Got Talent?
Sunnyside High’s Kelsey Vang Named Finalist in Art of Dairy Contest

Sunnyside High School junior Kelsey Vang was one of 30 finalists in a $20,000 national art contest for his delightfully fanciful design, which he had to paint on a life-size cow sculpture for the Lucerne Art of Dairy “Sharing Joy” art contest.

The Lucerne Art of Dairy “Sharing Joy” art contest was “Sharing Joy,” inspiring Kelsey to paint a mouse princess having tea with her maid and butler and his dog Udder. Kelsey was selected as a finalist based on an initial drawing, which he then had to duplicate on the cow sculpture shipped to Sunnyside High.

The artwork had to feature at least two dairy products. Kelsey’s painted cow is now on display at Von’s at Kings Canyon Road and Clovis Avenue.

“When he submitted his design I knew immediately that it was a winner,” said Jim Hawks, Kelsey’s art teacher. “I had seen past years’ entries on the Lucerne website and felt his design was vastly superior. It is sophisticated and addresses the theme beautifully.”

Hawks is working with Kelsey on his portfolio for college, where he plans to study both traditional and digital art. Kelsey said he’s interested in a career as a game designer and as an independent artist. The contest, he said, broadened his experience and provided an opportunity to show his work to the art community.

Kelsey, who began drawing when he was seven or eight years old after he was bedridden with a broken leg, said art and learning new mediums have become his passion. But despite Hawks’ confidence in his submission to the Lucerne contest, Kelsey said he was surprised to be named a finalist: “I was going up against a lot of talented people.”

Staying Focused on Students and Classroom Keeps District Successful Despite Budget Woes

The Fresno Unified School District, like most districts up and down the state, is battling an unprecedented budget crisis that has required layoff notices for hundreds of valued employees as well as likely pay cuts, program reductions and a variety of necessary cost-saving measures.

As the Board of Education grapples with these issues, it remains committed to protecting the classroom environment and students as much as possible from the reductions. The board remains dedicated to the five-year district goals it adopted in 2008:

• All students will excel in reading, writing and math;
• All students will engage in arts, activities, and athletics;
• All students will demonstrate the character and competencies of workplace success and;
• All students will stay in school on target to graduate.

“Our work has gotten harder, much harder, because of the very, very dire budget situation we are in,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “It’s bad for kids, and there’s no cavalry coming.”

“But Fresno Unified will continue to provide the highest quality of education to our students, keeping these devastating cuts as far from the classroom as we can. Now, more than ever, we are charged with preparing our students for success beyond graduation because how well we do our job is directly linked to the prosperity of our region.”

While the reductions are severe, they will not deter the district from building on the substantial progress it has made in the last five years. The Board of Education has said it will not squander accomplishments or allow this devastating budget cycle to derail continued success.

Plans will continue in a number of areas:
• Academic achievement – The district has produced steady academic improvement for the past five years, including an 11 percent gain in overall mathematics proficiency rates and an 8.2 percent gain in overall English language arts proficiency rates since 2007.
• High school exit exam – Following implementation of a special “boot camp” for 10th graders taking the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) for the first time, CAHSEE scores in math and English language arts both increased by 2 percent.
• Algebra participation – The number of students district wide proficient in algebra rose from 23.9 percent to 27.4 percent.

The Fresno Unified School District, dedicated to the five-year district goals it adopted in 2008:

• All students will demonstrate the five-year district goals it adopted in 2008:
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the

While the reductions are severe, they will not deter the district from building on the substantial progress it has made in the last five years. The Board of Education has said it will not squander accomplishments or allow this devastating budget cycle to derail continued success.

Plans will continue in a number of areas:
• Academic achievement – The district has produced steady academic improvement for the past five years, including an 11 percent gain in overall mathematics proficiency rates and an 8.2 percent gain in overall English language arts proficiency rates since 2007.
• High school exit exam – Following implementation of a special “boot camp” for 10th graders taking the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) for the first time, CAHSEE scores in math and English language arts both increased by 2 percent.
• Algebra participation – The number of students district wide proficient in algebra rose from 23.9 percent to 27.4 percent.

