District Finds Effective Ways to Deal with Budget Shortfalls

The Fresno Unified School District is well underway planning for another difficult budget year, but because of the district’s balanced, phased-in approach to reductions it will continue to keep cuts as far away from the classroom as possible for the 2012-13 school year.

The FUSD Board of Education’s prudent fiscal decisions also made it possible to use one-time funds during the current school year for targeted educational programs and additional staff and to help offset the rising costs of health care for employees.

For the 2012-13 school year, there will be no employee layoffs, no employee furlough days and no reduction in school days for students, despite California’s ongoing financial crisis. The district expects $10.4 million less from the state for the upcoming year if a tax increase on the November ballot fails, but careful fiscal decisions by the board will make it possible for FUSD to move forward with plans to provide more time for students to learn:

• Summer school: The district will again provide an expanded learning summer program that will include night and online courses as well as traditional classes. Last year, more than 14,000 students attended, with 857 starting this school year back on track for graduation and completion of A-G requirements for four-year universities.

• Transitional kindergarten: The district will launch transitional kindergartens at 33 more sites, laying an early foundation for student success and ensuring that more students will enter kindergarten with the maturity and skills they need to excel.

• After-school programs: The district will continue to expand after-school programs in the coming school year to provide enough capacity to serve more than 5,000 students at 29 sites throughout the district. (The Fresno County Office of Education funds programs at an additional 29 sites.) “More time for kids matters, and we are seeing the results,” said Fresno Unified Superintendent Michael Hanson. “We continue to invest in areas where school districts up and down the state have pulled back.”

While many other districts throughout the state have reduced the number of days students go to school by as many as five, Fresno Unified has maintained the 180-day school year. For the next school year, Gov. Brown’s proposed budget includes a trigger equivalent to a three-week reduction in school days if voters do not pass a proposed tax increase in November. The district will maintain its full number of student school days, even if the tax increase does not pass.

The district will also continue to maintain its $25 million investment in Targeted Improvement Actions, which include counselors, athletic directors and campus culture directors at the high schools; counselors and transition teachers at middle schools; and instructional coaches at elementary schools.

The district is developing an action plan if the governor’s proposed tax increase passes in November, generating additional revenue for education.

Through prudent financial decisions and by protecting and maintaining a solid reserve, the board was able to approve a one-time expenditure at its Dec. 14 board meeting for student programs, staffing and health-care costs for the current school year. The board looked for one-time investments that would have the most impact on students.

The board approved a plan to add teachers at four high schools to decrease class sizes at a cost of $1 million; allocate $750,000 to expand after-school programs; allocate $650,000 to develop the International Baccalaureate Middle Years program at Cooper Middle School; add 19 teachers in kindergarten through third grade at a cost of $1.5 million; and contribute $10 million to the health fund to soften the impact of rising health-care cost to employees.

While Fresno Unified is in better shape financially than most school districts, it continues to feel the effects of the state’s financial crisis. Since the 2007-08 school year, the district has been hit with $159 million in budget cuts.
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June 1 & 2

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SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE
Community members take on critical graduation work – invite community input

Every week, I have the privilege of visiting schools and seeing first-hand the work happening in our classrooms. On a recent visit to one of our high school campuses, I was reminded of the power of adult-student relationships. On a recent visit to McLane High School’s student-run Union Bank, I met a young man who is a representative of students across the city. He was articulate, thoughtful, polite and determined. What you wouldn’t know when you met him was that at the beginning of his senior year his parents moved out of state, leaving him alone. He is working multiple jobs, but still gets himself to school every day. What keeps him connected to school is his job at Union Bank. This tells me what a successful partnership we have established with Union Bank giving our students real world experience and launching them on a possible career pathway.

Whether it is a teacher, a counselor, a parent, or community member: adult relationships with students matter. This truth is at the core of the work that a group of community members have undertaken with the Fresno Unified Graduation Task Force.

Since March, the task force has been meeting to analyze research, assess current realities, and review best practices with the goal of presenting a set of recommendations to the FUSD Board of Education by late May. I invite you to go to the task force’s website at go.fresnounified.org/graduate where you will find the research and information the task force has been considering as well as summaries of their meetings.

In addition to student and teacher focus groups that will be held at schools throughout Fresno Unified, the task force cohosted with Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) two community meetings. This was an opportunity for parents, students, and community members to engage in the discussion of dropout prevention and provide input on increasing the number of students who stay in school on target to graduate. I encourage you to join us.

