Summer’s Over and it’s Back to School... Careful planning by school and district leaders and staff led to a smooth start of the new school year when Fresno Unified students returned to campuses on Aug. 22. Roosevelt High School students are top left, Bullard High School students are bottom left and top right, and at bottom right, Bullard’s new 50-meter pool is completed for the 2011-12 school year. Center, kindergarten teacher Martha Mendoza talks with student Christian Rodriguez at Jefferson Elementary School.

Major Facility Projects Continue to Take Shape Including Completion of Bullard High School’s Competition Pool

Bullard High School’s new swim complex and nine-lane all-weather track were dedicated Sept. 16 in a celebration that paid homage to the school’s rich aquatics history and highlighted the enhanced athletic opportunities the new facilities will provide students.

The 50-meter pool, smaller teaching pool and all-weather track are among the significant facilities projects recently completed or underway in the Fresno Unified School District, including new schools. On Oct. 5, the district will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the new southeast Fresno elementary school just north of Sequoia Middle School at Cedar and Heaton avenues. And next year, construction is expected to begin on a middle school in southwest Fresno on an expanded Carver Academy site.

The district continues to expand opportunities and enhance the learning environment for students and staff with upgraded facilities. At Bullard High School, the new pool replaces an aging pool half the size as part of $14 million in athletic upgrades to seven district high schools. The new swim complex also includes an office, concession building and restrooms, tiered concrete spectator seating as well as a handicap-accessible teaching pool. The competition pool is the first 50-meter pool in Fresno Unified.

“The completion of the Bullard High School aquatic center represents a milestone in the facility improvement efforts of the entire Bullard educational community,” said Principal Brian Beck.

>> See FACILITIES PROJECTS, PG. 4

Preparing Your Teen for the Real World

FUSD’s Career Readiness Pathway Programs can help.

Look for this insert on PGS. 7-10

Measure Q is Hard at Work
Campus upgrades and improvements continue thanks to voter approval.

Read this article on PG. 11

FUSD Summer School Draws Big Numbers
Students take advantage of multiple opportunities.

Read this article on PG. 13
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SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

Lesson Learned: Finding Opportunity in Our Difficulties

If there’s one constant these days, it’s that we are all facing difficulties. The economic crisis that we are enduring at the state and national levels (and internationally) is landing right in our own family rooms. No one remains untouched by this challenging time and that includes our schools and by extension our students.

We are doing more with less and our schools are feeling it. But, there’s a lesson to be learned here: there is opportunity in the difficulties we face. It’s easy to see the positive when great things are happening, but more difficult to seek out opportunities when faced with significant challenges.

Opportunity – Expanded Learning for Students

Our students need and deserve opportunities and that’s exactly the work of Fresno Unified. Our work is about providing students with expanded learning opportunities and giving them the support they need. In fact, as school districts up and down the state have reduced or eliminated summer school, we expanded it the past two summers and even offered online summer school courses for the first time. Now more than ever, our students need more opportunities. And we found opportunity among a major budget challenge – the kind of opportunities that made a big impact on students.

Opportunity – More Students Applying to Four-Year Colleges

Our equity and access work uses tools to not only target students who are on track to meet college admission requirements but to increase the pool of eligible students so that more students graduate with the greatest number of opportunities from the widest array of options. This work has resulted in a 52 percent increase in the number of Fresno Unified students applying to Fresno State over the last three years and the number of applications to UC Merced has increased from 81 in 2009 to 177 in 2011.

Opportunity – Saving Jobs

Fresno Unified has withstood $144 million in reduced state revenues, and we have found opportunity in this significant challenge. In fact, our Human Resources leaders did incredible work to save hundreds of jobs. The good news is that we were able to bring back the remaining 25 teachers in layoff status due to the fact that our student enrollment is up by about 400 students this fall.

