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**To:** School District Personnel

**From:** Arizona School Facilities Board Staff

**RE:** Governor Ducey Celebrates Opening of New Elementary School in Benson

*--First Arizona K-12 School Built Entirely with State Funds in More than 13 Years--*

On February 26, 2020, Governor Doug Ducey joined the Benson Unified School District to celebrate the grand opening of the new Frank "Chic" Maldonado Learning Center Elementary School in Benson, Arizona. The Maldonado Learning Center is the first public school in Arizona built entirely with state funding in more than 13 years.

"In Arizona, we know that our kids thrive when we have strong public schools," said Governor Ducey. "This new school in Benson will provide students an engaging learning environment that will help them succeed while helping meet the needs of this growing community. My thanks to the Benson Unified School District and everyone who worked to bring this project to fruition."

"We are thrilled with our new school and the amazing learning opportunities it brings," said Micah Mortensen, Superintendent of the Benson Unified School District. "This project is a great example of local and state agencies working closely together for the betterment of Arizona's students."

The Maldonado Learning Center is a 17,000 square foot, K-4 school that was built with flexible learning spaces featuring an indoor multi-purpose area that opens to outdoor learning stairs and a basketball court. The school is named in honor of Frank "Chic" Maldonado, who served as the president of the Benson Unified School District Board and passed away in 2017.

In most cases, new school construction is funded with a combination of state School Facilities Board resources and local school district funds. The Benson project is unique because it represents the first time a new K-12 school has been built to state guidelines with 100 percent state funds since December 2006.



### **About the Arizona School Facilities Board**

Created in 1998, the Arizona School Facilities Board (AZSFB) is a cabinet-level, state-government agency managing \$289 Million in state funding appropriated for K-12 school district facilities. The 10-member board meets monthly to grant funding for new school construction and to renew existing school facilities. AZSFB staff is a partner and advocate for school districts in facilitating successful grant requests.