Sunnyside student returns to impact lives of students

Johny York, 23, knows the access he has had in life and how he came to Sunnyside High School. "That's why the 2002 graduate -- part of Sunnyside High School's first graduating class -- came back to give back.

"Sunnyside High School is the best school; the teachers cared about me," York said. "It meant the world to me. No one else besides my teachers knew my name.”

He recalls seeing his principal at the time -- John Marinovich who now serves as Fresno Unified’s Chief Academic Officer -- picking up trash on campus. “Seeing your principal picking up trash was a huge message of pride.”

In August, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell visited Fresno Unified’s Lincoln Elementary School to celebrate the significant progress that the staff and teachers helped students make in math and English Language Arts. Lincoln and Greenberg elementary schools made school-wide gains of 8% or greater in both English Language Arts and math.

For the third year in a row, Fresno Unified demonstrated district-wide growth in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math scores on the M|S|A test. In addition, the recent release of the Academic Performance Index (API) showed that the district-wide math score was 82.2, compared to a 74.6 point growth last year.

Since 1998, we have never seen this kind of magnitude of across-the-board student achievement gains in grades 2-7 in mathematics for Fresno Unified,” Superintendent Hanson said. “We have been waiting for this kind of growth for the past 10 years, thanks to our commitment to excellence in education. I am extremely proud of our students, teachers and staff, and I look forward to the future growth that will continue in the 2008-2009 school year.”

The student performance growth was reflected in the state’s release of the API. Nearly 60 percent of Fresno Unified schools – 51 out of 87 schools -- met all API growth targets.

Key highlights for math results include:

• All grades 2-7 and subgroups exceeded or trended on their goals in 2008 over 2007.

• This district closed the achievement gap slightly between White students and Hispanic, African American and Asian students while at the same time White student achievement increased.

• For the first time ever in mathematics there is a grade level (4th grade) that has reached a proficiency rate of 50%.

• In grade 8 algebra I, we moved from a 40% proficient to 50% proficient -- this is due to the focus on early programs and not a change in our participation rates.

Student performance in English Language Arts also improved including:

• Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 showed an increase in 2008 over 2007.

• Grade 3 and declined and is maintained.

• The district closed the achievement gap slightly between White students and Hispanic, African American and Asian students at the same time White student achievement increased.

Fresno Unified students’ tests scores improve for third straight year – district posts historic gains in mathematics

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If You Are...

A School Employee
A Parent Of A Student
A Member Of A School Organization
Related To Anyone Who Is

Michael E. Hanson
Superintendent of Schools

#VJMEJOH’VUVSFT

As I walk our school campuses and classrooms this year, I am continually reminded of the outstanding work and commitment that our board members, administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students have shown to our students and to each other. Our students are doing amazing work and our staff is working hard to ensure that our students get the education that they deserve. Our work requires us to work together, especially at our high schools to make sure that students stay on track to graduate. We are employing several tactics to help connect and engage our high school students—from identifying students by name that are at risk of not graduating to creating small learning communities to help students establish relationships with their peers and teachers.

Project 980 is one of these tactics that identifies students—approximately 980—who have achieved at proficient or advanced on the California Standards Test, but are earning less than a C average. The district has created important policies on accountability that holds us all accountable for continuous improvement, on professional learning that emphasizes the impact that high-quality professional learning has on the success of all children, and on monitoring our progress in order to make sure that we are making progress. This leadership provides us with a solid foundation to guide and focus our efforts.

We are not spending time reinventing who we are, but rather spending our time supporting and sustaining work that is getting results, which is evidenced by our recent student achievement data. This year’s student data is the result of important work to improve student achievement in mathematics—the hard work of our teachers, staff, administrators, and students is paying off. We have made substantial progress in building our work and our work is taking deeper root. As our work continues and as we set new goals this year, I am continually reminded of the scale of the work that we have to do and the commitment of our staff to ensure that our students get the education that they deserve. Our work requires us to work differently, especially at our high schools to make sure that students stay on track to graduate.

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We welcomed more than 73,000 students back to school and opened the school year on a positive note with the release of our student achievement data. Fresno Unified School District has posted student achievement gains for three straight years with district gains in mathematics in all but a single tier-digit gain district-wide on the Academic PERFORMANCE INDEX (API) of 16 points. These gains are the result of important work to improve student achievement in mathematics and English language arts. This year, we have made important progress in building our work and our work is taking deeper root. As our work continues and as we set new goals this year, I am continually reminded of the scale of the work that we have to do and the commitment of our staff to ensure that our students get the education that they deserve. Our work requires us to work differently, especially at our high schools to make sure that students stay on track to graduate.