Opportunity – Investing our Community’s Dollars to Create Jobs and Improve School Facilities

Our community overwhelmingly passed our $280 million bond (Measure Q) last November making it the most successful school bond in California for the November election. With state and federal matching funds this could mean up to $400 million investment in upgrading and improving our schools. Our staff immediately went to work to apply for the Overcrowding Relief Grant (ORG) for a number of our schools. To date, this equals $38 million in state funding that has been received or applied for, leveraging local Measure Q dollars. Right now more than $60 million in Measure Q projects are either under construction or on the verge of breaking ground. We continue to work diligently to invest our local taxpayer dollars, which is not only improving our schools, it is creating local jobs so desperately needed.

Let us all demonstrate to our students this valuable lesson of finding opportunity in our difficulties. We will continue our work in Fresno Unified to provide all our students opportunities, but we all must ensure that our students see the work required to fully realize these opportunities.

Thank you for your continued support of Fresno Unified School District.

2011/2012 Academic Calendar

- THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 21-25, 2011
- WINTER BREAK DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 16
- SPRING BREAK APRIL 2 - 9, 2012
- LAST DAY of SCHOOL JUNE 15, 2012

To view the calendar in its entirety please visit our website at www.fresnounified.org.
swimming and water polo profile in the Valley. Bullard has a history of swimming success, including producing 50 All-American swimmers in the 1970s and 1980s, 25 Valley titles and 24 league titles for the girls teams, and 14 Valley titles and 21 league titles for the boys.

At the dedication, former swimmers dating back to the 1950s will be on hand to celebrate the new pool.

The new nine-lane all-weather track will be one of the finest in the area and will include a new jump pit and discuss throwing area, state-of-the-art drainage system and irrigation system that produces an optimal playing surface while maximizing water conservation, space on the infield for football, soccer and lacrosse, and competition lighting designed to have minimal impact on the neighborhood.

Students in the southeast and southwest regions of the district will benefit from new schools designed to relieve elementary school overcrowding and significantly improve the educational opportunities for middle school students. The southeast-area elementary school will be built on 8.43 acres with a capacity of 850 students and will eliminate the need to bus students to the temporary southeast elementary site. Teresa Calderon has been named principal of the school, which is expected to open for the 2012-13 school year.

In the spring, construction is anticipated to begin on a southwest Fresno middle school, providing the first traditional neighborhood middle school for the area since Irwin Junior High School was closed in 1979 and students were bused to various middle schools. The 22-acre campus will be built on the site of Carver Academy at Martin Luther King Boulevard and Church Avenue and is targeted to open for the 2013-14 school year.

Steve Gonzalez, currently principal at Carver Academy, has been named principal of the new middle school. The campus will have a rigorous academic program for 1,000 students that will meet the needs of the neighborhood students and strengthen the community.

As part of the school's mission to serve the entire community and provide a focal point for students, their families and the neighborhood, the district is exploring options for flexible space to accommodate workforce development programs and community services.

Both the southeast-area elementary school and the new middle school will be funded through Measure K bond money, passed by voters in the district in 2001. The new schools and improved athletic venues at Bullard High, along with hundreds of renovation and modernization projects throughout Fresno Unified, are tangible signs of the district's commitment to the highest quality facilities for its students and the community.
Summer Camp Builds Connections Prior to Building of New Middle School

Students from six southwest Fresno elementary schools attended a three-week camp over the summer as part of an effort to build a cohesive school community in preparation for the opening of the new neighborhood middle school in 2013.

The program, held at Carver Academy, provided academic, recreational and cultural enrichment for 125 students from Addams, Carver, Columbia, King, Kirk and Lincoln elementary schools, which will feed into the new Southwest Middle School. The program component focused on the traditions of the African-American, Hispanic and Hmong communities, the predominant ethnic groups represented at southwest Fresno schools.

“The goal was to provide an opportunity to build positive relationships between the students, and to create a better understanding of the various cultures of families from the southwest Fresno area,” said Liz Nunez, project coordinator. “When the new middle school opens, many of these students will already know each other from the camp.”

The new middle school will help restore a cohesive, aligned K-12 school community to the Edison High School feeder area, which has lacked a traditional neighborhood middle school since Irwin Junior High School was closed in 1979 and the district began busing students to various middle schools in the district. It will be built on an expanded Carver campus at Martin Luther King Boulevard and Church Avenue.

