Signed, Sealed, and Delivered: Race to the Top

It was a historic moment for Fresno Unified School District and the Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) on Nov. 2 when the district became the largest school district in California to sign U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top application.

For several weeks, Fresno Unified and the FTA had worked diligently to complete the grant application. The district is eligible to receive up to $40 million of the $400 million available as part of the grant. If successful, Fresno Unified hopes to use a great portion of the funds to strengthen preschool opportunities for young learners.

“The agreement was reached because all sides put students first, worked collaboratively, up until the very last minute, to make sure our earliest learners were provided with additional educational opportunities,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “I am deeply thankful and humbled by the hard work our teachers do every day inside the classroom.”

The funds will support pre-K through grade 3 literacy through an emphasis on language development and early literacy. About 85 percent of those dollars will directly impact students and teachers in the classroom.

Grant funds are also designed to place students in smaller groups in order to personalize their learning. Through technology, students have an opportunity for real-time feedback and assessments from their teachers. Additionally, teachers will be provided resources and learning opportunities in order to blend learning so they can personalize instruction to all demographics. Students will receive digital tablets and digital content enabling them to self-assess — all in effort to become proficient in literacy.

The U.S. Department of Education will notify districts who will receive funding in December.

Yosemite Principal Wins County Administrator of the Year Award

Principal Ed Gomes has been named the Fresno County Administrator of the Year for his efforts in leading turn-around work at Yosemite Middle School, a campus previously plagued by low test scores and student behavior issues.

Under Gomes’ leadership, Yosemite Middle School has been transformed into a school that staff, students and parents can be proud of, with a new culture of high standards for students academically and in how they conduct themselves that is achieving results.

Gomes was honored Nov. 7 at the Saroyan Theatre during the Fresno County Educator of the Year Awards. With the prestigious honor, Gomes joins a long list of distinguished educators recognized over the years through the Fresno County Office of Education’s Educator of the Year Awards.

Severs said Gomes has a keen ability to recognize high-quality instruction and provide the necessary feedback and support to teachers.

Severs also wrote: “He is truly visionary in his work and has the ability to help others buy into the difficult work because they too believe in where he is trying to lead the school.”

Gomes traces his first inspiration to lead a school to his father, who brought their family from Brazil to provide a better life. When Gomes was in sixth grade, he would help his father – whom he greatly admired – in his work as a night custodian. Gomes would tell his father that he wanted to be like him and clean a school when he grew up. But his father would tell him in Portuguese: “Edward, I want you to run this school and not just clean it.”

Gomes said the memory has never left him and “continues to fuel my relentless pursuit of fostering high education for all students.”

(continues on page 4)
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SUPERINTENDENT’S Message

It’s almost hard to believe that we’re already in the month of December, yet here we are. This is, without a doubt, one of the most festive times of each year. I hope that you were each able to enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends and I hope that the remaining holidays bring you much joy and happiness. This is the time of year when teachers tend to become a little restless, so parents, a gentle word of encouragement to “stay focused” to your children would go a long way to help them end the second grading period on a positive note.

It’s been a busy year, marked by many changes and challenges, some that help propel this District forward to greater levels of academic achievement. First, I’d like to say thank you to the voters who made it possible for Proposition 30 to pass. Without those funds, Fresno Unified would have been forced to make further cuts at a time when we are making tremendous strides. The funds that will be availed to us now that it has passed will allow us to forego making $11.5 million in additional cuts and leave us with $17.5 million to support programs and services. In September, the Fresno Unified Board of Trustees took action to utilize those resources to support early learning initiatives, expand music and Career and Technical Education offerings, add bus routes to transport middle and high school students and create an incentive for District teachers to earn the highly-coveted National Board Certification. I’m confident that taking these steps will further give our students the additional supports that they need in order to ensure that their learning experience is fruitful and enriching.

In November, we were also able to submit materials to apply for the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top grant program. Fresno Unified is eligible for up to $40 million of the $400 million available and we are very hopeful about our chances. We are the largest school district in the state of California that was able to work with its teachers union to reach an agreement about how the funds would be used should we be successful in winning the grant. Many thanks to Eva Ruiz, president of the Fresno Teachers Association, and the FTC executive board, for their leadership in helping us to reach a compromise. All of the work that we do is on behalf of the students and parents that we serve and I’m grateful that we were able to submit our materials by the deadline.

I hope that the entire City of Fresno will join me in congratulating Board Members Lindsay Ryan and Carol Mills for successfully winning re-election to the Board. They have been great assets to this District and I look forward to continue working with them. President Tony Bernard and Area 6 Trustee Moore serves his final day on the Board on December 5. He’s been a tremendous asset not only to those in his region, but to the entire Fresno Unified community and his presence will be missed. I also hope that you will join me in welcoming two new members to the Fresno Unified Board of Education – Lindsay Ryan, who will represent Area 2 and Christopher De La Cerda, who will serve Area 4.

Finally, I’d like to say once more how grateful I am for the tremendous outpouring of support we received for the State of Education Luncheon that we hosted October 22nd at TorNino’s Banquet Hall. I hope that as we move through the second half of this academic year, we can continue the dialogue that we began anew that day. Educating more than 72,000 students daily is not just a Fresno Unified matter; it’s a task that requires the support and involvement of the entire community. Your willingness to spend time with us as we talked about some things that aren’t always comfortable to hear speaks volumes. It not only made a great impression on the people here at Fresno Unified who help make this all possible – it also made a tremendous impact on our students.

