

BUILDING futures

A Publication of the Fresno Unified School District

P R E P A R I N G C A R E E R R E A D Y G R A D U A T E S

Fresno Unified Graduation Rates Increase Six Straight Years

Fresno Unified is highlighting increases in graduation rates and enrollment in career technical education classes and A-G courses to get into college -- all steps toward better preparing students for higher education and careers.

New data shows:

- The overall graduation rate reached a new high of 85.4%
- 10,003 students took CTE classes in 2016-17, compared to 8,584 in 2012-13
- 49.02% of students were enrolled in A-G courses in 2015-16, compared to 25.50% in 2009-10

“For the first time we saw graduation rates among Hispanic students outperform not only state averages, but they exceeded our district average as well,” said Interim Superintendent Bob Nelson. “It’s impressive to see our largest student population lead

our district data, especially with the number of English learners attending Fresno Unified schools. That in itself is a remarkable take-away from this year’s data.”

The district announced the improvements during a press event April 21 at McLane High School. Nelson emphasized that while rising graduation rates are critical, increasing the number of students taking the right classes to get into college and learning career skills in CTE classes is also crucial to improving academic achievement in the district.

The district’s four-year graduation rate for 2015-16 increased 1.6% over the previous year’s rate of 83.8%, the sixth straight year of increases. Other highlights of the latest graduation rate data include:

- Graduation rate for Hispanic students increased by 3.3%,

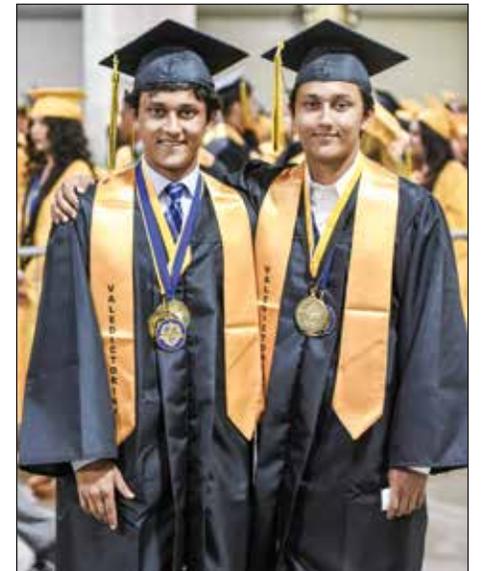
exceeding the state average increase for Hispanics

- Fresno, Hoover and McLane high schools had increases over the previous year
- Bullard, Duncan Polytechnical, Edison and Sunnyside high schools continued to have rates above 90%

The district has also seen a steady increase in the number of students taking CTE classes, learning skills for specific career pathways that can pay off immediately after graduation for students or as they pursue higher education.

More than 10,000 students are enrolled in CTE classes in career pathways that include health, teaching, engineering, environmental, trades and public service.

Enrollment in A-G classes continues to climb each year and has nearly doubled



since 2009-10. Nearly half of the district’s seniors on track to graduate are now completing the necessary A-G courses to be considered for admission to the University of California and California State University campuses.

Wawona Joins Rowell and McLane in Adding Dual Immersion Language Programs

Wawona Middle School is the latest site that will feature a brand new dual immersion program this fall.

The Fresno Unified Board of Education discussed plans on April 5 to add pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes at Wawona that will be solely focused on dual immersion.

Wawona joins Rowell Elementary School and McLane High School in creating brand new programs for students to become fluent in English and Spanish.

The expanded programs are in response to parents who have voiced their desire for increased dual immersion opportunities.

“We are extremely excited to provide our families this wonderful opportunity. Participating students will exit our schools with this tremendous asset that will

See DUAL IMMERSION Continued on page 2

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A Healthy Slice of Heaven (Page 2)



Generous Student Gives Bike to Friend (Page 7)



Superintendent's Message in Spanish/Hmong (Pages 15)



PARENTS

Tioga Students Give Thumbs Up to New Healthy Pizza

Who doesn't like pizza, even one with whole wheat crust and low-fat cheese and pepperoni?

Fresno Unified's Food Services has partnered with Pacifica Pizza to develop a healthy pizza to satisfy rumbling stomachs and picky eaters – and it's a hit with students.

"It's really good. I like it a lot. This is what I look forward to on Thursdays," said Tioga Middle School seventh-grader Jesse Gallardo. "I can't tell that it's a healthy pizza!"

The district is piloting the pizza with students in Tioga's after-school program as part of the district's SuperSnack offerings. In addition to the reduced-fat pepperoni and mozzarella cheese, the individual whole wheat flat bread pizza is topped with tomato sauce from local tomatoes. The pizzas are prepared by Pacifica Pizza

and baked at the Bullard Avenue and Fresno Street location.

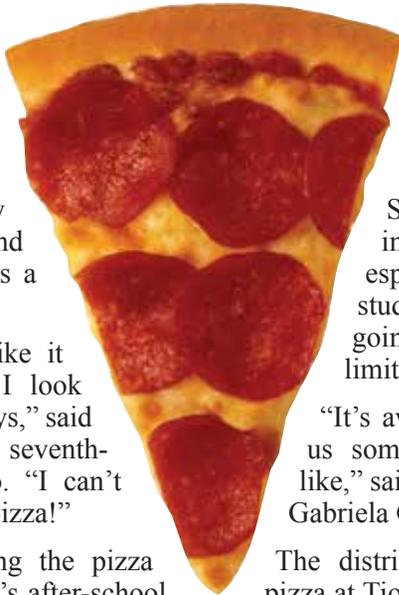
The pizza is part of the district's goal to provide nutritious, appetizing and satisfying meals for students. The SuperSnack program, in its fourth year, is especially beneficial to students who may be going home after school to limited eating options.

"It's awesome that they give us something that all of us like," said Tioga seventh-grader Gabriela Gomez.

The district began piloting the pizza at Tioga Middle School Feb.

2. Based on student feedback, it expects to expand serving the pizza at additional middle and high schools' after-school programs this spring.

"We are always taste-testing new menu items that are healthy and appealing to students," said Director



From left, Juan Gama, Gabriel Flores and Phillip Rodriguez enjoy a new healthy flatbread pizza during the after-school program at Tioga Middle School. The district's Food Services created the pizza with Pacifica Pizza.

of Food Services Jose Alvarado. "Our priority is to support student learning

by making sure students have access to healthy, nutritious meals."

DUAL IMMERSION Continued from page 1

enhance their academics and career skills, and their overall life," said Maria

Maldonado, assistant superintendent of English Learner Services.

Right now there are seventh- and eighth-graders at Wawona Middle School. Plans call for Wawona to



Irma Arredondo works with students in a dual immersion classroom at Yosemite Middle School. The district has recently approved adding dual immersion curriculum to Wawona Middle School and gradually converting the school to a K-8 campus.

eventually become a K-8 site beginning first with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes in August of 2017. Then, each year, an additional dual immersion grade level will be added ensuring students have the opportunity to complete the dual immersion curriculum up to eighth grade.

Wawona will continue to offer non-dual immersion classes for seventh and eighth grade for students who prefer the traditional curriculum.

"The research is really clear and with our experiences, as well, as we review outcomes for our students. Dual immersion instructional programs are the most effective in meeting the needs of not only our English learner students but also advancing the academics of our English only students," said Maldonado.

The goals of dual language immersion programs are for students to develop bilingualism and biliteracy, ensure academic achievement at

Applying for Dual Immersion Programs

Deadline: May 31, 2017
Call: (559) 457-3310

grade level or above, and develop and deepen cross-cultural competencies. It is strongly recommended that students begin a dual immersion program in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, with Spanish instruction for 90% of the day and English instruction for 10% of the day.

With each grade level, the percentage of instruction in English increases by 10%. By fourth grade, curriculum is taught 50% in English and 50% in Spanish. Students learn to read, write

See **DUAL IMMERSION**
Continued on page 11



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SUPERINTENDENT'S Message

Graduation Rates Rise Again, Schools Finishing the Year Strong

Spring break is over and the finish line is in sight -- just six more weeks before another school year is in our mirrors. Students and teachers alike are focused on finishing strong as schools wrap up California state testing and high schools begin Advanced Placement (AP) tests.