To support a successful opening of Southwest Middle School, the district is facilitating connections between the elementary school communities that will feed into the new middle school. For example, sixth-grader David Vasquez said he made friends at the camp with students from Kirk, Addams and King.

“It helps you, and it’s fun,” David said on the last day of the camp.

He said he learned about art, science and various ethnic groups. For instance, he said, one day members of the Hmong community demonstrated musical instruments from their culture.

Jamila Johnson, who has students attending Columbia Elementary, said her children came home excited about what they had learned and she noticed improved behavior.

The camp, funded by a Full Service Community Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, also provided dental screening for 100 students, and 90 of those students received dental care such as x-rays, cleaning, root canals and filling of cavities.

The California National Guard led leadership activities for the students and they had the opportunity to participate in field trips to California State University, Fresno and the Mary Ella Brown Center to go swimming.

Nunez, the project coordinator, said the camp was highly successful in building community around the highly anticipated new Southwest Middle School. Construction on the campus is expected to begin in the spring, with the opening scheduled for August of 2013. The two-story school will be built on 22 acres, providing a state-of-the-art middle school to the students of southwest Fresno that will enhance the educational opportunities for students in the area and bridge the gap between neighborhood elementary schools and Edison High.

Tigers Pounce at Chance to Welcome Back Coach McDonald to Edison Football

A sports rally at Edison High School on Aug. 31 welcomes back Tim McDonald, who has returned to coach varsity football again for the Tigers. McDonald, an Edison High graduate, USC All-American and NFL All-Pro safety, was a featured speaker.
Building Futures Recognized with High Honors by NSPRA

Building Futures, a publication of the Fresno Unified Communications Office under the direction of Public Information Officer Susan Bedi, received an “Award of Excellence” from the National School Public Relations Association. Award winners were highlighted at the association’s annual national conference in San Antonio in July.

Of the 769 publications submitted for judging, Building Futures was among just 71 entries awarded the highest honor. The district newspaper is published quarterly and distributed to all residences and businesses within Fresno Unified’s boundaries. The paper features articles on programs, staff, students and events, as well as critical information for students and parents as part of the district’s commitment to comprehensive and effective communication with the Fresno Unified community.

By providing essential information and spotlighting district accomplishments, Building Futures supports Fresno Unified’s ongoing efforts to prepare career ready graduates.
WHAT’S your teen’s path TO THE real world?

A career-ready graduate is a student who has all possible options available to them upon graduation from Fresno Unified School District. This student has a strong academic foundation, has completed required courses, and has acquired the workplace skills and competencies necessary for success after high school.

Preparation for college is the same as preparation for a career: An education that combines rigorous academics with technical skills and career competencies

Students who enter the workforce immediately upon high school graduation need the same level of skills and knowledge as students entering college. Just because college isn’t for everyone doesn’t mean everyone shouldn’t have the opportunity to go to college if they choose to go.

Fresno Unified School District believes in equity and access for all students. Our goal is for all students to graduate with a full range of post-secondary options including entering the workforce, enrolling at college or university, or taking advantage of further training or apprenticeship programs.

Career technical education is no longer just about vocational education. It is an opportunity for all students to integrate their core academic learning with hands-on, technical, career preparation. Real-world projects are useful tools to provide rigorous academic and technical career preparation and are also more engaging to students than traditional lectures. Just because students enroll in a career pathway during high school doesn’t mean the student has to stay in that career for the rest of their life.
Students connect to careers through awareness, exploration, and preparation.

Fresno Unified’s Career Readiness Pathway Programs give students the opportunity to explore and experience the different types of work and that it can be fun. Students see the relevance of core course work in interesting, applied learning methods taught by industry professionals. Pathway programs give students a chance to see themselves in a successful career.

Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning is a student directed, teacher facilitated learning model that is:

- Coordinated with industry partners
- Collaborative
- Multidisciplinary: integrates knowledge and information from multiple subjects
- Long-term: weeks or months
- Realistic: projects culminate in real or realistic products or presentations that demonstrate student learning
- Technology-supported: as a tool of learning rather than the focus of learning
- Focused skills as well as knowledge

Career pathway programs open doors and open minds

There are over 25 Career Readiness Pathway Programs representing 14 industry sectors offered across Fresno Unified. These programs expand student understanding of the world of work and identify career pathways and specific occupations within them. Students develop respect for workers in all fields and an initial understanding of educational and training requirements.