Be safe as you enjoy the holiday season and thank you again for your continued support.

Message from the Mayor

Our community has come together to promote the value of education across the city of Fresno. We know that we have 70,000 people without a high school or GED, and we know that many jobs go unfilled because of a lack of basic education and training. Learn2Earn has had many success stories in the past months about individuals, who have been able to get their GED, join a vocational training program to be better prepared for employment, get educational and career guidance from our advisors, and move forward with their goals.

Fresno is a tightly woven community with deep roots and on-going concern for our residents in need. The highlight of our current success is the efforts we see in the community, in neighborhoods, and in the business, education, and faith based community who all want to come together to provide education and training opportunities in their own neighborhoods. Wesly United Church has made it their goal to educate the El Dorado neighborhood by starting a GED study club to provide opportunity for their neighbors and friends to study for their GED test. By providing materials to study with, and bringing in volunteer tutors and childcare, they have overcome two of the biggest hurdles in accessing education and training, childcare and transportation. By bringing the classes to their own neighborhood they are sending a clear message about the importance of basic education to the residents of our community. They are providing access, educational guidance, and emotional support to their neighborhood, working together for the common good, and letting others know how much they care about them.

Learn2Earn is excited to be part of this on-going effort in our community, and will continue to promote community involvement in the process at all levels. Other neighborhood associations, churches, community centers etc. can help their own friends, customers, neighbors by taking action when it comes to providing and supporting basic education. Basic education and training is the beginning of the next step, to pursue skills training, vocational training, a college education, and employment. When we ask businesses in the community how we can match people with jobs the answer is simple: collaborate. Many education providers, and community action together to change the way we all do business together, and promote the singular objective of preparing our youth and adults for their future employment. Education and training are valuable pieces to the puzzle and must be supported throughout the family and the community to inspire real and lasting change.

Our favorite stories are about a mom who decided at the age of 40 that she needs to get her GED so that her daughter would know how important she believes education is for her future. Then the daughter signs up to go to school with the mom because she now feels like she can succeed at it also. Or the father who wants to be better prepared to help his children get through school by showing them how important education is, and improving his own skills to be able to work alongside his children as they grow. He did not want his children to ask him for help with school work and not be able to get it. We have so many stories of people who are ready and willing to make a change in their life, and providing access in different places and different ways, we are investing in the outcome for our community.

Take the time today to ask yourself if there is something you can do, someone you can support, get involved with others. Ask your employers, churches, associations, and friends if there are new and creative ways to help people in our community gain access to education and training. Many of our local businesses are involved currently and supportive of opportunities for people to get involved. Contact Learn2Earn at learn2earn@fresnounified.org if you would like to participate in your community.

www.FresnoUnified.org
State of Education Luncheon Raises $25,000 for Scholarships

The Fresno Unified School District hosted a State of Education luncheon on October 22 that was attended by close to 450 members of the Fresno community. Attendees in the sold out crowd included business leaders, community activists, clergy members, parents, students, teachers and local political leaders.

Fresno Unified Superintendent Michael Hanson delivered the keynote address and received a rousing, standing ovation when he finished delivering his remarks. He shared information about current district student achievement levels, future plans to further increase achievement and stories about what made him decide to go into the field of education.

“In the summer of 1990, I returned to Blythe, California from Cambridge, Massachusetts. I had a master’s degree but no job. I spent those summer days, working in a GED program, in a prison, with inmates. Thirty-two men between ages 18 to 64, two were white, the rest were black and brown. But there was a common thread to these strangers, as I found in a conversation with each man - none of them could read. I learned on the spot if you can’t read, life is predictably horrific,” stated Hanson. “I’ve committed my career to education because it’s the only road one can travel that will have a successful destination.”

The outpouring of support for the luncheon is a positive sign for the district, which has worked hard to gain more community input.

“We have made great strides but this is a long road we have to travel together as a city. As the largest employer in the Valley we play a pivotal role and we take this responsibility seriously,” stated Hanson. “In addition to increasing student achievement, maintaining a balanced budget and providing great opportunities for our students, for months now we have been driving our robust capital projects program forward. We still have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are absolutely moving in the right direction.”

Murray and Francine Farber attended the event. The Fresno couple earlier this year pledged support for Tehapipe Middle School students who graduate from a Fresno Unified high school on time and without behavioral issues.

Net proceeds from October’s luncheon will be used to support the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund. The district raised over $75,000, giving more students an opportunity to get some assistance with college costs. The event featured a meet and greet with district administrators, remarks from Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin, student performances, a student art display and raffle. The district hopes to be able to give away a record number of scholarships from the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year due to the proceeds raised from the event.

Ed Gomes from page 1

Gomes was assigned to Yosemite in August 2010, months after the state had designated it as a Persistently Low Achieving School (PLAS) in the bottom 5 percent among campuses throughout the state. Yosemite, one of three PLAS in the district, implemented drastic reform measures with the “turnaround” model.

Gomes has led widespread changes throughout the school to bring about improvement, including an emphasis on clear and precise standards-based instruction and the use of highly researched instructional practices. At the same time, suspensions have gone down by 65 percent and expulsions by 70 percent in the past 18 months. Gomes credits teachers using strategies from the Safe and Civil Schools and Capturing Kids Hearts programs to create high structure in their classrooms and strong connections with students.