Bob Nelson
Interim
Superintendent

Over the last few weeks, high school seniors have been declaring colleges and setting their sights on upcoming graduation

ceremonies. At the district level, staff is diligently working with Leadership Associates, our recently hired search firm, to identify strong, diverse and experienced candidates for Fresno Unified's next superintendent.

No matter what school site I visit, it's clear everyone is focused and committed to finishing the school year on a positive note.

As you will read in this edition of Building Futures, the California Department of Education (CDE) has developed a new accountability dashboard showcasing a school's performance. Performance is no longer based on a single state test score, but rather multiple measures including suspension data, overall academic

growth and graduation rates.

While this is a new accountability system for the state, it uses similar elements to our district data dashboard that we have used for the last few years, helping us identify academic strengths and opportunities district wide. The CDE dashboard allows districts and the state to look at academic success on a much larger scale, deploying resources to address student needs on multiple levels ensuring students have every opportunity to reach the graduation stage.

Last year the district saw graduation

See **SUPT. MESSAGE**
SPANISH AND HMONG
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Fresno EOC Works Closely with District to Support Students

Message from Brian Angus, CEO of Fresno EOC

Our children are our future leaders so an investment in their success is paramount. Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC) enjoys a mutually supportive relationship with Fresno Unified School District as well as a commitment to the social and academic wellbeing of our children.



Brian Angus
Economic Opportunities
Commission Chief
Executive Officer

Yes, our children! Many Fresno EOC Head Start children enter Fresno Unified classrooms each year. Teens participating in our programs are often district students. The families benefit from the wide array of programs and services Fresno EOC offers, including health and nutrition services, energy bill assistance, weatherization and solar installations, and small business development -- all designed to lift people out of poverty and into self-sufficiency.

The close alignment of our institutions over recent years has benefitted

students and the community at large immensely. All Fresno Unified schools are designated Safe Place sites -- a national program intended to help youth that is under the umbrella of Fresno EOC Sanctuary and Youth Services.

The challenges for children growing up in urban communities are formidable, especially for those students residing in poor neighborhoods. Poverty, lack of nutritious meals, shortage of affordable child care, substandard housing, violent neighborhoods, inability to afford adequate cooling and heating, unreliable transportation, and more. All of these factors impact a child's disposition to effectively learn, stay on grade level, and mature socially.

Concern about safe passage to school, bullying, and the allure of drugs and gang involvement, and fear perpetrated by threats of deportation are very real for many students making it agonizingly difficult to develop nurturing relationships and concentrate, acquire, and retain knowledge.

We know children from Fresno EOC Head Start and Early Head Start programs transition into Fresno Unified kindergarten and elementary schools and understand how important it is that our kids are prepared

for this transition. Early engagement by talking, reading and singing to children builds fundamental vocabulary and critical thinking skills. Likewise, fostering strong, consistent attendance at the pre-school level predictably leads to strong attendance at the elementary school level and high graduation rates.

Fresno EOC's Board just passed a Safe Access Resolution in the same spirit as the Safe Place Resolution that the district passed in March. We want our clients and their families to continue to feel safe accessing our programs.

No single institution provides all the support our students need to form a foundation for good decision making, social adaptation, maturation, and self-sufficiency. Fresno EOC pledges to continue to work closely with district administration, teachers, support staff, and parents to assure that students are equipped with tools and assistance to prepare them to be career and college ready graduates.

Our message to the Fresno Unified community is that you can count on Fresno EOC's continuing commitment and alignment in assuring all students are supported in their pursuit of education: a clear pathway out of poverty.



Cesar Chavez's Memory Honored at Day of Service and Learning

Twenty-four years after his death, civil rights activist and farm labor leader Cesar Chavez continues to inspire students through the annual Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning.



For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/cesarchavez2017

“As I researched Cesar Chavez, what I found the most inspirational about him was the fact that he didn’t give up right away but kept fighting for what he believed in for many years,” said Maite Garcia, an Edison High School 10th

grader and one of the Cesar Chavez Essay Contest winners this year.

The contest is a part of a day set aside in Fresno to celebrate Chavez’s legacy and promote service and learning. This year’s event, hosted on March 23 by Fresno Unified’s Fresno Adult School, was the 17th annual.

Students and community members gathered at the Saroyan Theatre for performances by district middle and high school students, then marched to the Cesar E. Chavez Adult Education Center for a garlanding ceremony at

the Chavez bust in the foyer.

Along with Maite, winners of the essay contest were:

- Fresno Adult School -- First, Bri Rodriguez, second, Naseem Saeed, third, Javier Padilla, and honorable mention, Mario Rodriguez
- High school -- First, Maite Garcia (Edison High School), second, Britany Juarez (Roosevelt High School); and third, Ricky Ortiz (Sunnyside High School)
- Middle school – First, Kaylee

Gudino (Kings Canyon Middle School), second, Elizabeth Gaspar (Gaston Middle School) and third, Emma Longoria (Tioga Middle School)

Maite said Chavez’s work continues to resound with the community, “inspiring many to not use violence to get what they want.”

Maite said Chavez used determination to accomplish his goals along with “respecting others and not discriminating against people based on their differences.”



Top, Marilyn Lopez-Cuevas, vice principal at Cooper Academy, marches with Jasmine Angeles (middle) and Daisy Navejas during the annual Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning March 23. Above, students perform at the Saroyan Theatre as part of the celebration.

Health Threat: The Sweet and Bitter Truth about Sugary Drinks

We are all quite familiar with the major threats to our children’s and students’ health presented by tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, and drugs. And we do everything in our power to reduce their exposure to, and prevent their use of, these products. But there is a much more subtle, and just as dangerous threat to the health and well-being of our youth that is frequently overlooked.

sugary drinks can hurt our bodies’ functions.

“As a pediatrician in Fresno, I am seeing, over and over, the devastating effects of children in my practice consuming too much sugar. Children as young as 2 years old are becoming overweight, obese, developing diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems and many more health issues.”



By Dr. Ken Bird
Fresno County Health Officer

One of the Fresno County Department of Public Health partners in illness prevention, local pediatrician Dr. Razia Sheikh, speaks about this threat that we know as sugary drinks.

“Sugary drinks include beverages such as sodas, sports drinks, juice drinks, flavored coffee and tea drinks. They are sugary sweet, colorful, appealing and taste good (so well-liked by all, especially children and youth),” Sheikh says. “The nutritional value of these beverages is zero but the amount of empty calories they contain is enormous. For example, a 20 oz. sports drink with 34 grams of sugar is equal to 8 ½ teaspoons of sugar. These empty calories from sugary drinks don’t help the body; instead

There are things you can do to protect your children from these products and their unfortunate health consequences. This includes not keeping them in your home (these products are as unhealthy for you as they are for your children). It includes asking your school not to make them available on campus. It includes asking your local merchants to not heavily advertise and market these products, and to make alternative healthful products readily available.

The Fresno County Department of Public Health has a number of resources available to assist you with these efforts. Contact the Office of Policy, Planning, and Communication at (559) 600-6449.



New Data Dashboard System Informs Beyond State Test Scores

Parents and the community now have a new way to examine how Fresno Unified students are performing that goes beyond a single test score.

The state has developed a new school accountability system -- the California School Dashboard. The dashboard is accessed online, and brings together test scores, graduation rates, suspension data and other significant measures to tell a more complete story of academic success, beyond standardized test scores.

The California Department of Education unveiled the new school accountability data dashboard on March 15. The dashboard replaces the Academic Performance Index (API) that based a school's academic success solely on a single state test score.

"We are pleased with the state's review of Fresno Unified based on the new dashboard," said Interim Superintendent Bob Nelson. "All of the system-wide indicators for Fresno Unified were at a 3 or above. Previously, the state accountability system provided really just a single score. This data dashboard gives a more complete picture of how our district is doing."

Results are considered a "field test," with full results expected this fall when more data has been inputted.

The California School Dashboard includes state and local indicators. The state indicators are English language arts and math, English learner progress, chronic absenteeism, graduation rates, suspension rates and college/career readiness.