Career Readiness programs provide innovative and experimental ways of learning while encouraging pilot programs, schools, courses and methods all within a framework that maintains alignment with district goals.

All students are able to participate in any district program—no matter where their home school is located. Currently, transportation is the responsibility of the student and their family.

The students, armed with the information about themselves, have the knowledge to begin to plan their course schedules for whatever postsecondary training they will need to prepare for career pathway and career choice they intend to pursue. Students can document activities and accomplishments to help build an “evidence” portfolio of skills-building demonstrations to confirm or perhaps even to help the student to change their minds about the career choices and refocus their direction.
**Bullard High School**

**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 2500  
**PROGRAMS:**  
• Business Pathway  
• Law & Social Justice Pathway  
• Multimedia Pathway

**Rigorous academics, committed teachers, and extensive extracurricular options.**

Imagine having the keys to success laid out before you: opportunity, knowledge, and room to grow and learn in a fun and supportive environment. Bullard High School is a place where the teachers are not only exceptional, they are caring and hardworking, with a true desire to help you succeed. It’s a place where the students are friendly and open, and you can find a comfortable niche of smart friends who share your interests—from football to French club, soccer to Student Council.

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**Design Science High School**

**SCHOOL TYPE:** Magnet Pathway School  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 250  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Enroll ONLY Freshman.  
**PROGRAM:**  
• Accelerated Academics

**Get a high school diploma and up to 60 college credits through an accelerated program**

Design Science High School is a four-year accelerated program that provides both a high school diploma and college credits upon graduation. It’s not like a regular school—there’s a small student body, no organized sports, and the freedom to explore your own interests. Students spend 2-3 years at DSHS and 1-2 years at Fresno City College, making the transition to college much easier. Plus, you’ll earn your Associated Arts degree upon graduation.

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**Duncan Polytechnical High School**

**SCHOOL TYPE:** Magnet School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 1000  
**PROGRAMS:**  
• Agriculture Pathway  
• Business Pathway  
• Construction Pathway  
• Education & Child Development Pathway  
• Engineering Pathway  
• Health Careers Pathway  
• Transportation Pathway

**Strong academic foundation meets superior career training**

Duncan is a non-traditional school with traditional high school activities. We place a high value on academics and relevant curriculum that prepares you for college and a career. We have seven Career Readiness pathway programs that teach skills in marketable, job-ready fields: Agriculture, Business, Construction, Education and Child Development, Health, and Transportation.

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**Edison High School**

**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 2300  
**PROGRAMS:**  
• Engineering & Design Pathway  
• Fashion Design Pathway  
• Green Energy Pathway

**High expectations, a strong support system and limitless opportunity for achievement**

Pride. That’s the feeling you get as you walk the campus of Edison High School. Pride in yourself, pride in your fellow students, pride in your community. You know that you’re at one of the top schools in the district, unmatched in academics and athletics, and that the opportunities to achieve are limitless. Being an Edison High Tiger carries with it a degree of responsibility. Edison is the center of the community in West Fresno. Your teachers, parents and the community all want you to succeed and will support you in every way possible. Ultimately, you’re responsible for your own success, and we know that you have the strength and ability to rise to the challenge.