The task force will also hold two more community meetings in May to provide our community a chance to see the set of draft recommendations and provide further input. These dates will be posted on the district’s web site at www.fresnounified.org.

Improving the graduation rate begins with creating more stability for our students by working together with students, their families, and the community. And that’s where you come in — I encourage you to look at the task force’s web site, email your input to graduate@fresnounified.org, and attend one of the community meetings.

It will take us all pulling in the same direction to ensure that our students stay in school to graduate – our students and our community deserve nothing less. Remember that your interaction with students – no matter who you are – matters.
District Believes in the ABCs of Transitional Kindergarten

Fresno Unified School District will build on the success of the two transitional kindergarten programs launched this year and add 33 more at elementary schools throughout the district for the 2012-13 school year.

Transitional kindergarten is the grade prior to kindergarten for students born on Sept. 2 through Dec. 2, better preparing students born late in the year for success in school.

The transitional kindergarten program was created by California Senate Bill 1381, the Kindergarten Readiness Act. SB 1381 also phases in new dates determining when students are allowed to enroll in kindergarten. Traditionally, students could enter kindergarten if they were turning five on or before Dec. 2. Under SB 1381:

• For the 2012-13 school year, students must have turned five on or before Nov. 1
• For the 2013-14 school year, students must have turned five on or before Oct. 1
• For the 2014-15 school year and each school year thereafter, students must have turned five on or before Sept. 1

Transitional kindergarten provides access to high-quality curriculum with rigor to successfully launch students’ educational careers. While other districts are scaling back on early childhood education because of cuts to education funding, the FUSD Board of Education has made transitional kindergarten a priority and will move forward with an expanded program, ensuring more students enter kindergarten with the maturity and skills they need to excel.

“Ensuring that students are proficient readers by third grade is essential to their success in school and beyond,” said Maria Maldonado, an assistant superintendent. “FUSD children will be supported with additional instructional time to learn necessary social and academic skills before entering kindergarten, increasing the likelihood of achieving reading proficiency by third grade.”

Transitional kindergarten teachers at this year’s pilot programs at Balderas and Thomas elementary schools said students have thrived and will be far better prepared to start regular kindergarten in the fall after a year in the program, which emphasizes oral language development, pre-literacy skills and early math instruction to build a strong foundation.

Parent outreach and education is also a significant element at the Balderas and Thomas transitional kindergartens, with comprehensive leadership and advocacy training provided through the Abriendo Puertas/Open Doors Program.

Transitional kindergartens will be offered at the following sites: Addams, Bakman, Birney, Burroughs, Calwa, Centennial, Columbia, Del Mar, Easterby, Ewing, Figarden, Fremont, Hidalgo, Kratt, Leavenworth, Lowell, Mayfair, Muir, Norseman, Olmos, Pyle, Roeding, Rowell, Slater, Storey, Turner, Viking, Vinland, Williams, Wilson, Winchell, Wolters and Yokomi.

For more information on transitional kindergarten, parents should call their home school.

IB Program Now Offered at Middle School

With the opening of an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Academy at Cooper Middle School this fall, Fresno Unified School District will strengthen the IB pathway available to students and offer a premier program for the Fresno High School region and the entire district.

Kristine Belcher was recently named principal of the IB Middle Years Academy at Cooper, which will initially accommodate sixth- and seventh-graders in August with eighth grade added in 2013-14.

The IB Middle Years Academy will offer a challenging, well-rounded curriculum designed to help students find a sense of belonging in an ever-changing world and foster a positive learning attitude. The school curriculum will provide a framework to help students understand the connection between traditional subjects and the real world and encourage critical and reflective thinking.

The new academy will provide a strong bridge between the IB Primary Years program at Dailey Elementary Charter School and the IB program at Fresno High School, creating the Valley’s only K-12 IB pathway. The FUSD Board of Education approved $650,000 at its Dec. 14 meeting to launch the IB Middle Years Academy and create the high-quality program.

Admissions criteria give preference to applicants enrolled in the IB program at Dailey and require that students have achieved proficient or advanced on the California Standards Test in either English or math at least once during elementary grades. If the number of applicants exceeds seats available, a lottery will be used with preference given to applicants from the Fresno High area and who attend an FUSD school.
After-school Program Expanded to Accommodate 1,300 More Students

Fresno Unified School District has welcomed 1,300 additional students to after-school programs following the FUSD Board of Education’s decision to allocate $750,000 to accommodate students on waiting lists.