The Fresno Unified School District, dedicated to the five-year district goals it adopted in 2008:

• All students will demonstrate the five-year district goals it adopted in 2008:
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
• All students will demonstrate the
SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE
Core beliefs and community values anchor us during challenging times

As we near the closure of the school year and prepare for the graduation of thousands of our students, we are reminded of the hope that this time of year evokes. The feeling of hope is also popping up in news reports that our economy is turning around – we hear that tax receipts are up, the market is strengthening, and consumers are showing more confidence.

The Governor’s recently released Revised State Budget reflects this hope with $6.6 billion in increased state revenues. But we can’t operate on hope alone – this good news is tempered by the fact that we still are faced with significant budget cuts. Fresno Unified’s funding gap is now about $556 million instead of $71 million and our Board has already addressed $33.8 million. These were difficult decisions and the reality of the $144 million of reduced state funding to Fresno Unified is stark. Simply put: cutting millions of dollars from our budget is not the best for our students, but it is a reality that we must face.

While our hope has been muted, what will define us is our belief that we can and will persevere to boost the academic performance of all students. Our Board of Education-adopted core beliefs will continue to anchor us during these difficult times. Our core beliefs about student learning, high quality instruction, leadership, safety, and culture have fueled our continued progress in spite of these fiscal challenges.

The recent release of the base Academic Performance Index (API) of our schools by the California Department of Education reveals that we continue to be on the right track. And other recent results are fueling progress:

• The district API has grown 66 points – from 644 in 2005 to 711 in 2010
• An additional 5,715 students are now proficient or advanced in English language arts than in 2004/05
• An additional 7,141 students are now proficient or advanced in mathematics than in 2004/05
• We have increased the number of Advanced Placement course offerings
• More students are completing the A-G requirement for UC/CSU eligibility
• The number of students applying to and attending college is up – in fact, more students were admitted to UC/CSU in 09-10 than students who applied in 08-09

These kinds of results continue to fuel us for the long road of improvement, but what will it take to accelerate our progress? Our Board of Education-adopted core beliefs will continue to anchor us during these difficult times. Our core beliefs about student learning, high quality instruction, leadership, safety, and culture have fueled our continued progress.

To view the calendar in its entirety please visit our website at www.fresnounified.org.
The Autism Art Festival, featuring 257 submissions from Fresno Unified students with autism, was a huge success, attracting more than 350 guests and providing an opportunity for students to show off their work to their families and the larger community.

The art show and reception, the first of its kind for Fresno Unified’s Special Education Department, was held at artist Margaret Hudson’s gallery on April 8. The art work remained up through April 21 and was part of ArtHop, which features a variety of galleries throughout the city.

“It was phenomenal. The kids were so excited to share their work. They engaged with other families and were able to articulate what they did,” said Susan Kalpakoff, a manager with the Special Education Department.

Families were proud to share in an extra-curricular activity with their children, Kalpakoff said, and the event provided an opportunity for families to network and a venue for students at various levels of social abilities to interact. Visitors completed comment cards about the art work that provided fun and helpful feedback to the student artists.

“They don’t get enough opportunities to show their work and be proud of something they’re good at,” said Lisa Panossian, whose children, Sareen, 12, and Sarkis, 11, participated.

Jeanne Butler, autism support manager, said she was honored to be part of an event “that allowed students to express their creativity, share their incredible artistic talents, and be recognized in front of their family, friends, and teachers.”

District employee Ed Hagopian, who is an artist as well as a paraeducator with children with autism at Starr Elementary School, came up with the idea for the art show, which featured the works of students in pre-kindergarten through the Adult Transitioning Program. The district serves approximately 500 students with disabilities on the autism spectrum.