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**Fresno High School**

**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 2500  
**PROGRAMS:**  
• Manufacturing Electronics Pathway  
• Marketing Academy  
• Multimedia Pathway

**High academic standards, a diverse student population and the opportunity to broaden your horizons**

A historic campus—the oldest in Fresno. A tradition of academic excellence that goes back over a century. A curriculum that encourages a well-rounded, comprehensive education. It’s impossible not to be inspired by the history of Fresno High as you walk the campus, a place that has been home to such notable alumni as singer/actress Cher, MLB pitcher Tom Seaver, astrophysicist Arthur Scott King and writer William Saroyan. Around you, students are studying Latin, playing music, rehearsing for a theater performance and training for an upcoming sports match. Teachers are helping students prepare for college, and students are inspiring each other to work harder.
**Hoover High School**  
**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 2,000  
**PROGRAMS:**  
- ACE: Architecture, Construction and Engineering  

**Students working together to meet challenges and succeed**  
Picture a group of friends helping each other study for an exam. After school, they paint signs and head out to the big game, where they cheer on their fellow classmates. At Hoover, friendship and school spirit are important. Students from all different backgrounds, ethnicities and physical abilities work together to accomplish tasks, creating lifelong friendships in the process. Study partners and advocates become friends, and vice versa. The teachers are dedicated and involved. Everyone wants to see each other succeed and is more than happy to help their friends and classmates achieve their dreams.

**McLane High School**  
**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 2300  
**PROGRAMS:**  
- ArtVenture Pathway  
- Banking & Business Pathway  
- Medical Education & Research Academy  

**Pride in yourself, your school, your community**  
McLane High is the home of Highlander Pride, where academics, arts and athletics are valued alongside school spirit and community pride. It’s where teachers are dedicated to helping you discover and grow your talents, and where close-knit learning communities become extended and supportive families. McLane is designed to help you get on your way to a rewarding career. In addition to traditional courses, you can choose from pathway programs in the medical field, arts and design, or banking.

**Roosevelt High School**  
**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 2300  
**PROGRAMS:**  
- Health Academy  
- IRS Academy  
- Multimedia Pathway  

**Prepare to shine in academics, the arts and beyond**  
Whether you have music, design, drama or sports in your blood, you’ll find unlimited opportunities to shine at Roosevelt. Support is a key ingredient for success, and you’ll get that not only from teachers, staff and parents, but also from community mentors, counselors, volunteers, and, most importantly, students that share your interests and goals.

**Sunnyside High School**  
**SCHOOL TYPE:** Traditional School with Pathway Programs  
**GRADES:** 9-12  
**STUDENT POPULATION:** 3200  
**PROGRAMS:**  
- Public & Human Services Academy  
- IRS Academy  
- Culinary Arts Pathway  

**Get the learning experience that will take you further in life**  
There’s something for everyone at Sunnyside: challenging academics, extracurricular activities, a diverse student body, and extraordinary teachers who will go out of their way to make sure you achieve your goals.

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**Application Process**  
Most applications are for the beginning of the next school year.

1. **Download the application** at FUSDcareerready.org
2. **Choose your top two schools.**  
   Be sure to indicate your first and second choices.
3. **Fill out application completely.**  
   The application must be signed by the parent or guardian and include contact information.
4. **Submit your application.**  
   Mail, fax or deliver the application to FUSD Transfer Office.

   Transfer Office  
   1350 M Street Fresno, CA 93721  
   Phone (559) 457-3343 | Fax (559) 457-3375

**Registration Deadline:**  
**December 1, 2011**

**More information:**  
FUSDcareerready.org
Measure Q Continues to Provide Improvements and New Construction Including New Look for Fresno High’s Royce Hall

Fresno High School’s beautiful historic Royce Hall will once again become a prominent feature at the district’s first high school as part of a makeover planned for the campus funded by Measure Q.

A long-range master plan for Fresno High, approved by the Fresno Unified Board of Education in April, outlines a series of improvements and new buildings at the campus that the $280 million Measure Q will initiate following voters’ 76 percent approval of the local school bond last November. Measure Q will fund dozens of projects in every corner of the district, including new classroom buildings already under construction to replace portables at Mayfair and Wilson elementary schools. The two elementary buildings are expected to be completed in December.

“Following our community’s show of overwhelming support for our district with the passage of Measure Q, we have been identifying and prioritizing projects for each school. Now we begin the incredibly exciting work of launching these projects,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson.

At Fresno High, Measure Q will upgrade facilities and enhance aesthetics at the campus, which opened to its first students in September of 1921. In the early 1970s, library and administration buildings were added to the front of the school to replace buildings no longer meeting earthquake safety standards. Although built partially below ground, the new buildings obscured the view of the grand façade of Royce Hall, arguably Fresno Unified’s most handsome building. Measure Q plans call for the removal of the library and administration buildings and the construction of new ones.

