee was Tyla Hoffa from Maine Consolidated School, who correctly spelled "oblique" in the final round to claim the title. Daphne Hammer from San Francisco de Asis took second place, receiving a \$150 prize from the Williams Rotary Club, while Erin Ebers rounded out the top three. As the county champion, Hoffa will now advance to the Arizona State Spelling Bee on March 15, 2025.

Superintendent Cheryl Mango-Paget expressed her admiration for all the participants.

"Each speller here today is already a winner, as these spellers encompass the school's champions of all Coconino County," she said.

The Coconino County Education Service Agency live-streamed the event, allowing community members to cheer on the competitors from near and far. The success of the event was made possible thanks to the generosity of Flagstaff Rotary Club, Williams Rotary Club, and Realty 85 Williams, whose sponsorship provided cash prizes for the top finishers.

Congratulations to Erin Ebers and all of our FUSD finalists for their hard work, dedication, and impressive spelling skills. 🌲



Photos, left: The Flagstaff High School boys and girls basketball teams, along with Girls Coach Tyron Johnson and Athletic Director Jeannine Brandel pose with their new shoes. Right: Flagstaff High School basketball players show off their new "Flagstaff" shoes. Bottom: Devin Booker handing out shoes to members of the Flagstaff High School basketball teams. (Photos courtesy of the Phoenix Suns)

Devin Booker Surprises Flagstaff High with "Flagstaff" Shoes

February 14, 2025

Flagstaff High School's varsity basketball teams recently experienced an unforgettable moment when Phoenix Suns All-Star Devin Booker surprised them with pairs of his newest Nike signature sneaker, the Book 1 "Flagstaff." Athletic Director Jeannine Brandel worked closely with Booker's representatives to orchestrate the surprise, keeping the teams in the dark about why she was collecting shoe sizes.

"We appreciate Mr. Booker's love for our community and his generous offer," Brandel said. "The kids were

over the moon!"

Coach Tyrone Johnson noted the excitement was palpable when the teams traveled to Phoenix on February 7 to see the Suns play.

"They were genuinely surprised to meet Devin in person," said Johnson. "Some of the girls were beyond elated, and one of the boys vowed never to wash his hand again after getting a fist bump!"

Principal Libby Miller called the event an "honor."

"Seeing the looks on the kids' faces when Mr. Booker walked in was priceless," said Miller. "From the bus ride down to meeting Booker, then watching a white-knuckle game, it will

be a lifetime memory for all of us."

Booker's signature shoe line has drawn inspiration from Arizona's landscapes, with the "Sedona" colorway preceding this forest-themed release. The Nike Book 1 "Flagstaff" features a green upper with leather accents, a gum outsole, and a topographical print echoing the region's pine forests. A "No Service" emblem and a moody sunset on the tongue nod to Booker's love for escaping into nature.

"This design can help you explore the spaces created by your piercing footwork and hungry hooper soul," reads a description from Nike.

The special moment extended

beyond the arena. After returning to Flagstaff, both the boys' and girls' teams sported the Book 1 "Flagstaff" at their final regular-season game, creating a striking show of unity and school spirit.

"All in all, it was a great team bonding event that will be fondly remembered," Johnson said.

For Flagstaff High School, the new shoes symbolize more than style or performance—they represent a heartfelt connection to a star athlete who values community, generosity, and the spirit of the game. 🌲

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



Ashly Smith, New Summit Math Teacher

February 10, 2025

Meet Ashly Smith, one of the newest staff members at FUSD, whose passion for teaching and vibrant personality is making a lasting impression. Hailing from San Clemente, CA, Ashly brought a wealth of experience and a unique personal story—she is a triplet and a devoted mom of two beautiful little girls. Motivated by a love for the outdoors and a desire to be part of a close-knit community, she and her husband relocated to Flagstaff to embrace all the area has to offer.

Before joining FUSD, Ashly spent the first half of her career in the Capistrano Unified School District, where she taught in the Special Education Department at comprehensive high schools. There, she delivered lessons in English, algebra, and social skills. Later, she transitioned to a continuation high school, teaching ASB, Yearbook, and Algebra—during which she earned her Single Subject Math credential—with additional qualifications in Special Education and Multiple

Subjects from CSU, Chico. Ashly's professional journey reflected her commitment to diverse teaching experiences and educational excellence.

Ashly has energized the Summit High School community as a math teacher, covering Geometry, Personal Finance, and Survey of Math. Her daily responsibilities included creating and implementing engaging lesson plans, building meaningful connections with her students, and working collaboratively as a valued Summit High School team member. Ashly's goal is clear—she is dedicated to creating a brave space where every student leaves her classroom feeling smart, valued, and capable of doing hard things.

Outside the classroom, Ashly is an avid traveler, a hands-on mom, and an explorer of all Arizona offers. With her two young children—one of whom is preparing to start Kindergarten at Knoles this upcoming year—she is excited to make Flagstaff her home and contribute to its thriving community. 🌲



Manager of Facilities, Custodial, Grounds

February 20, 2025

Ensuring that a school district runs smoothly requires dedicated professionals working behind the scenes, and Ian Hanf is one of those key individuals. As the Manager of Facilities, Custodial, and Grounds for Flagstaff Unified School District, Ian plays a crucial role in maintaining safe, clean, and well-functioning facilities across all FUSD schools.

Ian has been with the district for three years, starting in maintenance before stepping into his current managerial role. When asked about his experience so far, he had a simple

but enthusiastic response: “Love it.”

In his current position, Ian oversees custodial and maintenance staff, ensuring that district facilities meet health and safety standards while keeping daily operations running smoothly. His leadership helps provide a clean and welcoming learning environment for students and staff alike.

Ian's commitment to the district is evident in the pride he takes in his work. FUSD is grateful for his dedication and leadership in maintaining the facilities that serve our students, teachers, and community every day. 🌲





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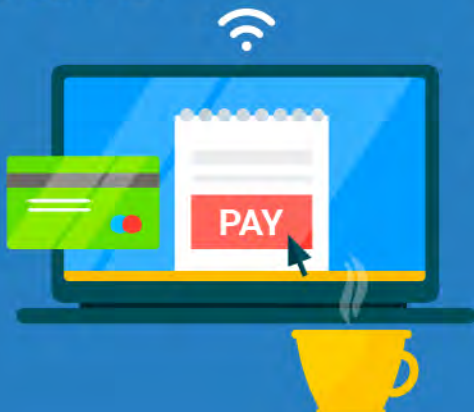
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**MY
SCHOOL
BUCKS**



MARCH 2025

- 3/4: Quarter 3 Ends;
Bond Oversight Committee
Meeting
- 3/5: Early Release - Parent
Teacher Conferences
- 3/6: Early Release - Parent
Teacher Conferences
- 3/7: Early Release - Parent
Teacher Conferences
- 3/10-14: **SPRING BREAK** - No School
- 3/25 Governing Board Meeting

Early Release - All Schools
All Fridays this month

Now Hiring!

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