The state indicators on the dashboard cover five color-coded performance levels, with blue being the highest and red the lowest.

"This data dashboard gives a more complete picture of how our district is doing." Interim Superintendent Bob Nelson

Local dashboard indicators for school districts are basic services, implementation of state academic standards, parent engagement and school climate. Performance on the local indicators are labeled as "met," "not met" or "not met for two years."

The local indicators on the dashboard are based on what a district measures and publicly reports. Results from the local dashboard indicators are not expected until the fall.

Users can choose from four different reports: Equity Report, Change Report, Single Indicators Reports and Single Student Group Reports.

California's new accountability system was a result of the state passing the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in 2013. The new accountability system reflects a clear expectation that all school districts and schools can and should improve and emphasizes equity by focusing on student group performance.

How to Access the Dashboard

To view the dashboard results, go to caschooldashboard.org.

The website provides clear instructions on how to read the dashboard, including a video tutorial.

The Verdict is In: Fresno Unified Relaunches Law Pathway at Bullard

Fresno Unified will relaunch a law pathway at Bullard High School with support from members of the Fresno legal community.



For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/bullardlaw

The new four-year Law and Social Justice Pathway will offer a sustainable learning experience for all students directly aligning with college and career options in the legal field beyond high school. Classes will start with the new academic year in August.

The district announced the relaunch on April 19 at Bullard High School.

The pathway was initiated in 2006 as a law magnet component for Bullard in conjunction with the opening of the Bullard High School Courtroom. The program provided ninth graders opportunities to explore the legal field as part of a traditional academic curriculum. The program eventually lost momentum because it lacked additional class offerings beyond the freshman year.

"We are excited to provide this new, redesigned law pathway to all of

our Fresno Unified students," said Interim Superintendent Bob Nelson. "Upon completion of the pathway and after receiving a high school diploma, students will be qualified to be employed as a legal clerk, social and human service assistant or foster care worker, or pursue a post-secondary education in the criminal justice arena."

The work to develop the pathway has been extensive, including collaboration with college partners both in Fresno and throughout the state. Partners include the California LAW Partnership, San Joaquin College of Law, Fresno City College and a number of local legal specialists.

Over the last few months, more than a dozen local partners met with the district, serving as an advisory committee and assisting in relaunching a sustainable program, rich in content, experiences and opportunities for all students. These partners will continue to work with and support this pathway moving forward.



Fresno Unified School District

2017 Important Dates

- May 3, 17 and 31** Board of Education Meetings
- Graduations May 18-June 7** (See Page 7 for Complete List)
- State Testing Window Grades 3-8** Through May 26
- State Testing Window Grade 11** Through June 2
- June 8** Last Day of School
- August 14** Start of 2017-18 School Year



Fresno Unified

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GOAL 2: ARTS, ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS

All Fifth-Graders Experience Live Theater Production at Roosevelt



All 6,000 of the district's fifth grade students enjoyed a theater production in April of "Founding Fathers...and Mothers," the first live theater experience for many of the students.

The play, staged at Roosevelt High School, was an original production written, directed, and cast by the Good Company Players. It was funded by a gift from community members Francine and Murray Farber.

"This was a unique and wonderful opportunity for our students," said Catherine Aujero, manager of visual and performing arts for the district. "This production was an integrated learning opportunity pairing elements of the state Visual and Performing Arts Standards and Social Studies Standards to bring U.S. history to life through a professional theater experience.

"The play is fast-paced and tells the story of our country's struggle to become a democratic nation with elements of humor and drama to engage our fifth grade students."

The Good Company Players' Laurie Pessano spent many hours researching and writing the play specifically for this arts integrated project. Under her direction, eight actors portrayed dozens of key figures from the birth of the nation.

All fifth grade teachers were provided a theater lesson to prepare the students for the experience. The play aligned with the goals of the district's Any Given Child

program, a Kennedy Center for Performing Arts initiative. Six productions were held during the school day April 18-20.

The Farbers' support for the theater production is a continuation of the fifth grade arts

***"This was a unique and wonderful opportunity for our students."
Catherine Aujero,
manager of visual and performing arts***

project they started last school, Fifth Grade on Broadway.

"We believe that all students can profit from being exposed to the arts. They can respond to new challenges, experience ideas and activities that they have never had before, and find ways of expressing themselves that don't necessarily involve classroom reading and writing. And the arts are fun!" the Farbers said in a written statement.

The Farbers generously support Fresno Unified schools in a number of ways including through Steve's Scholars at Tehipite Middle School. The Farbers launched Steve's Scholars in 2012, gifting Tehipite Middle School with a \$1 million endowment fund from the estate of their son, Steven, for a scholarship program in his memory.



All fifth-graders in the district attended "Founding Fathers...and Mothers," a live theater production at Roosevelt High School staged in April bringing history to life.

Ahwahnee Middle School Wins Inaugural Academic Pentathlon

Ahwahnee Middle School placed first in the district's inaugural Academic Pentathlon March 21 and 25 at Tioga Middle School.

The competition featured 12 middle schools and 125 students. The students were tested in Literature (with an essay), Social Science, Science and Fine Art, with the theme of World War II.

Following Ahwahnee with 12,882 points, top schools were Baird Middle

School with 12,213 points, Tenaya Middle School with 11,973 points, Tioga Middle School with 11,483 points and Kings Canyon Middle School with 11,149 points.

The event combined arts, activities and athletics with academics for an exciting learning experience in a competitive environment filled with school spirit. Students made valuable connections with peers and teachers.



Ahwahnees's Pentathlon team celebrates after taking first place at the district's first Academic Pentathlon, held March 21 and 25 at Tioga Middle School.



Character Counts: Sequoia Student Gives Bike Away to Friend



Matthew Sarim, left, donated a bike he won in a drawing at Sequoia Middle School to his friend, Robert Rodriguez, right, who did not have a bike. School neighborhood resource officer Katrina Lloyd, middle, worked with Walmart to secure donation of bikes to give away to students with good grades, attendance and behavior.

Seventh-grader Matthew Sarim was one of two lucky Sequoia Middle School students to win a mountain bike during a special drawing for students with good grades, attendance and behavior.

But Matthew had a different plan for his bike, not involving hopping on and racing around and jumping bumps. He already had a bike, so he wanted to give it to his buddy, Robert Gonzalez, who did not have a bike. Robert is also a seventh-grader at Sequoia.

“I was touched by the unselfishness displayed by Matthew, who could have very easily just kept the bike as a second bike,” Principal Matt Ward said.

Matthew said that he decided to give the bike to Robert

because he always helps him with homework and cheers him up in first period: “I wanted to do something nice for him.”

After giving up the bike, Matthew said he felt proud.

“I knew he deserved one because of the kind of person he is,” Matthew said.

He said they don’t live near each other so have not had the chance to ride bikes together, but he hopes they can someday.

The 26-inch mountain bikes were awarded to students on March 20 at the end of the third quarter. Sequoia staff had organized the giveaway and Katrina Lloyd, the campus’ school neighborhood resource officer, secured the donation of the bikes from Walmart.

2017 High School Graduation Schedule

DAY	DATE	GRAD TIME	PRACTICE	SCHOOL	LOCATION
Thursday	May 18	7 p.m.	8 a.m.	Design Science	FCC - OAB
Thursday	June 1	11 a.m.	10 a.m.	Fresno Adult H.S. & GED	Saroyan Theatre
Thursday	June 1	3:30 p.m.	7 a.m.	DeWolf	Saroyan Theatre
Thursday	June 1	5:30 p.m.	8 a.m.	J.E. Young	Saroyan Theatre
Thursday	June 1	7 p.m.	-----	Rata	Rata High School MPR
Thursday	June 1	7:30	9 a.m.	Cambridge	Saroyan Theater
Friday	June 2	5:30 p.m.	9 a.m.	Phoenix Secondary	Phoenix Secondary
Monday	June 5	4 p.m.	8 a.m.	Bullard	Save Mart Center
Monday	June 5	8 p.m.	10:30 a.m.	Edison	Save Mart Center
Tuesday	June 6	4 p.m.	8 a.m.	Hoover	Save Mart Center
Tuesday	June 6	7:30 p.m.	8:30 a.m.	McLane	McLane Stadium
Tuesday	June 6	8 p.m.	10:30 a.m.	Sunnyside	Save Mart Center
Wednesday	June 7	4 p.m.	8 a.m.	Roosevelt	Save Mart Center
Wednesday	June 7	7 p.m.	9 a.m.	Duncan	Saroyan Theater
Wednesday	June 7	8 p.m.	10:30 a.m.	Fresno	Save Mart Center
TBD	July	9 a.m.	TBD	Summer School	Roosevelt Auditorium



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Band Director Making Beautiful Music at Roosevelt High School

Taylor Ledak, a 10-year-veteran of Fresno Unified, is the band director and chair of the Music Department at Roosevelt High School and a recent finalist for an Excellence in Education award. Through his leadership, students are not only learning music but are serving their community. He continues to hone his own skills, playing often with the Tulare County Symphony Orchestra. Colleague Sandy Tapia, band director at Sequoia Middle School, said about Ledak: "Taylor's classroom is a place where you can find students learning about music and life skills."