Gomes was extremely humble in his reaction to winning the county Administrator of the Year award: “I know there are so many leaders out there that sacrifice everyday and have that courage to take on the difficult work in some of the most difficult places. I learned from them and wish they would get noticed.

“I also have a hard time accepting this award when my teachers from past and present have been the amazing surgeons providing precision instruction and relationship-building on a daily basis with challenging students. They are heroes and deserve many more awards than myself.”

ED GOMES BIO

- Yosemite Middle School principal since August 2010
- Past principal at Jefferson Elementary School in Fresno Unified and Lincoln Elementary School in Hanford
- Held teaching and other positions in the education field since 1993
- Master’s degree in education from Fresno Pacific University; bachelor’s degree in Spanish from California State University, Fresno
Thanks to the generous donation of more than $250,000 from the California Endowment, students at eight middle schools will have the opportunity to engage in a revolutionary way of exercising while improving their dance steps.

Teachers were trained in November to launch Dance Dance Revolution with their students in December using equipment by Konami Digital. Dance Dance Revolution is an interactive video game that combines real physical dancing with energetic music and visuals.

Each student will have their own smart card containing their height, weight and body mass index. The smart card will track their progress toward fitness while using the interactive equipment. Middle schools receiving the units are:

- Computech
- Kings Canyon
- Scandinavian
- Sequoia
- Tehapipe
- Terronez
- Tioga
- Yosemite

The California Endowment, a private statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Sarah Reyes, Regional Program Manager for the Endowment said, “The California Endowment is proud to provide teachers with a tool like Dance Dance Revolution and to bring a new partner in Konami to Fresno Unified. We know that today we suffer some of the greatest numbers when it comes to childhood obesity and we also know that youth respond positively to video games and so this partnership is a match made in heaven. Teachers have a new tool in the war on obesity, young people are playing a video game, and the District has a new strong partner.”

Local officials are your best source of information; listen to your radio or watch your local news until you are told it is safe to leave the shelter or to evacuate

When you leave the shelter, follow instructions from local officials to avoid any harmful materials outside

Do not use your cell phone unless you have a life-threatening condition to keep lines free for emergency responders

It’s a good idea to make sure you have all the supplies that a baby or child would need including formula, diapers, bottles, medication, etc. People with disabilities should create a support network to help them in an emergency. Make sure someone knows where your disaster supplies are and can get into your home or apartment in an emergency.

This is a good time to discuss with your family the simple steps to follow in case a shelter in place is called. Being prepared in an emergency helps to ensure everyone’s safety.

Fresno Middle School Students Will Dance Their Way to Fitness

Teachers from the eight middle schools get their lesson in Dance Dance Revolution.
Teachers Named Educators of the Week

Several Fresno Unified teachers have been recognized by NBC 24 during the station’s Educator of the Week segments. They include Al Chand, sixth-grade at McCandle Elementary School; Liz Reid, second grade at Roeding Elementary; and Barbara Simons, advanced mathematics at Edison.

A Teacher You Should Know

Debbie Duran finds inspiration from co-workers at Webster

Debbie Duran is part of the instructional team at one of the district’s three “turn around” schools, which underwent drastic reforms after the state designated them Persistently Low Achieving Schools.

School: Webster Elementary School
Grade: Instructional Coach
Years as a teacher: 10
Favorite teacher tip: Always remember your why!
I know I am successful with a student when they:
Trust and believe in themselves.
My favorite lesson to teach is:
The importance of recognizing each individual’s strengths and worthiness.
Webster is operating under the turn-around model. What has it been like to work under that model? The Webster staff is extraordinary in their commitment to our students. They consistently go above and beyond to do whatever it takes for students’ success. The ownership and dedication to each student is phenomenally modeled by every staff member. This is evident in our school wide intervention, data chats and accountable communities. The expectations at Webster have been set tremendously high, and each staff member is willing to challenge themselves to exceed those expectations. Our staff believes in themselves and more importantly in our students.
First job: McDonald’s cashier.
Most people don’t know that I: Love to dance to salsa music.
In my down time I like to: Read and spend quality time with my family.
It really frustrates me when: We have summer weather during the fall season.
If I couldn’t be a teacher I would: Be a social worker, because I am passionate about child advocacy.
Dream vacation: The Vatican in Rome.
My favorite book: Oh, the Places You’ll Go! By Dr. Seuss

Mayfair Teacher Saves Student

Mayfair Elementary School teacher Carole Putnam was able to think quickly and put her first-aid skills to good use when one of her fourth-grade students was choking recently. The student stood up suddenly, gasping. Putnam at first thought she was sick.

“I went over to her immediately and got her over to the sink, but I knew something else must be wrong because she couldn’t talk and had this desperate look in her eyes,” Putnam said. “My instincts were that this girl was choking on something and that I needed to do the Heimlich. After doing it twice, out of her mouth popped a plastic bottle cap.”

After getting the student to the nurse’s office, Putnam explained to the class what had happened, making it a “teachable” moment by reminding them how dangerous it is to put things in their mouth.
PREPARING CAREER READY GRADUATES

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

An Employee You Should Know

Sunnyside Office Manager Sets the Tone for a Friendly Front Office

Cheryl Abrams

Cheryl Abrams goes above and beyond in her capacity as office manager at Sunnyside High School, including leading the highly successful March for Babies March of Dimes campaign at her school last spring.

School: Sunnyside High School
Position: Office manager
Years with district: 25 years
What I like best about my job: I am spending way too much time on this question trying to explain why I love the staff! But the bottom line is I get the privilege to work with the most incredible staff in Fresno Unified: it’s not just a cliché, we really are a family!

