



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Matt Gress (R-4)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. Gress Urges Scottsdale School Board to Delay Pima and Echo Canyon Closure Vote Until Full Review Is Conducted

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – State Representative Matt Gress, Chairman of the House Education Committee and Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, is urging the Scottsdale Unified School District Governing Board to delay its vote on closing Pima Elementary and Echo Canyon K-8 School until February 1.

On Monday, Gress sent a letter to Board members outlining his concerns about the pace of the process, gaps in the district's fiscal analysis, and unanswered questions about the effect the proposed closures would have on students and families. In the letter, attached below, he calls on the Board to take additional time to conduct a more complete review and consider other viable options.

"Closing schools has lasting consequences. Before the board takes any action, the public should see a full explanation of the fiscal impact, the alternatives that were considered, and how the district plans to support the students who would be uprooted," Representative Gress said. **"Based on what I have seen so far, that work is incomplete."**

SUSD has cited declining enrollment and a projected budget deficit as reasons to rush action. Representative Gress said the district has financial options to sustain operations while a complete public review is conducted.

"Families deserve clarity before a final decision is made," he said. **"The district still has time to finish its analysis, make the findings public, and answer the questions parents have raised."**

Representative Gress also noted that districts have limited flexibility with unused property and said he will introduce emergency legislation next session with Senator Werner to allow districts to sell unused or underused sites and use the proceeds to strengthen academic programs and offerings that keep students enrolled.

"Districts need practical tools to respond to enrollment shifts," Representative Gress said. **"Allowing them to sell unused property and reinvest the proceeds in programs students want is a better option than closing schools without exploring all alternatives."**

"I urge the board to pause this process and use the next several weeks to finish the due diligence that remains and to allow the Legislature to act on the proposed policies," he added. **"This decision can wait. Taking the time to do this right will help the board make a more informed and beneficial choice."**

Matt Gress is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 4 in Phoenix and is Chairman of the House Committee on Education. Follow him on X at @MatthewGress.

###



Arizona House of Representatives
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

December 8, 2025

Delivered via U.S. Mail and Email

Scottsdale Unified School District Governing Board
8500 E. Jackrabbit Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Dear Members of the Governing Board,

As the Education Committee Chairman in the Arizona House of Representatives, I am fully aware of the fiscal challenges created by demographic changes that have resulted in fewer students in our classrooms. School leaders like yourselves are confronting difficult decisions to responsibly align spending with enrollment realities.

The decision to close Pima Elementary and Echo Canyon K-8 School should be made only after extensive forethought, planning, and transparency. Not only do families deserve clarity regarding how students will be supported and the fiscal impacts of this decision, but the district also deserves a more thorough process to consider a long-term vision. After meeting with Superintendent Menzel and district staff, I have concerns about the rush to a decision when other options should be considered and key variables that underpin Dr. Menzel's recommendation appear shaky.

Beyond demographic shifts, we know that Scottsdale families are increasingly choosing educational options outside the district, which may be exacerbating the situation beyond what retention data alone reflects. Of all the students within district boundaries, only 56% attend SUSD—down from 71% in 2010. With creativity and the right tools, this moment could be turned into an opportunity to reattract those families and strengthen the district's long-term position.

As I have stated previously, I intend to pursue emergency legislation next session that will allow school districts to sell property and reinvest those proceeds into existing programs — or create new ones — that enable districts to remain competitive in a dynamic school-choice environment. For this reason, I respectfully request that the Board delay any consideration of closures until February 1, 2026, giving the Legislature time to advance these policy changes and giving the district the necessary time to consider all possibilities for both school sites.

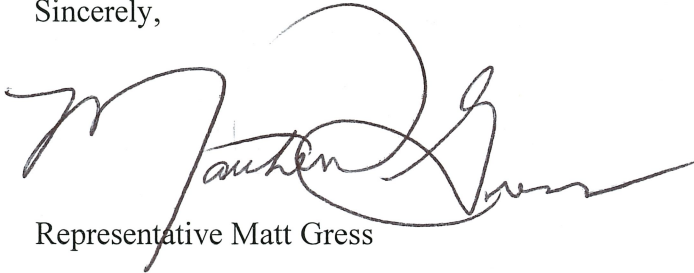
I understand the district is planning to draw from its \$15 million Classroom Site Fund reserves to support the closure process and reassign staff to other campuses. While this may ease short-term

operational pressure, I believe it is in the public's interest to instead use these available funds to pause the closures until a more comprehensive, community-informed plan is developed. The long-term gains to the district could be significant if this process is approached with deliberation rather than sticking with this undeveloped and rash plan.

Every school closure creates turmoil in the community, and these would be no exception. But with intentional planning and clear communication, the district can convert this challenge into an opportunity for students, families, and educators.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Matt Gress", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Representative Matt Gress

CC: Superintendent Scott Menzel