“We are overjoyed that future generations will be able to appreciate this majestic building like the thousands that have come before them,” said Fresno High Principal Adrian Palazuelos. “Alumni, staff, students and the community are anxiously awaiting the completion of the new buildings and subsequent removal of the existing administration and library buildings to appreciate the landmark that is Royce Hall.”

The two new two-story buildings along the Echo Avenue frontage will contain permanent classrooms, a library, career center and administration space. The buildings have been designed to complement the classical architecture of Royce Hall. Construction of the new buildings, targeted for the end of this year, will allow the removal of approximately 20 portable classrooms on the campus.

The board has also approved long-range plans for Edison, Hoover, McLane and Roosevelt high schools and is expected to approve a Bullard High School plan in the coming school year. The long-range high school plans are incorporated into the district’s Facilities Master Plan, a “living” document intended to be amended as necessary as it guides facilities development over the next 15 years. The board is using the Facilities Master Plan to prioritize Measure Q projects.

Measure Q Projects Summary:

- New classroom buildings at Aynesworth, Easterby, Rowell and Winchell elementary schools to replace portables.
- Edison and Roosevelt high schools: new classroom buildings and replacement of portables.
- McLane High School: classroom expansion to replace portables.
- Hoover High School: new classroom building to replace portables and site/field improvements, including relocating the pool away from the center of the campus to open up space for future improvements.
- Bullard High School: new buildings for classrooms, administration, library and career center; expanded quad area, and career technical education space.
- Modernization at Hamilton K-8 School and Sequoia Middle School that will improve access, classrooms, safety and major systems.
- Energy efficiency and water conservation projects with a focus on irrigation, heating and cooling and energy management.
- Technology upgrades: leverage Measure Q funds to obtain a significant federal grant for data/communications equipment for schools across the district to improve the reliability of systems such as intrusion alarms and security cameras, and to accommodate the more than 10,000 student laptops used in the district.
Rata Students Cultivate Learning with New Giving Garden

Students with physical and mental disabilities at Rata High School started this new school year enjoying the sights and smells of a garden created just for them. The school’s new Giving Garden is an amazing story of how school leaders, a father and a fruit broker who used to live in the neighborhood discovered a shared vision for creating a garden at the campus — and together they made it happen.

“This was just one of those things that was meant to be,” said Shane Halvorsen, president of the Rata PTA and a key organizer of the effort.

Rata is a special education center for grades seven through 12 adjacent to Tenaya Middle School. The garden was created to stimulate students of all abilities through multisensory tasks. The staff creates academic lessons around the garden and it also provides an opportunity for students to learn daily living skills and a place to relax, said Principal Pam Linsner.

“I thought it was something these kids needed,” said Halvorsen, whose 14-year-old daughter, Nikki, attends Rata.

Dozens of school and community members completed the garden in late May after two months of work, volunteering an estimated 1,400 hours. Donors from throughout the city provided expertise, goods and services, including the drip irrigation system from Netafim Irrigation Inc. and the garden design from landscape architect Susan Asadoor.

Other key supporters were the PTA and California Agricultural Leadership Foundation.

The school hopes to attract student volunteers from other schools to assist with tending the garden. Throughout the summer students attending summer programs and neighbors watched flowers and vegetables flourish in raised beds – accessible to students in wheelchairs – as well as regular planting areas. The garden also features a trellis with misters, benches, pizza and salsa gardens, a section of succulents, fruit trees and a maze of sweet-smelling jasmine. Future plans include a fountain and butterfly garden.

Fruit broker Randy Asadoor, married to Susan Asadoor, was a catalyst. He had grown up 30 years ago around the corner from the school and recalled watching kids with Down syndrome enjoying a garden at the campus. Asadoor attended a California Agricultural Leadership Foundation conference at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, where presenters stressed “giving back to the community,” he said.

“A light bulb kind of went off,” Asadoor said. “When I got back to town my wife and I walked into the school and said we wanted to do a garden.”