I know I am successful in my job when: Everything runs efficiently and the main office has fun while getting the job done.

What have you learned about students while doing your job? They are returning to our campus to visit, to tutor, to volunteer, to sub, to student teach, and... to teach! It is very exciting to see them graduate and give back to not only society, but to Sunnyside High School.

I am fascinated by: The legacy left by (former principals) John Martinovich and Sheryl Weaver and how it is being continued to this day here at Sunnyside. The way our admin runs this school so smooth and efficient really does fascinate me.

First job: In Fresno Unified School District, 3.5 hour classroom aide at Holland Elementary.

Dream vacation: Israel with my church.

Duncan Polytechnical Hosts Robotics Event with Focus on Innovations for Senior Citizens

Student robotics teams arrived at Duncan Polytechnical High School on Nov. 17 armed with robots and research and solutions on how senior citizens can remain active in their communities, applying academic and technical skills to a real-world problem.

Duncan’s robotics team, the Duncan Dynamics, hosted the qualifying tournament for elementary and middle school teams, with the top winners moving on to a FIRST LEGO League regional tournament Dec. 15. Although not advancing, Computech Middle School’s Mine-Craft Squared team won the Judge’s Award for innovative design. Duncan Dynamics alumni won the volunteer award.

This year’s competition theme is the Seniors Solution Challenge, which requires teams to explore the topic of aging and solve mobility, communication and physical fitness issues faced by many senior citizens.

“After seeing this competition, this is the type of problem solving, teamwork, and collaboration we should have kids participating in in every classroom every day,” said Chief Academic Officer Michael Neece, who assisted with the awards ceremony.

Eighteen teams from area elementary and middle schools competed against each other using robots built to solve a set of missions on an obstacle course. Teams also arrived at the tournament having researched obstacles for the elderly and possible solutions. Students were judged in the areas of project presentation, robot performance, technical design, robot programming, and team work with a consideration of the FIRST LEGO League core values.

Riverview Elementary School’s RAMTASTIC BOYS team won the first-place Champions Award.

The Duncan Dynamics team will compete in a separate division from the younger students, with robots weighing 120 pounds, at the FRC Central Valley Regional in Madera March 1-3. The team will also compete at the Sacramento Regional on the University of California at Davis campus March 14-16. The team’s adviser is Duncan teacher Doug Urabe.

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Cooper Academy launched its first annual “Cans for Kids” Food Drive with a challenge by school administration. Principal Kristine Belcher challenged each grade level to bring in 300 cans by Friday, Nov. 9 and if each grade level achieved this goal, the students who collected the most cans would get to throw a pie in the face of the principal.

The Cooper Academy students banded together and decided to not only meet the challenge, but to commit to a “double or nothing challenge.” They wanted to bring in 450 cans for each grade level and double the number of students who could throw pies.

To the surprise of the school administration, canned food came pouring in. Cooper Academy students worked with their families to secure a record number of donations. In five days, Cooper Academy students collected more than 1,800 non-perishable food items.

The “Cans for Kids” food drive was developed to take a stand against childhood hunger in the city of Fresno. Students at Cooper Academy collected cans for the entire month of Nov and at the end of the month voted on a local non-profit to donate all of the items to.

“I knew our students could do it,” stated Belcher. “I just didn’t anticipate how far they would exceed all of our expectations. The amount of work they have put into this is tremendous, and the amount of food they have collected will have a big impact on our community that will provide needed resources for some of our local non-profit organizations.”

The students won the challenge, and Belcher lived up to her word. In total, 12 students and one teacher built their own pie and got to smash it in the face of the principal. After all the whipping cream had been thrown, Belcher celebrated with her students, and reminded them that this project wasn’t about putting pie in the principal’s face, but was about serving our community and standing up against hunger and poverty.

The students kept on collecting, finishing with more than 3,000 food items.
Fresno Unified Makes Gains on State Student Achievement Measures

- Sixty-seven schools now have API growth scores above 700, up from 62 in 2011
- Fourteen schools have API scores above 800
- Yosemite and Tioga middle schools each gained over 60 API points

“Our API scores are solid. We are making steady gains and as we continue to examine and make adjustments to our efforts, that growth should expand in the years ahead,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “Our graduation rate is up, and our test scores are either higher or maintaining gains across the board. We have a lot to be excited about in this district.”

Hanson noted that the district is using a regional approach to address the needs of site leaders and teachers this school year: “This will create greater alignment with our Facilities Master Plan and engage teachers in accountable communities across grade levels. This should help yield even greater results this time next year. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are absolutely moving in the right direction.”

New data was also released this fall on the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) model, a different set of measures than the API. The AYP data shows that the district’s cohort graduation rate for the class of 2010-2011 was 72.7%, meeting the overall graduation rate target. In addition, Fresno Unified met 24 of 46 AYP criteria and will remain a Program Improvement Year 3 district for 2012-2013. The AYP model includes a set of measures that serve more as a sort of high jump bar of achievement, with the target inching higher each year.

District officials remain optimistic because the API data for Fresno Unified continues to show steady growth in student achievement.