What is your music background?

As a kid I had horrible allergies that would develop into a respiratory infection. My doctor suggested the potential benefits of playing a wind instrument. I chose the clarinet because it fit in my backpack. Right out of high school I taught private lessons, mostly to beginners – fourth-, fifth and sixth-graders at a music store in the afternoons, and was graciously allowed to sit in as second clarinet in a community orchestra. The group was full of teachers, retired symphony musicians, and top notch players in general. I learned the repertoire and how to really play. I played in

that group until I relocated to Fresno on a music scholarship at Fresno State. I played in the wind ensemble, Bulldog Beat, marching band, orchestra and numerous chamber ensembles. After finishing my degree in Music Education I was placed at Roosevelt for my student teaching. When the job opened up here, I jumped at it.

What has it been like rebuilding the marching band?

When I started here I cut back the band's schedule substantially. I focused on a few areas and doing those few things really well. Students felt confident performing in public and those fine performances helped attract others to the group. That small band of 23 the first year won a lot of first place trophies! When I started here there was not much of a feeder program from elementary and middle schools. I relied heavily on having a beginning band and grew the numbers significantly through that. It was a real challenge starting kids in high school but I had many continue and become real contributors to the program.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?

I would have to say the lasting



Roosevelt High School band director and teacher Taylor Ledak works with 11th-grader Miguel Avila.

connections I form with students and their families. I have had students for as many as six years consecutively 7th-12th grade. To see them grow as musicians and as people over time and having an impact on that is very rewarding. Traveling is a big part of band and I've taken many to their first trip to the beach or even out of town period. I've been invited to birthdays, quinceaneras, graduation parties, weddings, and funerals. Former students are now music teachers themselves and colleagues.

What is the most challenging?

Without a doubt, finding the balance between school and my personal life. With marching band, football games, festivals, musicals, winterguard, fundraising, events on Saturdays and even Sundays, 70+ hour work weeks are not uncommon. I try to do the job the way it should be done and give students the experiences they should have without neglecting my family. My wonderful

See **TAYLOR LEDAK**
Continued on page 10

Sunnyside Volleyball Coach Serves on the Court and the Classroom



Sequoia Middle School aide Kee Xiong works with Jennifer Carrera. Xiong is also the varsity boys volleyball coach at Sunnyside High School.

Kee Xiong is a para educator with students with severe disabilities at Sequoia Middle School and the varsity boys volleyball coach at Sunnyside High School. He was a finalist in February for an Excellence in Education award. "He gives and gives and never expects anything in return," said Sequoia teacher Lois Henderson.

Describe what you do in your job as a para educator at Sequoia.

My job is to care about the students. Everything else just seems to happen. I keep them safe, I learn about their strengths and their struggles, and I challenge them to be better. In the end, I hope that they leave knowing more than they knew when they came and that they feel better about who they are and what they can accomplish.

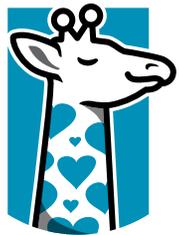
What is the best part about your job?

I get to work with students and athletes who are eager to learn and grow as a person both on and off the court. I have the best colleagues and administrators who support me by allowing me to bring my creativity and uniqueness to work.

What is the most challenging part about your job?

For me, it is challenging to stay positive. The students that I work with have a lot of different challenges and disabilities and it is difficult to make progress.

See **KEE XIONG**
Continued on page 10



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Tournament of Tech Turns 10



From left, Manuel Jardin, Alex Miles, Jared Tijerina and Zack Lopez from Ahwahnee Middle School were among the record 650 students competing in the 10th annual Tournament of Technology April 1 at Rutherford B. Gaston Sr. Middle School.

Fresno's Unified's Tournament of Technology attracted a record 650 middle school students this year for the 10th anniversary of the competition, the largest of its kind in the state.



For video, go to vimeo.com/fres-nounified/tournamentoftech2017

Geek is cool at this event, where teams of students battled with robots, 3D printers and in video production in 14 technology-based events on April 1.

"The event has created a compelling reason for students to engage in technology in middle school," said Kurt Madden, chief technology officer for the district.

As the event celebrated its first decade this year, Madden looked back on its humble beginning. The 2008 Tournament of Tech attracted 80 students. For the robotics challenge, robots had to weave in and out of five pylons, trying for the fastest time.

"Most robots couldn't navigate the simple course. At the time, I would never have predicted what middle school students are doing with robots now, with challenges like the Search and Rescue Maze we had this year," Madden said.

Madden and Mabel Franks, a now-retired Fresno Unified administrator, created the event because at the time, there wasn't a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)

Tournament of Tech Winners

Division 1 Champions:

- First -- Computech Middle School
- Second -- Sequoia Middle School
- Third -- Kings Canyon Middle School

Division 2 Champions:

- First -- Terronez Middle School
- Second -- Scandinavian Middle School
- Third -- Baird Middle School

in middle schools.

They also wanted to give non-sports students a competitive extracurricular activity to better connect them with school, Madden said.

The Tournament of Tech offers competitions in Design, Video and Robotics, tweaked every year to keep them current. The Coaches Guide is now 65 pages. Each event has an online competition that takes place the week before the tournament. Students compete online in design, website development, computer programming and

See **TOURNAMENT OF TECH**
Continued on page 13



District will Recognize Scholarship Winners

The district will honor 49 Fresno Unified Scholarship winners at a banquet May 10 in what has become an annual tradition celebrating deserving seniors.

The community is invited to attend the event, which will be held from 6-8 p.m. at the Golden Palace Banquet Hall. Tickets are \$40. Sponsorships are also available starting at \$500. Call 457-3380 or email maiyer.vang@fresnounified.org.

Scholarships are awarded through a fund established in 2009 made possible by generous donations



from the community and district employees. A State of Education luncheon in the fall is the largest single fundraiser for the scholarships.

The district will award \$61,000 in scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Recipients have overcome a number of roadblocks during their education journeys, including family tragedies, extreme poverty and language barriers.

To Give to the Scholarship Fund: <https://tinyurl.com/fusdscholarship>

TAYLOR LEDAK Continued from page 8

wife was in band in high school and college and is very understanding and supportive. It certainly wouldn't work the way it does otherwise! She still plays music in community groups and is a nurse at Children's Hospital. It is nice to have an RN on band trips!

What new song have you introduced to the marching band this year?

There is a YouTube video of a dad playing trombone and his kid slamming the oven door to the beat "When Mom Is Not Around." I wrote out parts for the band. Look out for this at football games next year.

What song does the band enjoy playing the most?

They really light up when they play the fight song after a touchdown. We were recently reconnected with the original version of the fight song after playing at the class of '71 and '72 reunion. The students really like the original.

What are some of the ways your students connect with the Roosevelt community?

Whether it is the Veterans Day Parade, Christmas Parade, Fresno

Fair, or a community event at Holmes Playground down the street, we do quite a bit around town.

Name one thing most people do not know about you.

I really like quiet. After a full day of music making, I really appreciate quiet.

What do you like to do in your down time?