“It was such a neat idea. I stayed there the entire evening,” said Kim DeMaria, whose 10-year-old son, Blake, participated. “When I walked in, I was so impressed. I think it really opened [Blake’s] eyes to all the art. He really enjoyed the experience and had fun taking his friends around to the different displays.”

Art Festival Gives Students With Autism a Place to Shine

Volleyball Coach Sets State Record

Bullard High School boys varsity volleyball Coach Roy Verduzco is honored at the May 5 game following his 628th career boys’ volleyball win—a new state record. Verduzco is in his 28th season at Bullard High School.

Photo courtesy of Larson Brothers Photography.

QUALITY PRIVATE TUTORING
Specializing in Reading Intervention

“One of the most important things we can do as parents is to provide our children with the power of education. And the first, and most essential, step in education is learning to read.

Sullivan Learning Systems offers the highest quality private reading tutoring program I have seen.”

-ALAN AUTRY

ALAN AUTRY
Former Mayor of Fresno, Educational Advocate, Actor

Contact Sullivan Learning Systems today to learn more. A representative can meet you and your child at home to discuss our program and determine your child’s needs.

800.975.7086 www.slslearn.com
Banking on Students’ Futures at McLane High School

Union Bank has selected McLane High School as the location of its first student-run branch, providing real-world training for students in career and leadership skills.

The bank branch, run by nine McLane student bankers and a manager, began serving customers in March followed by an official grand opening April 7 attended by bank executives, students, parents and district and community leaders.

Fresno Unified Superintendent Michael Hanson said Union Bank’s partnership with the district will provide a workplace experience that better prepares students for success beyond high school. What students learn, he said, will “bridge the gap between hopes and real opportunities.”

“This is not Monopoly money the students are playing with; this is real money,” Hanson said. “They’re working in the real world of a bank.”

Hanson also stressed the importance of the bank to the McLane and larger Fresno community because of the region’s high ratio of “unbanked” residents.

Fresno and El Paso had the highest percentage — 11 percent — of unbanked residents in the country among local markets examined by Scarborough Research for a March 2006 study. Fresno’s percentage was twice the national average.

Union Bank is also establishing a Parents Academy on campus that will offer financial education in both English and Spanish for parents and guardians of McLane students.

Students selected for the banking program are part of a McLane Business Academy elective course. Students will sharpen skills in finance, leadership, management, marketing, customer service, professionalism, public speaking and ethics. They receive a $500 stipend for completing teller training and a $1,000 college scholarship at the end of the year for working in the McLane branch.

Students hired on after graduation are eligible for health benefits if they work a minimum of 19 hours per week and in addition are offered up to $2,500 toward college tuition and books.

The students are supervised and coached by branch manager Rachel Flores, who joined Union Bank this year after working at Fresno City College as a counselor and instructor. The students also work closely with Business Academy teacher Brad Berrett.

“This program helps make learning meaningful as it is used to accomplish workplace tasks,” Berrett said. “The end goal of both the Union Bank as well as our program is to be able to place these students into job positions with Union Bank upon graduation.

“Ultimately, we are working to provide our students the best chance of being successful in the professional world.”

The branch is located in the interior of the campus adjacent to the cafeteria and is open to McLane students and staff from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Union Bank has selected McLane High School as the location of its first student-run branch, providing real-world training for students in career and leadership skills.

The bank branch, run by nine McLane student bankers and a manager, began serving customers in March followed by an official grand opening April 7 attended by bank executives, students, parents and district and community leaders.

Fresno Unified Superintendent Michael Hanson said Union Bank’s partnership with the district will provide a workplace experience that better prepares students for success beyond high school. What students learn, he said, will “bridge the gap between hopes and real opportunities.”

“This is not Monopoly money the students are playing with; this is real money,” Hanson said. “They’re working in the real world of a bank.”

Hanson also stressed the importance of the bank to the McLane and larger Fresno community because of the region’s high ratio of “unbanked” residents.