Local Firm Creates Meaningful Logo for Scholarship Fund

A logo for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund, designed as a donation to the district by Martin Ilic, a designer with Darden Architects Inc., wonderfully captures the spirit of the scholarship program with several symbols:
- The wreath of olive leaves – peace
- Young oak tree – wisdom and growth
- Column – consistency and fortitude
- Open book – opening the doors to knowledge
- Flame – district is eternally committed to education and students
- Year – Inception of the fund

Ilic said the goal was to create a logo that reflects “the commitment of the district to helping students achieve a brighter future.”

“Whether its architecture, interiors or graphic design, we strive to create enduring symbols within our community. It has been an honor for us to work with Fresno Unified to create a logo that represents such a great cause.”

The logo was unveiled at the State of Education luncheon on Oct. 22, where more than $25,000 was raised for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund. Every year, graduating seniors from each high school are awarded scholarships through the fund thanks to the generosity of Fresno Unified employees and the community.

Pumpkin Patch Pride

Ray Mata, a grounds maintenance worker for the district, provided pumpkins to Ewing’s pre-school and kindergarten students on Oct. 31. Photographed with Transitional Kindergarten students Ethan Ly and Jade Carrillo.

Ray Mata, a grounds maintenance worker for the district, provided pumpkins to Ewing’s pre-school and kindergarten students on Oct. 31. Photographed with Transitional Kindergarten students Ethan Ly and Jade Carrillo.

www.FresnoUnified.org  |  PREPARING CAREER READY GRADUATES  |  Page 9
Fresno Unified recently dedicated a new electronics lab at Edison High School, making it possible for students to earn up to 11 units of credits from Fresno City College and get a jump-start on college and career.

The PG&E Energy Lab, funded with a $100,000 grant from Pacific Gas & Electric, was dedicated on Oct. 31. The new lab provides the space and equipment to house dual enrollment classes offered as part of a partnership between Edison High and Fresno City College.

Future is Bright for Edison High Energy Lab Students

Edison students and teachers, officials from the district, PG&E and the State Center Community College District as well as community leaders gathered at the dedication to celebrate the opening of the new lab.

“This new lab is a great example of how our community partners are investing in our students, and investing in the future of our community,” said Ellie Honardoost, academy program manager.

Juniors and seniors enrolled in Edison’s Green Energy and Technology Academy are expected to receive college credit this year through the program. Seniors graduating from the Green Academy could take with them up to a semester of college credits. In addition, through a new partnership with GRID Alternatives, academy students will also have the opportunity to gain experience in solar panel installation during their senior year.

Designed with Edison’s black and gold school colors in mind, the 1,500 square-foot lab features nine stations equipped with air and dedicated circuits for electricity and basic hand and power tools. The lab also features oversized dual projection screens, standing-height tables and new lap tops.

Fresno Unified has landed a grant from the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation to begin a teacher residency program at California State University, Fresno emphasizing math and science with a focus on grades four through eight.

With less than half of Fresno Unified students proficient in math and science and academically vulnerable, the grant will support improved instruction and new techniques to help students learn and achieve.

The Middle Grades Teacher Residency Program will also address a possible deficiency in math and science teachers due to expected retirements over the next five years. The two-year grant will train approximately 20 “teacher-residents” a year for a total of 40 new teachers. Residents must commit to teaching in Fresno Unified for at least five years.

“We are extremely grateful to the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation for its willingness to support this program,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “What we are attempting to do here is significantly change the way new teachers are prepared for the classroom in the Central Valley.

“This program will help new teachers better address the needs of English learners and understand child and adolescent development. It’s a tremendous opportunity for those young people who are considering entering the teaching profession.”

Hanson said the program will not only instill confidence in new teachers, but parents will also see the district’s commitment to high quality in its corps of teachers.

The new program will combine rigorous masters-level course work, teacher credentialing course work and a year-long apprenticeship in a classroom with a mentor teacher who has undergone comprehensive professional development curriculum specifically for mentors.

The course work will be developed and co-taught by Fresno Unified teachers, district leaders and Fresno State faculty.
Fresno Unified Joins Prestigious Arts Program

On Oct. 16 at Storey Elementary School, the Kennedy Center announced Fresno’s selection as the 10th city from across the country for the Any Given Child initiative. The program will incorporate existing resources of the district with those from local arts organizations and the Kennedy Center to create a plan for arts education specific to Fresno. Any Given Child cities and regions are Sacramento; Springfield, Missouri; Portland, Oregon; Southern Nevada; Tulsa Oklahoma; Sarasota, Florida; Austin, Texas; Iowa City; Iowa; and Baltimore, Maryland.

“Fresno Unified is excited to partner with the Kennedy Center and the Any Given Child initiative to establish and develop a solid K-8 arts plan that will not only allow every student access to the arts, but will open their hearts and minds to the world in ways that supports their success in the 21st century workplace,” said Fresno Unified Superintendent Michael Hanson.

During the first phase of the program, expected to take six to nine months, Kennedy Center staff and consultants will conduct a comprehensive audit of existing arts education resources and needs, followed by creation of a long range plan.

During the second phase, a 36-member community committee will make recommendations to the district and local arts groups on how to best implement the plan, focusing on increasing arts opportunities for K-8 students.

In addition, educators and artists will have access to a wealth of resources available from the Kennedy Center, such as supplemental lessons and professional development for teachers and teaching artists.

“We expect the program to provide benefits not just for our students, but for our entire community,” said Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin.