After-school programs are part of the district’s expanded learning efforts, with the goal of providing the maximum number of high-quality educational options for students beyond the regular school day and school year. After-school programs offer homework and academic support and enrichment, physical activity and a healthy snack.

“The After School Program provides an opportunity for students to receive additional academic support, participate in physical fitness as well as various enrichment activities in a supervised and safe environment,” said Glenn Starkweather, director of expanded learning.

At the Dec. 14 board meeting, trustees approved an infusion of funds that made it possible for more students to enroll in after-school programs and the addition of 60 staff members to maintain a 20-to-1 ratio. The additional funds will also support an expanded program for the 2012-13 school year.

Approximately 5,100 elementary students are involved in after-school programs at 29 sites throughout the district, with about the same number involved in after-school programs funded by the Fresno County Office of Education at an additional 29 sites.

Four playing fields are under construction at Hoover High School as part of dozens of projects underway in the Fresno Unified School District, thanks to the Measure Q bond passed by voters.

The project at Hoover consists of new varsity and J.V. diamonds for both baseball and softball, with permanent dugouts, new playing surfaces, turf and new seating for the varsity baseball field and new seating for the varsity softball diamond.

“Having these fields is going to make our programs that much stronger,” said Tim Carey, Hoover High athletic director.

As part of the Hoover fields project, the school made a special request of architects to retain Hoover’s version of the Green Monster at Fenway Park, the Boston Red Sox’s extra high left field wall famous for preventing line-drive home runs.

The old right field fence of the varsity baseball field at Hoover was 16 feet tall, nearly triple the norm. The extra-high fence was built in the 1960s as a barrier to the J.V. outfield. The new fence will be 12 feet tall – still twice the normal height – and is also less deep like the Green Monster.

“When the field was being planned we wanted to preserve that link to Hoover baseball history,” Carey said.

With the renovations of the fields, the school will no longer have to move fencing and share field space between various sports. The fields will be completed for the start of the new school year in August.

Additional Measure Q projects include:

•• Roosevelt High School classrooms: Opening planned for August 2013
•• Mayfair/Rowell/Wilson/Winchell elementary classrooms: Mayfair and Wilson classrooms opened in January; Rowell and Winchell classrooms are under construction
•• Fresno High School: Groundbreaking expected in May for classroom building
•• Hoover High School: Groundbreaking expected in May for classroom building
•• McLane High School: The Division of State Architect is reviewing design of locker-room upgrades

All of the projects are a result of voters’ overwhelming support of Measure Q in November 2010, and translate into a boost to the local economy and reinvestment in Fresno neighborhoods. The $280 million bond measure will upgrade and improve all Fresno Unified schools, support the district’s work preparing career-ready graduates, invest in renovation and repair of schools, continue to upgrade classroom technology and attack the dropout issue through alternative and continuing education facilities.

Measure Q projects are tied to the district’s Facilities Master Plan, adopted by the FUSD Board of Education in 2009 to guide facilities work in the district over the next 15 years.

BUDGET (continued from Page 1)

million in reduced state resources and has had to take significant steps to maintain solid financial footing. Actions included:
• Reducing the central office by 14 percent
• Offering retirement incentives
• Increasing class sizes in K-3 and in ninth-grade English and math
• Implementing a temporary reduction in staff development buyback days for teachers and a temporary reduction in the work year for all other employees in 2011-12
• Implementing a temporary increase in class size by one in grades 4-12
• Lowering district contributions to the health fund and workers’ compensation fund
• Utilizing one-time federal economic stimulus funds
• Utilizing flexible categorical funds (Tier III)
• Collapsing hundreds of jobs through attrition
• Implementing a purchasing and hiring exemption process for the past four years

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All students entering or transferring into 7th grade will need proof of an adolescent whooping cough booster immunization (called “Tdap”) for school in the fall and all future years.

To meet this requirement a child will need to have one dose of a pertussis containing vaccine on or after the seventh birthday. The law allows parents to choose exemptions to immunization requirements based on their personal beliefs or for medical reasons verified by the child’s health care provider.

Check your child’s immunization record with the chart below or call your health care provider to determine if your child has met the requirement.

What you can do NOW: Send a copy of your child’s immunization record to the school office as soon as possible so the school nurse can update your child’s immunization status. Adults are also advised to get a pertussis (Tdap) booster to protect themselves and their families.