Fresno and El Paso had the highest percentage — 11 percent — of unbanked residents in the country among local markets examined by Scarborough Research for a March 2006 study. Fresno’s percentage was twice the national average.

Union Bank is also establishing a Parents Academy on campus that will offer financial education in both English and Spanish for parents and guardians of McLane students.

Students selected for the banking program are part of a McLane Business Academy elective course. Students will sharpen skills in finance, leadership, management, marketing, customer service, professionalism, public speaking and ethics. They receive a $500 stipend for completing teller training and a $1,000 college scholarship at the end of the year for working in the McLane branch.

Students hired on after graduation are eligible for health benefits if they work a minimum of 19 hours per week and in addition are offered up to $2,500 toward college tuition and books.

The students are supervised and coached by branch manager Rachel Flores, who joined Union Bank this year after working at Fresno City College as a counselor and instructor. The students also work closely with Business Academy teacher Brad Berrett.

“This program helps make learning meaningful as it is used to accomplish workplace tasks,” Berrett said. “The end goal of both the Union Bank as well as our program is to be able to place these students into job positions with Union Bank upon graduation.

“Ultimately, we are working to provide our students the best chance of being successful in the professional world.”

The branch is located in the interior of the campus adjacent to the cafeteria and is open to McLane students and staff from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
Well-Versed Young Poets Gain National Attention

Roosevelt High School celebrates and promotes poetry every spring with the Week of Poets, a program that has attracted national attention and inspired students to pursue poetry writing and poetry knowledge.

This year’s Week of Poets, March 28-April 1, included poetry reading by Stephen Barile, a published poet and Roosevelt High graduate, and 20 other poets. Roosevelt alumni also include Gary Soto, Mike Cole, DeWayne Rail and Jon Veinberg, part of Fresno’s rich legacy of poets dating back to the early poetry writing of Pulitzer prize-winning playwright William Saroyan.

Week of Poets featured poetry readings in the library every period, all week, attended by classes from all subject areas. Megan Bohigian, poet and English Department lead teacher at Roosevelt High, said interaction with the poets inspired many students to write, and to bring their work for discussion and constructive criticism. Students had the opportunity to share their writing during open-mic sessions at lunch, which continue all year round under the direction of the creative writing group and librarian Sandra Gutierrez.

“For students, there is no substitute for meeting and interacting with excellent professional writers,” Bohigian said. “Our writers’ diversity ensures every student has a poet they can look to as a model of powerful literacy.”

Poetry enriches student learning because it presents heightened language in an accessible, non-threatening form, Bohigian said, and allows students to work on language choice and voice in manageable-sized writing.

This year’s Week of Poets, Roosevelt’s seventh, ushered in National Poetry Month and was coordinated by Bohigian in collaboration with Connie Hales, Masters of Fine Arts program coordinator at California State University, Fresno.

Week of Poets garnered state and national attention after it was publicized in California Educator Magazine in 2009 and featured at the National Writing Project Conference in Orlando, Fla. last year. The week-long celebration of poetry furthers Fresno’s support of local poets and its reputation as a center for poetry.

According to a history by Barile of Fresno’s “poetry legacy,” more than 75 poets with ties to Fresno have achieved national or international reputations. Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Philip Levine’s arrival at Fresno State in 1958 brought about an “explosion” of poetry in the region as he and colleagues Peter Everwine and C.G. Hanzlicek established an undergraduate poetry writing program that produced numerous highly respected poets, Barile writes.

Bohigian said Roosevelt’s Week of Poets is also producing talented writers as it enriches the English language arts curriculum at Roosevelt High and encourages students to join creative writing groups on campus, read their work during open-mic sessions and submit their writing to be judged.

“Everything we work to teach high school students to do in writing …can be done efficiently in poetry,” Bohigian said.
The Fresno Unified School District launched work on several Measure Q projects this spring, including demolishing 50-year-old ‘temporary’ bungalows at Mayfair and Wilson elementary schools and starting construction on new classrooms at the two campuses.