Fresno Unified is embarking on exciting work with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to create a long-range arts education plan for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Chess-playing Students Have the Right Moves at Lowell

Lowell is the latest Fresno Unified school to promote the value of chess for students and participate in the Sequoia Chess League. Other Fresno Unified schools involved in organized chess competitions are Forkner, Gibson, Manchester GATE, Starr and Yokomi elementary schools; Ft. Miller, Ahwahnee, Tenaya and Computech middle schools; and Hoover High School.

Lowell’s new chess club has grabbed the attention of students at the high-poverty school, despite most students’ limited exposure to the game. Earlier this year, the North Fresno Rotary Club presented the school with a check for $1,000 to support the school’s new Lowell Chess Initiative. Through the Lowell Chess Initiative, teachers were trained over the summer to teach chess to all students in grades 2 through 6.

Students are enjoying the game so much that the school has opened the library at lunch to accommodate chess matches, and formed a chess club that attended its first chess competition, the Sequoia Chess League Tournament, on Oct.13 at Ahwahnee Middle School.

“Chess is helping our students focus academically and we are seeing fewer behavior issues,” said Principal Miguel Naranjo. “They love it, and they are learning problem-solving skills they can use the rest of their life.”

The Sequoia Chess League attracts about 30 schools from throughout Fresno, Tulare and Kings counties to compete at about eight tournaments a year. Allan Fifield of Visalia started the league in 1993 and has watched an increasing number of students play chess, despite the popularity of video games, television and other media.

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Forget about racing to the black top at lunch time. At Lowell Elementary School, chess is the game of choice for many students.

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We had at least 150 kids at the Ahwahnee tournament this year,” Fifield said, adding that some tournaments last year attracted more than 200 students.

He said for elementary students, representing their school as a team is exciting and keeps them interested.

“Kids take a lot of pride in that,” Fifield said.

Ahwahnee Principal Jose Guzman said the library for the finals of a recent school chess tournament was filled with school spirit with about 40 students crowded around to watch and cheer: “It was like a stadium in there.”
Time to Get Kids Moving

By Yvonne Juarez, MD
Chief of Pediatrics
Kaiser Permanente Fresno

Nearly one in three children in America is overweight or obese. Many will grow up facing chronic health conditions including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma.

But it’s not too late to reverse that trend and start your children on a path to a healthier lifestyle. Helping our children to become more physically active can prevent weight problems from developing or getting worse.

Although children tend to be naturally active, today they are more sedentary than ever before. Video games, television and computers are occupying more of our children’s lives. They just aren’t as interested in going outside and playing with neighborhood friends.

The general rule is for children to have 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Making sure that happens can take some dedication and work on our part as parents.

It won’t take long to see the benefits.

Regular exercise helps children have more energy throughout the day. Physical activity produces overall physical, psychological and social benefits as well. Studies also show that regular exercise can increase the blood and oxygen flow to the brain leading to improved academic performance.

Exercise may help children in other ways too, such as making their hearts, muscles, and bones stronger.

Exercise can make children feel stronger and happier. It can help them relax and sleep better and give them confidence in other things they do.

So what can you do to get your children moving?

One of the best ways is to make physical activity a part of every family’s daily life. Walk to school together. Take the dog for a walk. Ride bikes at a local park. Rake some leaves or just kick a soccer ball around the front yard.

It doesn’t have to be rigorous activity; just something that gets the heart pumping.

Also exercise doesn’t have to be done all at once. With today’s busy schedules fitting in 30 minutes a day of exercise may seem impossible. So try breaking it into smaller segments of the day. Even short 15-minute periods engaged in some type of physical activity can make a big difference in a child’s life.

Sports teams are a great way to get your children moving. Check out what seasonal sports are available at your local school. Many community centers and parks and recreation programs also offer low-cost activities for children.

Exercise is one thing the family can do together so that everyone benefits. Even just a stroll through the neighborhood can make a difference in your family’s health and overall well being. Set the example for your children. Show them that exercise is important to you too.

Kaiser Permanente is committed to building healthier communities and offers many free online tools that can help your family track their physical activity. For more resources visit kp.org/fresno.

It only takes small gradual changes in your children’s activity level to have a lasting impact on their health.

Calling All Coats

It’s time to go shopping for coats! Every year, the generous employees of Fresno Unified gather new and gently used coats for the Coats for Kids effort benefitting homeless students in the district’s Project: ACCESS program. This year’s coat drive will start Dec. 3, culminating in a holiday celebration (date to be announced), where the Golden Stapler will be awarded to the department gathering the most coats. Let’s break last year’s coat total of more than 300!
The theater and performing arts building at Bullard High School will reopen later this month with renovated spaces for music and drama, including improved acoustics in the theater and ample room for the band to practice.

The work comprises the final phase of modernization at Bullard funded by Measure K, the local school bond passed by the community in 2001. The final phase also includes upgrades to the North Gym, which is scheduled for completion in early December.

The theater and other spaces within the performing arts building will be ready for students when they return to campus after the winter break. The first theatrical production scheduled for the new theater is “Zombie Prom,” set for the first two weekends in April. A date for the first concert in the new theater has not been set.

“The theater building has undergone a dramatic change from the original design,” said project manager Tim Patterson. “The actual theater is the jewel of the building.”

Visitors to the new theater will arrive through a new, formal entrance with the ticket booth moved to the side. The foyer and restrooms have been updated to incorporate the new design of the theater.

The theater itself was made over “from top to bottom,” Patterson said, with new walls, ceiling treatments and upgrades to acoustics, lighting, sound and seating for 298. Accessibility was also improved.