He said Linsner’s eyes lit up and she said, “We’ve been waiting for someone to walk through that door and want to help with a garden.”

She had for years wanted to restore the garden but was hampered by the cost. Meanwhile, about the same time, Halverson had been elected president of the school’s first PTA and proposed a garden. He too, however, realized the cost and labor involved. With the support of the Asadoors, the project took hold.

“Each of us brought our own separate visions to the project and it came to fruition,” Halvorsen said.

Randy Asadoor said it’s hard for him to discuss the garden without becoming emotional.

“It’s extremely touching,” he said. “I’ve never done anything in my life that has been so positively emotional.”

Linsner said not only have students enjoyed the beauty and bounty of the garden, it has focused attention on the school’s students and programs: “This far surpasses anything we could have imagined.”
FUSD Summer School Benefits Thousands of Students

More than 14,000 students participated in a highly successful Extended Year Summer Program in June and July that included for the first time a Chinese Language and Culture Academy and night courses.

Despite severe budget cuts due to the state’s ongoing fiscal crisis, the Fresno Unified School District continued to offer summer school targeting students who failed classes and needed to get back on track to graduate as well as those who wanted to accelerate or augment their studies. The program also included classes for middle school and kindergarten through third grade students.

“In a fiscally tight budget time, when many districts are not offering summer school, our Board of Education thought it was important to continue offering summer school and because of that more than 14,000 students benefitted,” said Glenn Starkweather, Director of Extended Learning who coordinated summer school.

Starkweather said that 250 students completed requirements for graduation through the extended-year program and 196 participated in summer graduation.

Students for the first time had an opportunity to study Chinese language and culture during the summer at Hoover High School, a popular course that filled quickly and attracted students from Central and Clovis school districts as well as University High School charter school, said Director Elaine Yen.

“I really like to learn about different languages and cultures. This was a good opportunity,” said John Pacella, a senior at Sunnyside High School.

The three-week, 60-hour course fulfilled five units of elective credit and also prepared students to take Chinese II during the regular school year, which should pave the way for Hoover to add an Advanced Placement Chinese class.

Language skills were reinforced through cultural activities, such as dancing, paper cutting, calligraphy and Chinese chess. Students performed for their families in a talent show.

Night courses were also new this year to summer school, providing an opportunity for students to catch up on credits and still hold a summer job during the day. More than 340 students took A-G classes in the evening, including English I and U.S. History, which met four-year college entrance requirements. Classes were offered via the Fresno County Office of Education’s PASS program, self-paced individualized learning.

“That number surpassed our expectations,” Starkweather said.

Elvis and FUSD’s Latest Retirees Have Left the Building...

Retirees, their families and guests and FUSD staff enjoy “Elvis” entertainment at the district’s annual retirement dinner last June, which was attended by more than 300 retirees and a total of more than 800 guests.
NEW PRINCIPALS (continued from Page 1)

Look Who’s In Charge Now!
Sixteen New Principals Start the School Year

Teresa Calderon
Principal II, Southeast Elementary School

Cindy Ferdinandi
Principal II, Columbia Elementary School

Juan Garcia
Principal II, Muir Elementary School

Lori Grace
Principal IV, Hoover High School

Jack Jarvis
Principal II, Del Mar Elementary School

Deborah Marquez
Principal II, Holland Elementary School

Linda McLaughlin
Principal II, Powers Elementary School

Virginia Mendez-Buelna
Principal III, Terronez Middle School

Felicia Quarles-Treadwell
Principal II, Winchell Elementary School

Curtis Shamlin
Principal III, Tioga Middle School

Lisa Shipman
Principal II, Ewing Elementary School

Sherry Thorpe
Principal II, Olmos Elementary School

Reynaldo Villalobos
Principal II, Hidalgo Elementary School

Cherie Walters
Principal II, Pyle Elementary School

Matt Ward
Principal III, Sequoia Middle School

Kay Yang
Principal II, Heaton Elementary School

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Principal II, Southeast Elementary School

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Juan Garcia
Principal II, Muir Elementary School

Lori Grace
Principal IV, Hoover High School

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Principal II, Del Mar Elementary School

Deborah Marquez
Principal II, Holland Elementary School

Linda McLaughlin
Principal II, Powers Elementary School

Virginia Mendez-Buelna
Principal III, Terronez Middle School

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Improvements in the Works for Early Learning Programs

The district is accelerating efforts to improve and expand preschool programs for students so that early learners are better prepared for kindergarten and future academic success.