If your child needs this vaccine, a pertussis (Tdap) booster may be obtained from:

- Your private health care provider
- Clinica Sierra Vista (www.clinicasierravista.org for clinic locations)
- Fresno Unified School District (www.fresnounified.org)
- Your child’s current elementary school may be offering the Tdap vaccine. Contact your child’s school nurse regarding dates and times of Tdap clinics
- Fresno County Health Department 1221 Fulton Mall 1st Floor, Immunization 445-3550

If you need a copy of your child’s immunization record or have questions, please contact your child’s school nurse.

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### Important Dates

- MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY  **MAY 28, 2012**
- LAST DAY of SCHOOL  **JUNE 15, 2012**
- FIRST DAY of SCHOOL  **AUGUST 20, 2012**
- LABOR DAY HOLIDAY  **SEPTEMBER 3, 2012**
- VETERANS’ DAY HOLIDAY  **NOVEMBER 12, 2012**

To view the calendar in its entirety please visit our website at [www.fresnounified.org](http://www.fresnounified.org)

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### Parents Be Aware: Dangerous New Teen Fads

Recent reports have highlighted two new items young people are abusing: cinnamon and “whip-it,” the street name for nitrous oxide used for charging whipping cream dispensers. Cinnamon is being used for the “cinnamon challenge,” a teenage fad that has spiked in popularity with the YouTube generation. Participants attempt to ingest a tablespoon of cinnamon in under a minute without drinking water or vomiting. Many teens video the experience and post it to Facebook or YouTube. The stunt may seem harmless, but can be extremely dangerous and cause uncontrollable coughing, choking, vomiting and hypoxia. The cinnamon can be aspirated into the lungs and cause pneumonia and scarring. Parents should also be aware that teens are getting high by inhaling nitrous oxide found in small metal canisters used for whipping cream dispensers. “Whip-it” causes extreme lethargy and sometimes death. It is illegal to sell the canisters to anyone under the age of 18, but many teens across the nation have been successful in purchasing them online.

Parents are encouraged to take the time to talk to their students about the dangers of these seemingly harmless activities and stress the severe medical consequences associated with inhaling cinnamon and nitrous oxide.

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### Vaccine Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine Name</th>
<th>Age Requirement</th>
<th>Meets 7th grade Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tdap (Adacel, Boostrix)</td>
<td>Must be given on or after 7th Birthday</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTaP (DTP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECAVAC (TENIVAC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>History of Whooping Cough (Pertussis) disease</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Ring with Selena Acosta: Roosevelt High Sophomore Punches Her Way to the Top

Roosevelt High School sophomore Selena Acosta got tired of just watching her brothers box, and is now a national girls amateur boxing champ.

Acosta, 15, won the National Silver Gloves Amateur Boxing Tournament in the 125 weight class in Independence, Mo. earlier this year and is considered the best female amateur boxer for her weight class and age in the nation.

She started boxing just two years ago at Velarde’s Boxing Gym in Fresno, where a younger and older brother were boxing. Her coach is her father, Daniel Acosta.

“I would be sitting there watching them box. I was thinking how competitive it was,” said Selena, who also plays soccer and runs track.

Selena acknowledged that most people are surprised that she’s a boxer because it’s traditionally been a male-dominated sport.

“But I think girls can do anything a guy can do,” Selena said. “My friends think it’s pretty cool how far I’ve taken boxing in just two years, and how successful I’ve been.”

After she graduates, Selena said she wants to represent the United States in the Olympics and turn pro. A second career? She would like to be a pediatrician.

$1 Million Technology Upgrades Keep Schools on Cutting Edge

As part of Fresno Unified School District’s continuing efforts to provide cutting-edge technology to students and staff, the FUSD Board of Education approved technology upgrades to Sunnyside High School and Computech Middle School totaling more than $1 million.

At Sunnyside High, technology upgrades include new laptops for teachers, mobile labs for students including enough laptops for every student, new projectors and a variety of other items. The mobile labs will allow many classrooms at Sunnyside to experience a one-to-one student/computer ratio. At Computech, upgrades include projectors, equipment for a video production lab, Robotics kits, 300 student netbooks and a variety of other items.

The upgrades also include the foundational equipment for digital video equipment that will give the district the capability to efficiently stream video across the district as well as an infrastructure for collection and playback of educational video content created by teachers and students.

“This is part of the board’s effort to make sure our schools have the best in technology,” said Kurt Madden, chief technology officer for the district.

“Technology moves so fast that we can get out of date very quickly. This investment by the board will infuse the two schools with upgrades and help them continue to be at the forefront of technology.”