“The most significant aspect of these much-appreciated renovations is the statement to students that the arts matter in education,” said Calvin Hoff, theater teacher. “The investment in the theater and the performing arts building is a tangible statement that arts are important.”

The rest of the performing arts building has been significantly renovated as well. The band room was expanded, incorporating a practice area 1,000 square feet larger than before, ample storage for the percussion and color guard groups, office space, storage for sheet music and other valuables, and locking music lockers that wrap the room.

“The most important aspect is that all of my students will fit in the room. Our band has grown so much in the past six years that it was very difficult to impossible to have a rehearsal in the building,” said Matt Carroll, band director at Bullard.

The layout of the choral room was reconfigured as well. Like the band area, the choral space had previously included several small, seldom-used practice rooms and one larger room. The area was redesigned to accommodate larger group rehearsals.

The drama room – or green room – was renovated to include ample storage for props and gear, a private office, restroom for performers during performances and dressing areas.

The North Gym includes a new entrance with redesigned foyer that includes space for trophies and artifacts, larger concession area and remodeled restroom facilities. The gym itself has new powered bleachers, a refinished floor and new lighting, acoustical treatments and a new sound system. The locker rooms have been upgraded and the dance and cheer room received additional storage space, new wall finishes and mirrors wrapping around the room.

“I am very excited about the renovations to our gym,” said boys varsity basketball coach Tony Amundsen. “There have been some significant changes that will improve the look and create a better atmosphere for practices, games, and events for our feeder programs.”

Amundsen noted that the new bleachers are navy blue to coordinate with the gym’s fresh navy blue and Columbia blue paint scheme.

“It definitely will have that home Bullard High School feel to it,” he said. “The student body, community, and our athletic programs are going to take a lot of pride in our new gym.”

Upgrades to the Bullard gym, together with the makeover in the performing arts and theater spaces, are great examples of Fresno Unified’s continued work throughout the district to provide high-quality facilities.
Throughout the fall sports season, student athletes in Fresno Unified battled their way to glory on the field and courts during highly successful seasons for a number of boys and girls sports.

Highlights include Valley championships for:
- McLane girls tennis Division 5
- Hoover girls volleyball Division 3
- Roosevelt boys cross country Division 3

Other highlights of the fall include:
- Elementary District Volleyball Tournament: Top 32 teams marched into Sunnyside Stadium to the theme of the Olympics; Manchester GATE wins the girls volleyball championship
- Elementary Flag Football District Tournament: Top 24 teams marched into Sunnyside Stadium to theme of the Olympics; Manchester GATE wins the championship
- Middle School Football Championships at McLane Stadium: Ahwahnee wins the American Division Championship and Sequoia wins the National Division Championship
- Baird Middle School wins the Middle School Golf Championship
- Yosemite Middle School wins the Middle School American Division Girls Volleyball Championship
- Computech wins the Middle School National Division Girls Volleyball Championship
- Computech wins the Middle School Boys Cross Country Championships at Woodward Park
- Computech wins the Middle School Girls Cross Country Championships at Woodward Park

High school league champions:
- Hoover -- North Yosemite League (NYL) girls volleyball and NYL boys water polo
- Sunnyside -- NYL football, NYL girls water polo and NYL girls cross country
- Roosevelt -- NYL boys cross country
- McLane -- NYL girls tennis co-champions
- Edison -- County Metro Athletic Conference (CMAC) football co-champions
- Bullard – CMAC football co-champions, CMAC girls golf and CMAC girls tennis

Student bankers at the Union Bank branch at McLane High School are featured in the October issue of American Banker magazine as part of the edition’s focus on women in banking. The McLane students, from left, are Bessy Vang, Thalia Garcia, Sasha Lopez and Alexandra Cabrales. Since the branch opened at McLane in 2011, Union bank has hired 22 percent of its student bankers to work in other Fresno-area branches.

2012-2013 Dates to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 24 to January 11</td>
<td>Winter Break</td>
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<td>January 21</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</td>
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<td>February 11</td>
<td>Lincoln’s Birthday</td>
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<td>February 18</td>
<td>Presidents’ Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25 – April 1</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>Memorial Day</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
<td>Last day of school</td>
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Measure Q Funds Roosevelt Classroom Wing to House Award-Winning Classes

A new academic building at Roosevelt High School, designed with arches, tile roof and other features that complement the school’s architecture, will open in January, adding a beautiful and functional L-shape wing to replace 16 portable classrooms.

The new building is a Measure Q project, made possible by the community’s overwhelming support for the district’s $280 million local school bond passed in November 2010. The new wing is made up of 12 classrooms encompassing 16,000 square feet. The largest room in the wing will provide space for career technical education focused on Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (N.F.T.E), which inspires young people from low-income communities to find their paths to success. The courses are taught by Linda Jean Voth, R.O.P. Teacher of the Year and past recipient of N.F.T.E’s Global Teacher of the Year Award. The classroom will house the school’s award-winning virtual enterprise courses, where students learn small-business management skills necessary for owning a business.

“The students also learn valuable lessons that range from the how to create a business from the ground up all the way to board-level decisions about their corporate plans,” said Roosevelt High Principal Bryan Wells.

“Ultimately, students present their business model to local entrepreneurs in the Fresno area as part of a competition for scholarship opportunities, and actually network with those in key positions within the business market in Fresno County.”