Measure Q, the $280 million local school bond approved by 76 percent of voters in November, will allow the district to potentially seek up to $120 million in state matching funds, including modernization and Overcrowding Relief Grant (ORG) funds. “It’s extremely satisfying to see the work begin on these new facilities,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “Measure Q is about physical transformation in our schools, which will support the progress we are making every day in the classroom lifting student achievement.”

The highest-needs projects have been identified in the district’s Facilities Master Plan, a milestone document to guide the district’s facilities work over the next 15 years. The plan places a high priority on replacing portable classrooms with permanent classrooms, improving core facilities such as libraries and career counseling centers, as well as establishing feeder patterns in the high school areas so that students and their families have a clear vision of where they will attend from elementary to middle to high school. On March 30, Hanson, Mayfair Principal Bill Serns, Mayfair parent Areli Perez, Board of Education President Michelle Asadoorian and other district officials were part of a special event to announce the launch of Measure Q projects with the construction of the new classroom building at Mayfair.

The building, which is expected to be done in December, will feature eight classrooms clustered around a central student collaboration area for project-based learning, natural lighting through upper-level windows, extra storage in classrooms for projects, technology access in a variety of hard-wired locations as well as wireless, and staff and student restrooms in the central area.

Karin Temple, assistant superintendent, operational services, said the district is grateful to voters for the passage of Measure Q, which provides “this new funding source that will allow Fresno Unified to make significant, lasting improvements to our campuses.”

KIDS INVENT™ SUMMER CAMPS

Kids Invent! Summer Camps are back! This summer we will be offering our popular Digital Videos and Robotics Camps. For our younger campers we will be offering our Young Inventor’s camp.

ENROLL NOW!

Digital Videos I™
July 11-15
Robotics™
July 25-29
Young Inventor’s™
July 25-29

Digital Videos II™
August 8-12

Monday—Friday 9AM-4PM

www.kidsinventCA.com

 טבע וחיות הבר
שבועיים מומרים לשנים קבוצתיות
Between June 13th - August 12th

It’s the WILDEST CAMP around!

For class listings and registration forms call 559-498-5920 or visit www.fresnochaffeezoo.org

FRESNO CHAFFEE ZOO
894 W. Belmont Avenue
Fresno, CA 93728

For phone registration please call 559.347.3907

$279 Early Bird Price
(DV I & II, Robotics)

$299 after June 1
(DV I & II, Robotics)

$225 Young Inventor’s

Other initial Measure Q projects include:

• 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.

• Fresno High School: new buildings for classrooms, the library, administration, career counseling and meeting space, and replacement of portables. Removal of the existing administration and library buildings will open up and enhance the view of historic Royce Hall.

• 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 counseling; 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.
Improving Schools Show Hard Work Pays Off

Reform efforts are paying off in a big way at three Fresno Unified School District high schools – Fresno, McLane and Roosevelt – through the district’s involvement in the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) program.

The three high schools were identified for QEIA in 2007 based on low academic achievement. In a recent update to the Board of Education, Chris Evans, associate superintendent, school leadership, detailed clear progress at the three campuses over two years:

- Ninth-grade progress toward graduation increased at all three schools: 27 percent for Fresno High, 24 percent for McLane and 12.4 percent for Roosevelt.
- Grade-point averages for freshmen increased.
- D’s and F’s dropped at all schools, including by 13 and 14 percent for first and second semesters at McLane.
- Completion of A-G requirements (necessary for admission to four-year universities) increased by 9 percent for Fresno High, 10 percent for McLane and 20 percent for Roosevelt.
- Schools have experienced increases in first-time passage rates for the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), with the most recent results showing a 10 percent increase in both math and English language arts (ELA) for Roosevelt.
- The Academic Performance Index has risen for the three schools: 33 percent for Fresno High, 13 percent for McLane and 54 percent for Roosevelt.