I spend as much time with my family as possible. Besides that, I'm an avid DIYer (I have an older house that requires a lot of attention). Though I don't get nearly enough time to, I am also into woodworking and metalworking, hiking, camping, and river rafting.

If you were not a teacher, what career would you choose?

I have a lot of different skills and enjoy working with my hands. Maybe a trade, contractor, or a career with the forest service or National Park Service. Before settling on music education as a career I was on track to become a mechanical engineer.

If you could join any touring band, which one would it be?

I would play keyboards and sing screaming lead vocals with Boston.

KEE XIONG Continued from page 8

You bring food and recipes into class. What does that teach students?

Cooking lessons are basic life skills. There are so many lessons in a cooking lesson such as vocabulary, following recipes (reading), following directions, science (changes in properties), math (measuring and fractions), etc. In addition, different foods bring the students and staff together, teaching everyone about our cultural foods.

What are some of the ways you connect with your students?

I connect with my students by finding their strengths and building upon them.

How do you motivate students to learn?

I motivate the students to learn by giving them opportunities to succeed while also challenging them in a place where they feel safe to make mistakes.

How did you get into coaching?

I have been coaching since 2006. I have always loved competitive sports such as tennis and volleyball. Growing up in Fresno, I was given so many great opportunities to play sports. I wanted to continue to stay involved in sports while giving back to this community. Coaching was a perfect fit.

What is the connection between being involved in sports and academics?

All of my athletes are students first. I make that clear from the beginning of every season. Both academics and sports require persistence and grit.

You grew up going to Fresno Unified schools. How does your personal background help you in working with your students, whether it's in the classroom or on the volleyball court?

In the classroom, the students are living in the same socio-economic environment that I came from. I understand that before we can make progress, their basic needs must come first.



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DUAL IMMERSION
Continued from page 2

and speak in both languages.

“We want to offer our students the opportunity to be fully bilingual upon graduation. The intent ultimately is to regionalize these opportunities across the district. We want to provide our parents options for how they want their children to be educated because it’s a really important piece of how we plan to move forward,” said Interim Superintendent Bob Nelson.

Wawona Middle School, Rowell Elementary School and McLane High School join Ewing, Leavenworth and Sunset elementary schools, which also have dual immersion programs.

La Escuela Wawona se une a Rowell y McLane Agregando los Programas del Lenguaje Español

La Escuela Secundaria Wawona es la más reciente que contará con un nuevo programa de doble inmersión este otoño.

La Mesa Educativa del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno discutió los planes

el 5 de abril, para agregar las clases de pre-kindergarten y kindergarten en Wawona las cuales serán enfocadas únicamente en doble inmersión.

Wawona se une a la Primaria Rowell y Preparatoria McLane en la creación de programas nuevos para que los estudiantes lleguen a ser bilingües en inglés y español. La ampliación de los programas es en respuesta a los padres que expresaron su deseo de que se aumentaran las oportunidades de doble inmersión.

“Nos sentimos extremadamente emocionados de proveer a nuestras familias esta maravillosa oportunidad. Los estudiantes que participan saldrán de nuestras escuelas con esta enorme ventaja la cuál mejorará sus destrezas académicas y carrera/profesión y su vida en general,” dijo Maria Maldonado, asistente de superintendente de la Oficina de Servicios Para Estudiantes Aprendices de Inglés.

Hasta el momento hay estudiantes de séptimo y octavo grado en la Secundaria Wawona. Los planes de convocatoria en Wawona son; eventualmente convertirla en una escuela de K-8, comenzando con clases en

pre-kindergarten y kindergarten en agosto del 2017. Después, cada año, se agregará un nivel del grado de doble inmersión asegurando que los estudiantes tengan la oportunidad de completar el plan de estudio de doble inmersión hasta el octavo grado.

La secundaria Wawona continuará con clases de no doble inmersión para los estudiantes de séptimo y octavo grado que prefieren el plan de estudio tradicional.

“La investigación es realmente clara y con nuestra experiencia, como también, la revisión de los resultados de nuestros estudiantes. Los programas de instrucción de doble inmersión son los más efectivos reuniendo las necesidades no solamente para nuestros estudiantes aprendices de inglés sino que también nuestros estudiantes de sólo inglés avanzan en lo académico,” dice Maldonado.

Las metas de los programas de doble inmersión son para que los estudiantes desarrollen el bilingüismo y lecto-escritura, asegurando el rendimiento académico en el nivel del grado o superior, desarrollando e intensificando las competencias culturales. Se recomienda enfáticamente que los estudiantes comiencen el programa de doble inmersión en pre-kindergarten o kindergarten, con 90% de instrucción en español y 10% de instrucción en inglés durante el día de clase.

Con cada nivel del grado que pasa, el porcentaje de instrucción en inglés aumenta el 10%. Para el cuarto grado, el plan de estudio provee instrucción de 50% en inglés y 50% en español. Los estudiantes aprenden a leer, escribir y hablar ambos lenguajes.

“Deseamos ofrecerle a nuestros estudiantes la oportunidad de ser completamente bilingües en cuanto se gradúen. Finalmente, el propósito es regionalizar estas oportunidades en todo el distrito. Deseamos proveerle a los padres las opciones de como desean que sus niños sean educados ya que es una pieza verdaderamente importante de como planeamos seguir adelante,” dijo el Superintendente Interino Bob Nelson.

La escuela secundaria Wawona, primaria Rowell y la preparatoria McLane se unen a las escuelas primarias Ewing, Leavenworth y Sunset las cuales también tienen el programa de doble inmersión.

Tsev Kawm Ntawv Wawona Koom Nrog Tsev Kawm Ntawv Rowell, McLane Muaj Kev Kawm Ntawv Mev Ntxiv

Wawona Middle School yog lub tsev kawm ntawv uas nyiam qhuav yuav pib ib qho kev kawm ob tog lus tshiab tshiab rau lub caij nplooj zeeg no.

Fresno Unified Board of Education tau sib tham tej kev npaj nyob rau lub Plaub Hlis tim 5 los ntxiv cov chav kawm pre-kindergarten thiab kindergarten hauv Wawona uas yuav ua tsi ntsees rau kev kawm ob tog lus nkaus xwb.

Wawona koom nrog Rowell Elementary School thiab McLane High School los tsim cov kev kawm tshiab tshiab rau cov tub kawm ntawv kom paub ob hom lus ua lus Askiv thiab lus Mev. Qhov kev nthuav tej kev kawm raws li niam txiv tej lus teb uas nws tau tawm suab lawv kev ntshaw rau kev nce tej hau kev qhib kawm ob tog lus.

“Peb muaj siab kawg nkaus los npaj peb tej yim tsev neeg qhov hau kev qhib zoo kawg nkaus no. cov tub kawm ntawv muab kev koom tes thaum tawm ntawm peb tej tsev kawm ntawv mus lawm yuav muaj ntau yam txiaj ntsim txhawb pab lawv txoj kev kawm txuj ci thiab tej kev txawj dej num, thiab lawv lub neej txhua yam,” Maria Maldonado, tus pab tuam thawj saib kev kawm ntawm Neeg Kawm Lus Askiv Tej Kev Pab tau hais li ntawm.

Tam sim no nws yog cov kawm qib xya thiab yim hauv Wawona Middle School. Tej kev npaj yuav ua Wawona dhau los ua ib lub tsev kawm ntawv K-8 pib xub thawj nrog cov chav kawm pre-kindergarten thiab kindergarten thaum lub Yim Hli ntawm 2017. Ces, tej xywb xyoo, ib them qib kawm ob tog lus ntxiv yuav ua kom tej tub kawm ntawv muaj txoj hau kev qhib los kawm tiav kev kawm ob tog lus mus txog rau qib yim.

Wawona yuav txuas ntxiv cov chav kawm tsis yog ob tog lus rau cov tub kawm ntawv qib xya thiab yim rau cov nws nyiam qhov kev kawm li ib txwm.