Other highlights of the new building:
• A media graphics room where students will operate a silk-screening business creating spirit wear and other items and learn creativity, marketing, entrepreneurship and other skills
• Four labs that will expand hands-on science experiences for students
• A new classroom for special-needs students

The wing is aesthetically pleasing and blends well with the character of the existing campus.

“With this new building, we were able to design to match the architectural style of the campus, which makes this one of the show pieces of the district,” said project manager Tim Patterson.

The building is among more than $100 million in Measure Q projects underway throughout the district, providing better teaching and learning environments, a boost to the local economy and reinvestment in Fresno neighborhoods. Voters passed Measure Q with a resounding 76 percent approval two years ago, making it possible for the district to pursue priority projects outlined by the Facilities Master Plan, a watershed document approved by the Fresno Unified Board of Education in 2009 to guide the district’s facilities needs over the next 15 years.

Other key projects underway or in the design phase include:
• Buildings to house classrooms, the library, career center and administration at Fresno High School; the buildings’ classical architecture will complement historic Royce Hall and allow for the removal of 22 portables as well as the existing buildings at the front of the school to make way for green space
• Modernization of Hamilton K-8 School
• Classroom buildings at Hoover and Edison high schools
• Remodel/upgrade of Roosevelt’s girls locker room
• Classroom buildings at Winchell elementary, Ayresworth, Easterby and Centennial elementary schools to replace portables
• Planning for new classroom and administration buildings at Bullard High School
• Planning for a new classroom building and locker room remodel for McLane High School

Completed Measure Q projects include Hoover baseball and softball fields, classroom buildings at Mayfair, Rowell and Wilson elementary schools, and upgrades throughout the district including heating/air conditioning, irrigation, play courts, concrete walkways and security enhancements.

GOALS FOR MEASURE Q INCLUDE:

- Upgrading and improving all Fresno Unified schools
- Supporting the work of the district to prepare career ready graduates through career technical education
- Investing in renovation and repair of schools
- Continuing to upgrade classroom technology
- Addressing the dropout issue by investing in alternative and continuing education facilities
Sleep Better Today With New Treatments Available to Address Physical Problem

Through natural selection, the muscles that once held our airway open became the speaking muscles, and the throat, which was once a stiff “tube” became soft so it could vibrate with sound. Ultimately these changes weakened our respiratory system and created the sleep apnea problem of modern day. In addition, our jaws have become smaller, making less space for tongue in the front of the mouth. Although not the main problem, one’s weight can affect sleep apnea, as excess fat in the tissues of the tongue and throat also close down the airway.

This lower blood oxygen level leads to hypoxia which is associated with all of our major diseases. Because the brain requires the most oxygen it is usually affected first. Symptoms include tiredness, forgetfulness, headaches, dementia, early Alzheimer’s and depression.

The second most common area to be affected is our cardiovascular system. Sleep apnea is associated with high blood pressure, strokes, and heart attacks. Beyond that, low blood oxygen is associated with diabetes, cancer, sexual dysfunction, and most of our major diseases. Falling asleep while driving and loss of productivity in the workplace are also major social problems.

It is a wonder then that doctors and patients are starting to pay attention to this deadly disease? Sleep apnea is an oral systemic disease. It is caused by air blockage in the oral cavity, but its effects are seen throughout the body. Therefore, it is best treated by both dentists and physicians. The current system is for physicians to diagnose the problem with a poly somnogram in a sleep lab or at home. Based on the outcome, the patient can be treated by a specially trained dentist who will make them a medical oral sleep appliance that will maintain the airway by keeping the tongue from blocking the airway. This treatment is comfortable, convenient, and dignified.

Or the physician may refer the patient to a DME company to be fitted with a CPAP. This positive air pressure machine applies air pressure on the tongue to keep it out of the airway. The CPAP’s do work to reduce sleep apnea, but most people find them uncomfortable and discontinue wearing them.

The newest treatment for sleep apnea is actually a blend of the two traditional methods. It’s called a combination appliance or Symphony. It combines the best of both systems and reduces the side affects of both systems. Even “severe” patients can now be treated with relative comfort and convenience. No longer do you need straps around your head or a mask on your face blowing high pressure air down your throat.

The other treatment is surgery, however, this is seldom used anymore because of pain, expense, and disfigurement. And the fact is that the other treatments tend to work better, unless the problem is very, very severe.

If you or your family members snore, gasp for air, have extensive tiredness or have multiple medical problems, you should discuss with your physician and your dentist, as patients do now have a choice in their treatment.

Dr. Weldon Schapansky 107 N. Hall St. (at Main), Visalia 559- 57-SNORE (577-6673)
www.endsnoring.org

Do You Have Sleep Apnea? Snore? Do You Dislike Your CPAP?

Treatment options for sleep apnea and snoring have been limited to the CPAP for many years, but times have changed, now there is an alternative. The modern treatment for these problems is a medical oral appliance that is comfortable, convenient, and more dignified than the CPAP. Most people no longer need to wear the dreaded CPAP mask.

If you want to feel better, be happier and have more energy, call Dr. Schapansky today for a consultation appointment.

559-57SNORE (559-577-6673)

Dr. Weldon Schapansky
Graduate of California State University, Fresno
University of the Pacific, School of Dentistry

Member of:
American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine
American Academy of Cranial Facial Pain
American Dental Association, Fresno, Madera Dental Society

Central California SLEEP CENTER
Better Sleep For A Better Life.

REMINDER: NOW IS THE TIME TO USE YOUR MEDICAL INSURANCE BEFORE DEDUCTIBLES GO UP!