A comprehensive report from the Superintendent’s Early Learning Task Force calls for expanded preschool opportunities, better alignment of existing programs with kindergarten and elementary grades, and increased preparation for preschool teachers.

Last spring, a team of district leaders, instructional coaches, and preschool teachers identified the essential California Preschool Foundations that serve as prerequisite skills for mastery of kindergarten standards. Based on these identified skills, the team is creating curriculum guides for early learning programs. Additionally, teachers of early learners attended training on Handwriting Without Tears, a research-based program to build motor, visual/perceptual and language skills that will be implemented district-wide this year.

With the start of the 2011-12 school year, the district expanded early learning opportunities by opening transitional kindergarten classes at Balderas and Thomas elementary schools; adding early learning programs in underserved geographical areas in the districts (Lawless Elementary School and additional classes at Sunset and Norseman elementary schools); and adding inclusive early learning programs at Figarden, Viking, and Anthony elementary schools. These three programs will be co-taught by special education and general education teachers.

The task force recommendations address specific systemic gaps and support the reform required to ensure access to high quality instruction to learn at grade level and beyond and redefine Fresno Unified School District as a pre-K-12 system.

The Superintendent’s Early Learning Task Force, a 60-member group, made seven recommendations in a report to the Fresno Unified School District Board of Education on June 15. Superintendent Michael Hanson commissioned the task force last winter to develop a coherent, district-wide approach for accelerating the academic achievement and social and emotional growth of early learners in the district. The panel included teachers, parents, instructional assistants, community members and district and site administrators.

Developing systematic, integrated, high-quality early learning programs is the first step to improving the academic performance and closing the achievement gap for Fresno Unified students. To this end, the Early Learning Task Force recommended:

- Efficient recruitment and registration of early learners
- Integration and unification of all early-learning programs
- Implementation of a standards-based curriculum that provides a seamless transition to kindergarten standards
- Professional development for early-learning teachers
- Utilizing classroom, local and state assessments to consistently guide instruction
- Aligning supervision and evaluation processes with K-12 processes
- Ensuring participation and education of parents

Fresno Unified currently serves 2,250 children from birth to age 4 in a variety of preschools that operate according to their respective funding guidelines, which has led to inconsistency in expectations for students and instructional programs. Current programs serve only a fraction of the approximately 6,000 incoming kindergarteners.

Every year, children within Fresno Unified are denied access to early-learning programs due to full classes or not meeting state income eligibility requirements. Although 82 percent of the 6,151 students enrolled in FUSD kindergarten in 2010-11 school qualified for free or reduced-price lunch, only 36 percent had access to FUSD preschool programs. And all of the existing programs were south of Shaw Avenue except the Wolters Elementary School program, just north of Shaw.

From birth to age 5 is a critical time for children’s cognitive development and in fact is a critical time that sets the stage for all later learning and functioning as an adult.

Researchers have consistently documented the benefits of high-quality preschool, finding that students who attend are less likely to need special education services or to repeat a grade and more likely to graduate from high school.

The largest single study began nearly 40 years ago when the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project developed a high-quality educational approach focusing on 3- and 4-year-olds at risk for school failure. The longitudinal study found that not only was the project effective as an educational intervention, students in the program were less likely to commit crimes or be delinquent, become pregnant as teenagers or depend on welfare.

By age 27, participants were nearly three times more likely to own their own homes than the control group and less than half as likely to be receiving public assistance.

Given the research indicating that early learning programs are critical in improving social, emotional, and academic development, in promoting long-term academic success, and in increasing the likelihood of attending college and earning higher wages, Fresno Unified School District is committed to the expansion of high quality early learning programs throughout the district.
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