“Kev tshawb fawb yeej pom meej meej thiab nrog rau peb kev ua dua loss, thiab, raws li peb tau ua zoo xyuas tej kev ua tau zoo rau peb cov tub kawm ntawv. Tej kev qhia kev kawm Ob tog

See **DUAL IMMERSION**
Continued on page 12

Fresno Unified School District
is Proud to *Celebrate Academic Achievement*

For the first time in more than a decade, 85% of Fresno Unified students are graduating from high school on time. In order to reach the ultimate goal – 100% of our students graduating on time college and career ready – it will take everyone’s support.

I AM READY

PRINCIPAL Erica

My goal is to develop greatness within every person who walks through our doors – and I include teachers, staff, and parents, too. I believe that is how Leavenworth can best serve our students.

One of the most important things for me is to make sure the staff knows how valued they are – that my love for them is unconditional. People need to know that it’s ok to be imperfect. As long as we are in this together, we can pick up and move forward.

Among the students, staff, and parents, we’ve built trusting relationships so there are no obstacles we can’t overcome. We are all ready to be great for our kids so our kids can be great.

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DISTRICT ROUNDUP

District Launches Superintendent Search

The Fresno Unified Board of Education took another step toward replacing its top administrator, hiring Leadership Associates on March 22 to conduct a national search for a new superintendent.

The board approved a contract with the firm on April 19.

Bob Nelson is the district's interim superintendent. Nelson was approved on an unanimous vote on Feb. 15 following the board's decision to buy out Michael Hanson's contract.



Edison Aca Dec Places Second in State

The Edison Academic Decathlon team finished second in Division 2 at the California Academic Decathlon March 25-26. Edison finished 16th overall, the Valley's top finisher. Team members Martha Salazar, Azure Lopez, Victoria Espitia, and Sumanjit Gill contributed to the team's success, as did team medalists Xitlali Pacheco (silver in Speech), Marcus Tan (gold in Social Science and silver in Essay), Riley Budd (bronze in Interview and silver in Math and Art), Daniel Clark (gold in Essay and Art and bronze in Science) and Andrew Garcia (gold in Music and bronze in Language & Literature, Economics, and Science). Andrew was also the top varsity student in the state's Division 2.

Fresno High Hosts Holocaust Exhibit

Fresno High School's library hosted "The Courage to Remember," a memorial exhibition on the Holocaust open to schools and the community April 20-28. The exhibit, produced by the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, featured 200 exclusive

photographic images on panels offering unique insight into the Holocaust.



Educators of the Week

Sheryl Smith, a preschool teacher at Williams Elementary School, was recognized March 13 as KSEE24's Educator of the Week and Manchester GATE Elementary School sixth grade teacher Susan Milos was selected April 3.

Constituent Services wins Magna Award

The district's Constituent Services Office won one of five Magna Awards Honorable Mentions for school districts with over 20,000 students. The award was presented March 25 in Denver. Magna Awards, sponsored by the National School Boards Association's *American School Board Journal*, recognize innovation and excellence in public schools. Winners were selected by an independent panel of school board members, administrators and other educators from more than 200 submissions in three enrollment categories.

Vang Pao Demonstrates Healthy Habits

As part of a \$90,000 Healthy Eating Active Living grant Kaiser Permanente Fresno provided to Fresno Unified, students and staff at Vang Pao Elementary School have been learning how to improve their physical fitness by making healthier choices. On April 18, students demonstrated what they have learned as part of a revamped physical education curriculum that focuses on teamwork, strength training and lesson plans on managing diabetes and other chronic health conditions. Students demonstrated volleyball, pull-ups and planks.

District Schools Named to Honor Roll

Forkner and Manchester GATE elementary schools, Baird and Computech middle schools, Bullard TALENT K-8 School and Design Science Early College High School were among 1,866 schools named to the 2016 California Honor Roll as higher performing, higher poverty schools distinguished for their academic achievement and for closing achievement gaps. The honor roll is presented by Educational Results Partnership and the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence.

Fresno Unified Middle School Third Quarter Champions

For the third quarter for girls basketball, Tenaya Middle School was the Division I champion and Computech Middle School runner-up, while Ahwahnee Middle School was the Division II champion and Sequoia Middle School runner-up. In baseball,

St. Anthony School was the Division I champion and Baird runner-up, Kings Canyon Middle School first in Division II and Yosemite Middle School runner-up and Cooper Academy was first in Division III and Bullard TALENT School runner-up.

Schools Awarded Gold Ribbon Honor

Baird Middle School, Design Science Early College High School and Edison High School have been recognized by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson with Gold Ribbon School Awards. The awards go to schools with significant improvements in state academic performance standards that have also created a positive, safe learning environment for all students on campus. The schools will be honored at the California School Recognition Program Awards Ceremony on May 17.

DUAL IMMERSION Continued from page 11

lus yog yam zoo tshaj rau tej kev xav tau ntawm peb cov tub kawm ntawv kawm lus Askiv tiam sis kuj tseem nce kev kawm txuj ci ntawm peb cov tub kawm ntawv paub lus Askiv nkaus," Maldonado hais li.

Tej hom phiaj ntawm tej kev kawm ob tog lus yog rau tej tub kawm ntawv los paub ob hom lus ob hom ntawv, ua kom kawm tau raws theem qib los yog siab dua, thiab kom paub ob hom kev lis kev cai zoo thiab tob dua qub. Nws raug pom zoo tias tej tub kawm ntawv pib ib qho kev kawm ob tog lus hauv pre-kindergarten los yog kindergarten, nrog kev qhia lus Mev rau 90% ntawm hnuv kawm ntawv thiab kev qhia lus Askiv rau 10% ntawm hnuv kawm.

Nrog tej thwb theem qib kawm dhau, fem pua ntawm kev qhia ua lus Askiv nce los ntawm 10%.

Thaum txog qib plaub, kev qhia yog qhia 50% ua lus Askiv thiab 50% ua lus Mev. Tej tub kawm ntawv kawm nyeem, sau thiab hais lus tag nrho ob hom lus.

"peb xav los qhib muaj txoj hau kev rau peb cov tub kawm ntawv kom paub ob hom lus puv npo thaum kawm tiav. Lub hom phiaj yog los ua raug lees paub tej hau kev qhib no thoob plaws hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv. Peb xav los npaj peb tej niam txiv tej kev xaiv rau lawv xav kom cov me nyuam kawm li cas vim tias nws yob ib qho tseem ceeb heev seb peb npaj li cas rau tom ntej," Bob Nelson tus Tuam Thawj Tuav Dej Num Ib Vuag no tau hais li.

Wawona Middle, Rowell Elementary thiab McLane High schools tau koom nrog Ewing, Leavenworth thiab Sunset Elementary schools uas kuj tseem muaj tej kev kawm ob tog lus.



TOURNAMENT OF TECH
Continued from page 9

video advertisements, public service announcements and movie trailers.

Madden said they added 3D printers about six years ago, realizing that students needed to learn this important technology. The district bought 3D printers for each middle school and created several competitions.

For the 3D Derby, students “print” their cars, including the wheels, and race them on an official 32-foot aluminum Pinewood Derby racetrack. Students must build their cars to height, length, width and weight specifications.

Madden said involvement grew from a few students meeting after school with teachers a couple of times to official after-school programs dedicated to preparing for the Tournament of Tech for most of the school year.

Now, many of the middle schools offer a technology-oriented elective during the school day where students rotate through the 14 different events, creating, developing design documents or websites, printing out and testing

cars, bridges and other 3D objects and competing with their peers.

Joe Humphry, an eighth-grader at Ahwahnee Middle School, loved the event this year.

“I’ve learned that team work is the key to success,” Joe said.

Florida Cheung, a science teacher at Kings Canyon Middle School, has coached Tournament of Tech teams for three years. She said the Tournament of Tech projects give students a range of literacy, communication, knowledge and technical skills that can be used in any future career.

She has developed curriculum based on the tournament. Her classroom becomes an exciting studio, where some students are working on 3D objects, some on media films, while others on video games.

“It is empowering for them to choose their topics, and then to develop their skills,” Cheung said. “It is also incredible to see them at the day of the competition, where they are ready to face the challenges. They get so excited, and they are also supportive of their peers competing.”



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Gaston Grows a Garden

Rutherford B. Gaston Sr. Middle School unveiled a garden featuring seasonal fruits and vegetables on April 6.

