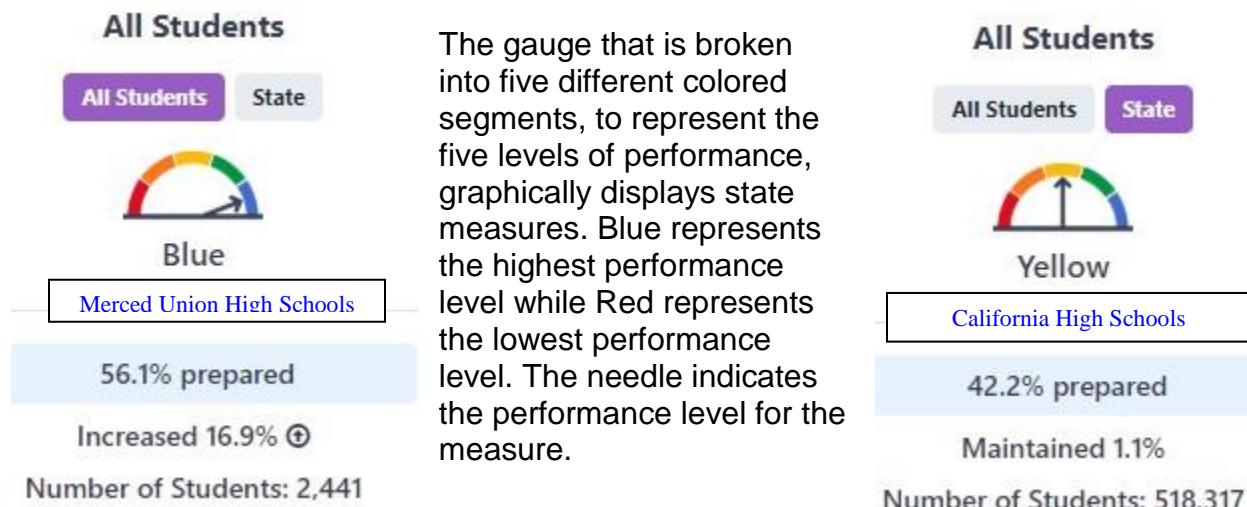


## County Career & Technical Education Spotlight

### **Merced Union High Schools' College/Career Gauge Blue for Highest Performance**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at Merced County comprehensive high school campuses offer robust pathways for students to prepare for further education and employment in current and emerging employment sectors. Instructors enthusiastically (and with a little mist in their eyes) share student success stories across the pathways. CTE opportunities for alternative education high school students and adults through the Merced Adult School and Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) are attracting individuals to re-engage with the course of study. Worknet Merced County is a partner, and with staff serving on advisory boards, linkages to labor market information, and connections with target industry sectors for the area, are fostered with education leaders who regularly update programs in response to changing technology and labor market conditions.

Merced Union High School students in Merced, Atwater, and Livingston are outperforming their peers across the state for college and career readiness according to the California School Dashboard. The Dashboard reports on the performance of schools and student groups on a set of state and local measures to assist in identifying strengths, challenges, and areas in need of improvement.



Transportation, Health And Medical Technology, and Early Childhood Education pathways that correspond to Merced County's fast developing industry sectors are highly engaging for students. Dr. Constantino Aguilar, Merced Union High School District (MUHSD) Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, also attributes the dramatic increases in student performance to the talented staff recruited to deliver the programs. Transportation is one of the pathways Aguilar highlights as he shares that Instructor Arturo Castro was hired from industry to teach Diesel mechanics. "Arturo worked at Interstate Truck Center in Turlock for numerous years before making the

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commitment to work in education. Because diesel mechanics are in high demand, the District paid for Arturo to return to school, so he could earn his credential," Aguilar said.

"Arturo's classes are very engaging and students get industry level experience, using industry level tools and equipment in his classes. Arturo is serving all of our campuses," Aguilar said. Students are bused from all of our school sites to his classes. "We started Diesel 1 this year and will grow the program to include Diesel 2, and 3 next year. Students will earn industry recognized certifications upon completion of the pathway program," Aguilar stated. The Transportation pathway includes courses in Systems, Diagnostics, Service, and Repair of Diesel Engines.

Merced Adult School offers the Medical Administrative Assistant Certification class for the past three years from the Health Science and Medical Technology pathway. Steve Hobbs, Principal, says that the students learn the importance of becoming a member of a patient-focused medical team while earning their Medical Administrative Assistant Certification.

Some of the areas covered are; therapeutic communication, patient education, medicine and law, HIPAA, scheduling appointments, the patient health record, basics of health insurance, and a simulation program along with much more, according to Instructor Patricia Murphy. "The National Healthcare Association (NHA) Certification Exam covers all aspects of the medical administration environment as well as basic medical terminology. Also as part of the class, the students earn their Infant/Adult CPR Certificate, Mandated Reporting, HIPAA Certification, and Blood borne Pathogens Certification," Murphy explains.

"We are happy to report that we have had a 100 percent passing rate for the National Healthcare Association Certification. This year we are excited to include a unit for Electronic Medical Records Specialist Certification. What makes this class so nice is that it is free and held two nights per week with online access," Murphy said.



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MCOE provides CTE courses through the Regional Occupational Program to high school and adult students at various campuses throughout the county. Holly Newlon, Director of MCOE's College and Career Department, highlights the Foundations in Early Education Adult Training Program for preparing participants to not only work in this field contributing to a child's development, but to also provide valuable support to families with young children. This field includes working with infants, toddlers, and pre-school age children as well as working in extended day care facilities and family childcare centers.



Donna Acheson, Instructor at the Wolfe Educational Center MCOE, enjoys sharing success stories about her students. "Edgar Duarte just graduated with an Associate in

Arts degree and his permit to teach preschool," Acheson shares. "Now, Edgar is starting in the Bachelor of Arts program with Fresno Pacific University in Child Development." Edgar's enrollment in the Foundations in Early Education adult training program started his journey in higher education, achieving a permit to teach, and accomplishing the goal of being a positive role model for children. He continues the CTE experience for his young students during dramatic playtime as children "practice" cosmetology skills when pretending to cut Teacher Edgar's hair.



"I encourage the students to sign up for one college course to see that they will be able to be successful," Acheson says. Articulation with Merced College assists students with achieving the six units required for the associate teacher permit, enabling students to start working, and to enroll in child development college courses for the next semester.

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Photos include Arturo Castro, Instructor, Transportation; Edgar Duarte, successful student in Foundations in Early Education program; Donna Acheson, MCOE ROP Instructor.