Evans said he was extremely proud of the schools’ dedication to the QEIA goals for improvement and stated that actions taken at the schools have acted as a catalyst for change for all of the district’s high schools.

“The staffs worked incredibly hard on behalf of students at Fresno High, McLane and Roosevelt, and it’s gratifying to see tangible results of those efforts,” Evans said.

Evans said the work focused on student placement; interventions for ELA and math, targeting literacy, the CAHSEE; student placement; interventions for ELA and math, targeting literacy, the CAHSEE; alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment; ninth-grade achievement; completion of A-G requirements; leadership changes at the schools; and credit recovery for struggling students to keep them on track for graduation.

Biliterate Students Recognized

In an increasingly global economy where multiculturalism is an asset to many employers, the Fresno Unified School District has piloted a program to officially recognize students who study and attain proficiency in two or more languages.

FUSD has joined a growing number of districts awarding a Seal of Biliteracy to graduating seniors, and will recognize 117 students this year at senior awards nights and note the designation in graduation programs. The Seal of Biliteracy program was established by Californians Together, a statewide non-profit organization, and widely promoted by the California Department of Education.

The district used four stringent criteria for the biliteracy recognition, including requiring at least four units of a language course other than English that met A-G college requirements, or a “3” or better on an Advanced Placement test in a language other than English. The district is also working on strategies to certify proficiency in languages not taught in Fresno Unified.

The Seal of Biliteracy is intended to help students better access opportunities in the globally-influenced job market and meet the needs of local employers for bilingual, biliterate and inter-culturally experienced students who can interact with sophistication with all potential clients and consumers.

In addition, the effort will encourage students to pursue biliteracy and can provide evidence of skills to college admissions offices.

A Lesson in Giving...

Students in Andrea Bittick’s special day class led an effort at Heaton Elementary School in making and selling origami cranes, which not only raised more than $530 for the Japan relief effort but created new relationships among students and staff. When other classes saw what Bittick’s class was doing, they asked to participate, providing the opportunity for the special day students to teach the rest of the school how to make the cranes.
Impressively Playing by the Beat of Their Own Drum

The Latin/jazz band at Roosevelt School of the Arts has just 11 members but has impressed festival judges throughout the year, including bringing home a superior rating from the Fresno City College Jazz Festival this spring.

While many other jazz bands feature dozens of musicians, Latin/jazz band director Steve Alcala said Roosevelt’s small size is actually an advantage because each student has the opportunity to experience what jazz is really about: improvisation.

"One of the key ingredients to learning jazz is to spend time ‘blowing’ changes and ideas," Alcala said. "Even though most of the students are not studying privately, they are asked to improvise every class meeting, giving each student an opportunity to get over the fear of playing a solo."

Senior Maya Olais is one of several students who have taken advantage of this opportunity, and her work has paid off. Judges at every festival the band has received superior or excellent ratings at the Mid-Valley, Delta Jazz, and Columbia jazz festivals, along with the City College festival. Maya, Adan Petersen. The Latin/jazz band has received superior or excellent ratings from year to year what instrumentation he has the privilege of hearing many students who went on to work as professional musicians. His two assistants are percussionist George Ramirez and guitarist Dustin Petersen.

The Latin/jazz band has received superior or excellent ratings at the Mid-Valley, Delta Jazz, and Columbia jazz festivals, along with the City College festival. Maya, Adan Petersen, David Samuels, Chick Corea and others. "Now I can really appreciate the work involved and the real sense of satisfaction when my ideas flow during my solos."

Alcala said it’s actually fun not knowing from year to year what instrumentation the band will include: "Last year we had a tuba and this year a violin. Since Maya plays in the Roosevelt School of the Arts steel drum band, we incorporated the steel drum pan in our set."

Alcala created the Latin/jazz band class in the early 1980s and has had the privilege of hearing the very first solos from many students who went on to work as professional musicians. His two assistants are percussionist George Ramirez and guitarist Dustin Petersen.