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Fresno Unified School District has once again partnered with Granville homes on the home of Hope campaign, which raised nearly $10 million for local organizations since 2003.

Tickets are available for a $100 donation for the opportunity drawing for a new Granville home. The drawing will be held on Saturday, Oct. 18, at 1 p.m. at 541 South Lazer, a new, single-family home located in the Las Vegas communities area.

The 2007 Home of Hope raised more than $20,000 for Fresno Unified Project ACCESS, which provides support services to homeless students to ensure that they graduate in three years.

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For more information or to purchase an up-to-date brochure, visit http://www.gvhomeofhope.com or call 559-457-3500.

The Fresno Unified School District serves approximately 85,000 students with disabilities. More than two hundred of those students have Autism. The number of students with Autism continues to increase each year, and in celebration of Disability Awareness Month, the FUSD Board of Education adopted the STAR curriculum that provides teaching strategies based on Autism research.

In celebration of Disability Awareness Month

This fall, Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) will implement a new Safe and Civil Schools training program to boost the academic performance and social-emotional behaviors of its students. The FUSD Board of Education approved an agreement with the Fresno Magazine Foundation to establish the district’s Foundation and the Fresno Unified Leadership Academy to support FUSD graduates pursuing post-secondary education and will be supported by both employee and public contributions.

A Fundraiser to help support the Foundation for Fresno Unified School District!

This year’s Home of Hope campaign has been a huge success. We are grateful for the support of all of our partners, including Granville Homes, The Fresno Magazine Foundation, Foundation for Clovis schools, foundation for Sanger schools, and foundation for Sanger schools.

Win a Granville Home or other exciting prizes!

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High school athletic facility upgrades give ‘jump-start’ to FUSD master plan

FUSD’s workforce is now well over 10,000 employees. Approximately 92% of the annual general budget is spent on employee salaries and benefits. With this magnitude of expenditure in people, it makes sense to invest in our people to be the best they can be for the benefit of our students and community.

On July 30, 2008, the Board of Education formally adopted the Professional Learning Board Policy. This document is the culmination of months of work to put in place the Board’s strategic focus on growth and professional development. FUSD workforce at all levels can now participate in growth opportunities.

Leadership Standards. The Skillful Leader Project primarily addresses and supports the first standard of skillful supervision and evaluation.

This summer more than 300 leaders began a long-term journey on how they can support teachers, and classroom learning. The Skillful Leader Project is designed to help pre-K through university administrators, effectively supervise and evaluate teachers, and develop staff in line with student achievement.

When I wake up, I feel more alive.
The sights, the sounds, even the smells are immediate and intimate. My heart pounding as I go up and the wind blaring as I speed back down give me the feeling of a challenge answered. What a great way to start my day. If it works for me, maybe it will work for you, too.

FUSD leaders learn about ‘skillful leadership’ to support student learning

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No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or thereafter
No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving
No words by 12 months
Any loss of speech or babbling or social gestures by 24 months

No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, gestures, or other expressions by six months or thereafter

“Loss of speech” is one of the early autism screening criteria. If a child is not speaking by age 3, a professional must determine if that child is at risk of developing an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A professional must conduct a comprehensive evaluation of a child’s communication development.

No words by 14 months

This is about creating a common understanding and vision of student learning,” said Julie Levens, Administrator of Leadership Development. “It is about supporting teachers and school leaders in the work they do every day in the classroom.

To ensure that the facility needs of FUSD are addressed beyond the Measure K facilities bond passed in 2001, the district is spearheading a long-range facilities master plan to address the needs of students well into the future.

FUSD focuses on growth and professional development. FUSD workforce at all levels can now participate in growth opportunities.

The more than 300 school administrators in Fresno Unified School District are placed in 19 groups that will meet throughout the school year to learn through professional reading, training, and other professional learning opportunities. The groups are mixed positions to provide an opportunity for leaders to work with each other and learn from each other.

“We are committed to continuous improvement,” Levens said. “The only way we are going to continue to improve student learning is to know what student learning looks like in the classroom — that is what this training is all about.”

The Skillful Leader Project is one of several professional learning initiatives that not only support the Board’s Social Learning policy for professional development, but also supports the Board’s commitment to core accountability, high quality instruction, and student learning.

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Kaiser Permanente: thrive

Early Autism Screening

A Publication of the Fresno Unified School District
Measure K Dollars at Work

- New construction
- Modernization of schools
- Upgrading schools
- Technology infrastructure

Thank you for your support!