Students and staff plan to share the healthy produce with the community and the elementary schools that feed into Gaston Middle School. The first harvest is expected by May. The garden is planted with cilantro, sweet and hot peppers, tomatoes, herbs and corn.

Students launched the garden as a solution to making the Gaston community healthier as part of a school wide project-based learning experience. Students came up with the garden partly in response to the lack of grocery stores in the Gaston neighborhood, limiting access to healthy fruits and vegetables.

Every student and department on campus contributed to the project since the beginning of the school year. The career technical education class designed and built the garden, art students painted the boxes holding the plants, science students analyzed the best soil for the garden and much more.

Also on April 6, the school’s first Student Health Advisory Club hosted a health fair open to the entire community to learn how to stay healthy. The club was launched through Gaston’s Health and Wellness Center and P.E. Department, thanks to the support of Kaiser Permanente Fresno. The event also showcased the talents of students in the visual and performing arts and provided information to parents about college from the College Making it Happen initiative.



Gaston Middle School student Takiyah Russell, in back, and after-school staff member Angelica Chavez work on a garden that the campus launched April 6. The produce will be shared with the community and elementary schools that feed into Gaston.



Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse

The district's Fiscal Services reminds the community that dishonest or fraudulent acts can be confidentially reported by calling the Anti-Fraud Hotline, (559) 325-3200, or by completing the fraud, waste or abuse reporting form online at:

<http://www.ppcpas.com/fresno-unified-fraud-alert>

The anti-fraud waste or abuse reporting hotline is available to report alleged fraud in the district.

The responsibility for monitoring the hotline rests with the internal auditor, Price, Page & Company. A report may be made anonymously.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Duncan Teacher Academy Student Getting Jump Start on Career

As a senior in high school, Abigail Alvarado spends about six hours a week helping students at Centennial Elementary School. The hands-on learning experience is giving Abigail a head start on her future career as a teacher.

Abigail is enrolled in the Teacher Academy career pathway at Duncan Polytechnical High School. The

pathway is part of the district's Linked Learning program. Linked Learning incorporates rigorous academic courses with real-world experiences to prepare students to graduate from high school prepared for college or a career.

Abigail loves her time in the Centennial classroom. She is gaining invaluable experience not only helping students learn, but in how to recognize the

different emotions that students may come to school with.

"It's fun and challenging. Sometimes students are sad or not in the mood to learn so I try to help them feel better and I try to motivate them to learn," Abigail said.

Abigail also enjoys the opportunity to work alongside teachers and said that it has helped her learn to be a better student. She is able to understand her teachers and how hard they try to help her and other students learn.

In addition to her current work-based experience this year and during her junior year, Abigail was selected last summer for a paid internship with Fresno Unified's Teacher Academy Work-Based Learning Program. The program is one of the district's strategies for "growing its own" teachers while providing work-based learning and internship opportunities for high school juniors and seniors.

Abigail worked with 60 other high school students as paraprofessionals (aides) in classrooms during summer school. They worked alongside teachers to provide support for students and were required to attend professional learning sessions to gain a deeper understanding of the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Abigail loved the experience: "It's great to get paid and do what you love."

Abigail has already applied for the program this year and hopes to get to work with special education students.

After graduation, Abigail hopes to continue working with Fresno Unified as a paraprofessional while attending Fresno City College. Then she plans to transfer to Fresno State University to get her teaching credential, with possibly a focus on special education. She believes all students have the potential to learn and that more special education students should be included in regular classrooms. Abigail recognizes that every student learns differently and trying to be the teacher that each student needs is difficult.

"I have learned more about myself and how I can be a better person from this pathway program," Abigail said.

The Teacher Academy program will be offered at McLane, Roosevelt, and Sunnyside high schools for the 2017-18 school year. The program provides additional support for students interested in taking the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) and the district's No Child Left Behind para-educator exam, opportunities for paid summer internships, and possible employment as a paraprofessional after high school graduation.



Abigail Alvarado, a Duncan Polytechnical High School student in the Teacher Academy career pathway, works with Carlos Flores in Roseleen Empleo's third grade class at Centennial Elementary School.



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Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative



SUPT. MESSAGE
Continued from page 3

rates grow to an all-time high -- nearly 84%. As we expected, the growth continues with the release of CDE's 2015-16 graduation rates indicating an increased graduation rate for the sixth year in a row.

Data highlights a rate of 85.4% -- a 1.6% increase over the year prior. McLane High School, Fresno High School and Hoover High School all saw percentage improvements over last year's results while our Hispanic students saw a 3.3% increase, now exceeding the state average, and rates at Bullard, Edison, Duncan, and Sunnyside high schools all remain above 90%.



Bob Nelson
Interim
Superintendent

These results are a direct reflection of the district's investments -- investments that are helping students stay in school and on track to graduate and opening the door to the greatest number of post-secondary choices from the widest array of options. While graduation rates are a positive indicator to academic success, the district is now beginning intentional work with our collegiate partners to ensure that our graduates are fully prepared to move successfully from high school into colleges and careers.

Together, we are building momentum to reach 100% graduation rate and I am thankful to our students, staff and this great community for remaining dedicated and focused on that goal.

Una Vez Más Aumenta el Índice de Graduación, Las Escuelas Terminan el Año Consolidado

Las vacaciones de primavera han terminado y la meta final está a la vista -- sólo seis semanas más antes de que otro ciclo escolar se refleje en nuestro espejo. Los estudiantes y maestros por igual están enfocados en terminar el año consolidado mientras concluye el examen estatal de California y las preparatorias comenzarán sus exámenes de Colocación Avanzada (AP). Durante las últimas semanas, los

estudiantes del 12vo grado (seniors) han estado mencionando las universidades (colleges) y fijos en sus metas para las próximas ceremonias de graduación.

El personal trabaja diligentemente con los Asociados de Liderazgo a nivel distrito, nuestra firma de investigación recientemente contratada, para identificar a candidatos fuertes, diversos y con experiencia para el próximo superintendente del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno. No importa que escuela visito, está claro que todos están enfocados y comprometidos a terminar el ciclo escolar en una nota positiva.

Como podrá leer en esta edición Building Futures, el Departamento Educativo de California (CDE) ha desarrollado un nuevo indicador de responsabilidad mostrando el rendimiento académico escolar. La capacidad ya no es basada en un sólo resultado del examen estatal, sino en medidas múltiples incluyendo datos de suspensión, crecimiento académico en general y promedios de graduación. Mientras que este es un nuevo sistema de responsabilidad estatal, usa los elementos similares a nuestro indicador de datos del distrito que hemos usado por los últimos años, ayudándonos a identificar la fortaleza académica y oportunidades a nivel distrito.

El indicador CDE les permite a los distritos y al estado ver el éxito académico en una escala mucho más grande, despliegue de recursos para atender las necesidades estudiantiles en niveles múltiples asegurando que los estudiantes tengan todas las oportunidades de alcanzar la etapa de graduación.

El año pasado el distrito vio el índice de graduación crecer hasta el punto más alto -- casi el 84%. Como lo esperábamos, el crecimiento continúa con la liberación de los índices de graduación de CDE de 2015-16 por seis años consecutivos. Los datos reflejan un promedio de 85.4% -- 1.6% de aumento durante el año anterior. La Preparatoria McLane, Fresno y Hoover todas vieron porcentaje de mejoramiento durante los resultados del año pasado mientras que en nuestros estudiantes hispanos se vio un aumento de 3.3%, superando ahora el promedio estatal y el índice en las preparatorias Bullard, Edison, Duncan y Sunnyside todas permanecen arriba de 90%. Estos resultados son un reflejo directo

de las inversiones del distrito -- inversiones que están ayudando a los estudiantes a permanecer en la escuela y con el objetivo de graduar y abrir puertas a una gran cantidad de opciones de estudios superiores de la gama más amplia de opciones.

Mientras que los índices de graduación son un indicador positivo para el éxito académico, el distrito ahora empieza el trabajo intencional con nuestros colegas socios para asegurar que nuestros estudiantes graduados están completamente preparados para continuar con el éxito de la preparatoria al colegio y una carrera.