The Latin/jazz band has received superior or excellent ratings at the Mid-Valley, Delta Jazz, and Columbia jazz festivals, along with the City College festival. Maya, Adan Petersen, David Samuels, Chick Corea and others. "Now I can really appreciate the work involved and the real sense of satisfaction when my ideas flow during my solos."

Alcala said it’s actually fun not knowing from year to year what instrumentation the band will include: "Last year we had a tuba and this year a violin. Since Maya plays in the Roosevelt School of the Arts steel drum band, we incorporated the steel drum pan in our set."

Alcala created the Latin/jazz band class in the early 1980s and has had the privilege of hearing the very first solos from many students who went on to work as professional musicians. His two assistants are percussionist George Ramirez and guitarist Dustin Petersen.

The Latin/jazz band has received superior or excellent ratings at the Mid-Valley, Delta Jazz, and Columbia jazz festivals, along with the City College festival. Maya, Adan Petersen, David Samuels, Chick Corea and others. "Now I can really appreciate the work involved and the real sense of satisfaction when my ideas flow during my solos."

Alcala said it’s actually fun not knowing from year to year what instrumentation the band will include: "Last year we had a tuba and this year a violin. Since Maya plays in the Roosevelt School of the Arts steel drum band, we incorporated the steel drum pan in our set."

Alcala created the Latin/jazz band class in the early 1980s and has had the privilege of hearing the very first solos from many students who went on to work as professional musicians. His two assistants are percussionist George Ramirez and guitarist Dustin Petersen.
percent during the past year. In addition, 670 more eighth graders completed Algebra I than in the previous year, opening up advanced math and science pathways as students enter high school.

- Summer school – While districts throughout the state were eliminating or cutting summer school last year because of the budget crisis, Fresno Unified offered an expanded summer program that made it possible for 520 students – 17 percent of students who enrolled – to clear deficiencies and get back on track to complete A-G requirements, necessary for acceptance to four-year colleges. And nearly 24 percent of students who were not on track to graduate made up D’s and F’s to get back on a graduation pathway. The program also offered expanded acceleration opportunities for high school students, help for middle school students to successfully transition to high school, and provided academic support for identified elementary students. The program enrolled 11,475 students compared to 5,568 the previous year.

- AVID – FUSD boosted the number of students in Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) by 149 this past year, for a total of 2,800. AVID provides rigorous academic and social-emotional support and helps students develop test-taking skills, goal setting, analytical reasoning, writing skills and problem solving. The program targets underachieving “middle-of-the-road” minority and/or low-income students who are traditionally under-represented at colleges and universities. Sunnyside High School is a national demonstration school for AVID.

- Tracking student involvement – The district is refining a system to monitor how many students engage in arts, activities and athletics, the board-adopted district goal No. 2. Last year, more than 17,000 students participated in a sport, while more than 11,000 middle and high school students and more than 9,000 elementary students were involved in visual or performing arts.

- Sparking career interest – The district has developed a system to prepare students for careers, beginning in kindergarten. The “Your Path to the Real World” work defines career-readiness activities in kindergarten through eighth grade to support the career themes in the district’s high schools.

- Mentoring – The district has developed a culture of mentoring by creating mentoring guidelines and expanding efforts. By the end of this year, FUSD will have launched 10 new programs in the past two years, adding 156 new students and 101 mentors for a total of 608 mentors working with 51 sites.

- Advanced placement – Fresno Unified has more than 5,000 course enrollments in AP and International Baccalaureate classes. Last year, students took 703 more AP tests than the previous year.

- College ready graduates – Counselors have a new system of tracking students who are on target to graduate, but not meeting the minimum A-G course pattern to be eligible for a four-year college. Preliminary data indicates that FUSD increased A-G completion rates among graduates by 4.9 percent (25.6 percent in 2010 compared to 21.7 percent in 2009).