Juntos, construiremos la fortaleza para alcanzar el índice de 100% de graduación y estoy agradecido con nuestros estudiantes, personal y esta gran comunidad por permanecer dedicados y enfocados en esta meta.

Kev kawv ntawv tiav rov qab nce dua, kawm ntawv tas xyoo no zoo kawg

Kev so thaum lub caij nplooj ntoos hlas twb tas lawm ces txhais tau tias twb pom zem zuag txoj kab yuav kawg lawm--tshuav rau lub vij xwb ces kev kawm ntawv xyoo no twb tas lawm. Cov tug ntxhais kawm ntawv thiab cov xib fwb coj zoo ib yam rau qhov kev kawm tau ntawv zoo uas lub xyoo yuav xaus ces yuav xeem cov ntawv ntawm lub xeev thiab cov kev xeem AP.

Tau ob peb lub vij tas lawm cov tub ntxhais kawm qib kaum ob tau qhia txog cov tsev kawm ntawv qib siab lawv yuav mus kawm thiab npaj tos mus lav ntawv lawm xwb. Nyob rau ntawm hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv, lub koom haum hu ua Leadership Associates uas peb tau diav lawv los nrhia Hauv Paus Tsev Kawm Ntawv Fresno tus thawj coj tshiab ua hauj lwm nyav heev li. Thaum kuv ncig mus saib cov tsev kawm ntawv nws yeej yog ib qhov uas tseem ceeb heev tias txhua lub tsev kawm ntawv yuav kawm kom tau zoo rau lub xyoo xaus.

Thaum koj tau nyeem qhov Building Futures no lawm, lub Xeev California Hauv Paus Saib Kev Qhia Ntawv tau tsim is qhov kev lav phij xuaj tshiab los qhia tsev kawm ntawv qhov kev xeem tau li cas. Kev xeem tau li cas tsis yog saib ib qhov kev xeem ntawm lub xeev lawm xwb tiam sis muaj ntau ntau qhov kev ntsuag zoo li kev tsho tawm ntawv, cov kev kawm tau ntawv yog li cas thiab kawm tiav coob li cas. Thaum

qhov no yog ib qhov kev lav phij xuaj tshiab los ntawm lub xeev lawm, nwg yog ib qhov uas zoo yuav khws qhov uas peb twb tau siv ob peb lub xyos lawm uas yog pab peb qhia txog qhov kev kawm tau zoo nyob hov twg rau tas nrho peb cov tsev kawm ntawv.

Lub Xeev qhov kev lav phij xuaj yog cia rau cov hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv thiab lub xeev saib xyuas txog kev kawm tau ntawv zoo nyob qhov twg thiaj paub muab kev pab rau cov tub ntxhais kawm ntawv qhov kev xav tau ntawm ntau yam ua kom tub ntxhais kawm ntawv muaj feem kawm tau tiav.

Lub xyoo tas lawm hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv pom qhov kawm ntawv tiav nce siab tshaj tshua zaus---uas yog li 84%. Zoo li peb qhov kev xav thaum lub Xeev tso tawm qhov kev kawm tiav rau 2015-16 cov kev kawm tiav yuav qhia tau tias cov kev kawm tiav nce tau rau lub xyos sib law. Ntaub ntawv qhia tias qhov kev kawm tiav yog 85.4%-- uas yog nce 1.6% tshaj lub xyoo tas. Pom tau tias lub Tsev Kawm Ntawv McLane, Fresno, thiab Hoover los kuj yog nce tshaj lub xyoo tas ntawm peb cov tub ntxhais Mev yog 3.3% nce uas yog tshaj lub xeev qhov lawm.

Lub Kawm Ntawv Bullard, Edison, Duncan thiab Sunnyside los kuj tseem nyob tshaj ntawm 90%. Cov kev kawm tau zoo li no twb yog qhov uas hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv muab cov kev pab tso tau qhov yog lawm---cov kev pab ua yog pab tau tub ntxhais kawm ntawv nyob hauv tsev kawm ntawv thiab kawm tau li nws them thiab qhib qhov rooj rau coob tus muaj feem mus kawm them tom ntej.

Thaum cov kev kawm ntawv tas nce lawm qhia tau tias muaj kev kawm tau ntawv zoo lawm, yog li ntawm hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv ua hauj nyav los koom nrog lwm cov kev pab ua kom peb cov tub ntxhais kawm tiav npaj tau mus kawm zoo nyob hauv cov tsev kawm ntawv qib siab thiab kev kawm ua hauj lwm.

Uake, peb yuav tsim tau kev kawm tiav nce mus ncev 100% thiab kuv ua tsaug rau peb cov menyuum kawm ntawv, neeg ua hauj lwm thiab cov neeg zej zog zoo ua tseem mob siab pab thiab saib xyuas txog lub hom phiaj no.



FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ACADEMIC CALENDAR SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018

BOARD ADOPTED January 20, 2016

Visit us on the web www.fresnounified.org

TEACHER INSTITUTE DAYS August 10-11

DISTRICT BUYBACK DAYS August 9, 2017 November 6, 2017 February 5, 2018

INSTITUTE & BUYBACK DAYS ARE NON-STUDENT DAYS

VACATION & HOLIDAYS Independence Day: July 4, 2017 Labor Day: Sept. 4 Veterans' Day: Nov. 10 Thanksgiving: Nov. 20-24 Winter Break: Dec. 18-Jan. 5 M.L. King, Jr. Day: Jan. 15 Lincoln's Birthday: Feb. 12 Presidents' Day: Feb. 19 Spring Break: March 26-April 2 Memorial Day: May 28 Independence Day: July 4, 2018

HOLIDAYS FOR CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL 2017: July 4, Sept. 4, Nov. 10, Nov. 23 & 24, Dec. 22 & 25, 2018: Jan. 1, Jan. 15, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Mar. 30, May 28, July 4

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS 2nd & 4th Wednesdays unless otherwise specified. Board Meetings are held at the FUSD Education Center 2309 Tulare Street, 2nd Floor

Public Schools Month - April, 2018 CA Day of the Teacher - May 8, 2018 Classified Employee Week - May 21-25, 2018

Calendar grid for July 2017 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for August 2017 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for December 2017 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for April 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

BLACK FIGURES DENOTE DAYS SCHOOL WILL BE IN SESSION RED FIGURES DENOTE NON-STUDENT DAYS WHEN SCHOOL WILL NOT BE IN SESSION HOLIDAY INSTITUTE DAY AP TESTING NOT IN SESSION BUYBACK DAY STANDARDIZED TESTING WINDOW

Calendar grid for September 2017 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for January 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for May 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for October 2017 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for February 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for June 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for November 2017 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for March 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

Calendar grid for July 2018 showing days of the week and dates.

SCHOOL BEGINS August 14, 2017 SCHOOL ENDS June 7, 2018

Elementary & Secondary Reporting Periods Oct. 6.....Period 1 ends (39 days) Dec. 15.....Period 2 ends (43 days) Mar. 16.....Period 3 ends (46 days) June 7.....Period 4 ends (52 days)

REPORT TO PARENTS Sept. 8-13.....1st Deficiency Notice Oct. 9-20 (Revised).....1st Report Card (Elementary Parent Conferences) Nov. 3-9.....2nd Deficiency Notice Jan. 8-12.....2nd Report Card Feb. 9-15.....3rd Deficiency Notice Mar. 19-23.....3rd Report Card Apr. 27-May 2.....4th Deficiency Notice June 7.....4th Report Card

END OF SEMESTER DATES ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY Dec. 15 (82 days) June 7 (98 days)

STANDARDIZED TESTING WINDOW Grades 3-8 & 11 April 16-June 1 (Revised)

Deviations from the calendar require Board approval.

Traditional School Year - 180 teaching days and 5 non-student days 2 Institute Days: August 10 & 11, 2017 3 District BuyBack Days: August 9, 2017; November 6, 2017; February 5, 2018



Fresno City College SUMMER AT CITY GET AHEAD, GET DONE Four sessions available beginning in May & June Only \$46/unit Fall semester begins in August (559) 442-8225 www.fresnocitycollege.edu/summer State Center Community College District