- Admissions to college – Because of the date-driven work that counselors have undertaken, applications to California State University, Fresno have increased 47 percent over the past two years. FUSD is also part of a nationwide pilot project to increase the number of students successfully completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

- Safety – The Safe and Civil Schools program has dramatically changed the culture of campuses, providing staff with the techniques to help students behave responsibly and respectfully. In addition, the district has enhanced training for employees in and around campuses, including CPR and defibrillator use, traffic safety, and earthquake, fire and lockdown drills.

To advertise in Building Futures, please call: Susan Bedi (559) 457-3733 or Tricia Bowlby (559) 287-2799
As the Fresno Unified School District continues to feel the weight of California’s fiscal crisis, the district has prepared budgets that include devastating cuts.

While recent projections of rising tax revenues is measured good news for the district, FUSD is still preparing for $56 million in cuts over and above the $88 million that the district has already addressed over the past two years – for a total of $144 million of reductions from the state to Fresno Unified in three years.

The district continues to use a phased-in approach to reductions with an emphasis on protecting classrooms and employees and preserving adequate reserves as it moves toward delivering a balanced budget to the state as required by law.

**Background on previous cuts**
- Eliminated more than 650 positions over the past two years.
  - More than 400 teachers
  - More than 60 managers and administrators,
  - More than 200 classified employees

**Steps taken this year**
- Offered a retirement incentive that will save more than $5 million. Typically, approximately 100 teachers and 100 classified staff retire every year; 570 are retiring this year. In addition, the district has expanded the retirement incentive, which may capture more savings and save additional jobs.
- Conducted an on-line survey that solicited hundreds of ideas from the public on saving money.
- The Board of Education has committed to keeping cuts away from the classroom environment as much as possible.

**What lies ahead**
- The board has acted to reduce 522 teaching positions but because of the retirement incentive and the release of 73 temporary teachers, layoff notices were reduced to 257 for certificated employees.
- The board has acted to reduce classified staff in the operational services division, collapsing 57 classified positions. Due to vacant positions and retirements, classified layoff notices are not anticipated in operational services.
- However, there will be layoff notices for other employees (non-teachers) issued later this spring.
- Class sizes in some elementary grades are expected to increase.
- Two furlough days for all employees will continue into next year.

**Impact to programs and services**
- Additional reductions to central office administration are required: the Office of State and Federal; Research Evaluation and Assessment; Technology Department; Curriculum Department; Special Education Department; and, Department of Prevention and Intervention plus others, must be reduced further.
- Site funds (categorical allocations) will also be reduced by approximately 20%.
- Other programs will need to take some cuts, such as the Adult School, Parent and Child Education (PACE) and potentially Regional Occupation Program (ROP).
- Approximately 100 instructional coaches and teachers on special assignment will return to the classroom.
- Guidance learning coordinators (GLCs) at middle schools will also be reduced.

Staff and the FUSD Board of Education will make adjustments to the budget as necessary during this period of evolving budget figures from the state and new information on projected tax revenue.

In spite of the huge budget challenges and declining revenues, Fresno Unified has maintained a strong fiscal status and sustained steady academic gains. Under the leadership of the Board of Education, the district will continue to demonstrate fiscal responsibility while directing more resources to the classroom.
Get more gigabytes
at a rate that won’t byte back.

Computer Loans
from just

3.00% APR

Borrow up to $2,500 at a rate as low as 3.00% APR – only for a limited time at EECU!

When it’s time for a new desktop or laptop computer, it’s time for a computer loan from EECU! We’ve slashed our rates to give you maximum purchasing power! Take advantage of up to 100% financing, convenient payment options, and special discounts on select Dell computers. Whether you need more computing power for school, home or business, finance it with EECU for high-performance savings!

Apply today in person, by phone or online!

*Special computer loan rates effective 5/1/11 to 9/30/11. The actual rate of interest applicable to your loan will depend upon credit history and other factors, and will be disclosed to you before you become obligated. The rates range from 3.00% to 9.00% APR. Minimum loan amount is $500; maximum loan amount is $2,500. Rates subject to change without notice.