The investment was part of the board’s package of one-time expenditures approved at the Dec. 14 board meeting, including $3 million to support educational programs, $4 million for additional staffing and $10 million to offset the rising cost of health care for employees.

New Southeast Elementary School Named to Honor Hmong Leader

Excitement is building around the new elementary school under construction in southeast Fresno named for General Vang Pao, a revered leader among the Hmong community and advocate for education.

The FUSD Board of Education voted on Feb. 8 to name the school after Vang Pao, who passed away in January 2011. Vang Pao’s son, Chi Neng Vang, said at the board meeting that the effort to name the new school after his father had tremendous community support and noted that more than 10,000 letters were submitted in favor of the name.

Chi Neng Vang said the FUSD Board of Education’s decision to name the school after his father portrayed the district’s support for “diversity and empowering communities to achieve success and stability through education.” He said it is the first school in the nation to carry the name of a Hmong-American.

Plans are underway for a dedication ceremony this fall following the opening of the school in August. The campus is located on an 8.4-acre site just north of Sequoia Middle School at Heaton and Cedar avenues and will serve students currently attending a temporary campus, Southeast Elementary School. The school will accommodate 850 students, with two stories to best utilize the site. The principal is Teresa Calderon.

“It is an exciting time for the staff and community as well as the students as they watch the school being constructed,” Calderon said. “There is almost a disbelief that this is really happening. Parents and community are thrilled with the fast progress and all the selections that are being made in order to create a beautiful and successful school.”

The school is among extensive facilities projects underway throughout the district to ease overcrowding, eliminate the need for portable classrooms and create better kindergarten through high school feeder patterns. Its name honors Vang Pao, who was a Hmong soldier who rose to command a secret army of CIA-trained and supported forces that fought against the Pathet Lao and People’s Army of Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s.

Vang Pao immigrated to the United States after the communists seized power in Laos in 1975. He was an esteemed elder of the American Hmong people and helped with the resettlement of Hmong refugees in the United State, many of whom experienced the war or the reprisals that followed.

Vang Pao spent considerable time in Fresno, where many Hmong have resettled, and was supportive of his countrymen and their families pursuing education. Fresno Unified has more than 5,000 Hmong-speaking students.

Chi Neng Vang said his father championed education “as the key to success for any group of people or community across the nation.” He also said the naming of the school was not only groundbreaking, “but will make the Hmong-American community and other groups of people in Fresno be more involved and active in the educational system and their children’s educational future.”
The late Rick Erlenheim, a CTE director for Fresno Unified, was selected as one of five recipients of the William F. Noli Outstanding Service Award given by the Fresno County Office of Education/Fresno Regional Occupation Program (ROP). Recipients are honored for their commitment to career technical education. The award will be presented to Erlenheim’s family at the Fresno ROP Spring Advisory Night on Friday, April 24.

Elizabeth Fralicks, an English language development manager, was selected to participate on a Panel of Experts for the revision of California’s English language development standards for kindergarten through 12th grade.

Superintendent Michael Hanson was selected as one of 10 winners from across the country for a 2012 Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award by editors of eSchool News, a national educational technology magazine. The award is given to school executives who have shown outstanding leadership and vision in directing educational technology initiatives.

Dr. John Quinto, a manager in Maintenance and Operations, has publicly presented his dissertation findings on the effectiveness of the Cal Grant program, including a briefing to the Constituent Affairs Office of Gov. Brown and in the Kennedy Caucus Room of the Russell Senate Office Building as part of a Pi Gamma Mu Honors Society convention.

Don Rotella, a teacher at Roosevelt High School, won the Carolyn Dobbs Special Education Teacher or Leader of the Year Award, which recognizes the important work of special education professionals. Rotella was selected from among eight finalists from throughout the Valley.

Operations employees at several schools won annual Curb Appeal, Attendance, Recycling, Environment (C.A.R.E.) awards at a Jan. 6 presentation for exemplary performance. Excellence Awards for the top schools went to Burroughs and employees Long Her, Tomas Olivas, Genieva Moreno and Stanley Hernandez; Kirk and employees Sia Her and Vang C. Xiong; Tehipite and employees Lowyane Quinola, Seng Lor Moua, Armando Bonavente, Ka Chang, Mheng Alonzo and Garry Yang; and Chavez Adult School and employees Gregory McLaren, Souvanthong Chanthapany, William Olivas, Xao Thao, May Vue Yang, Katherine Cha and Eric Ovalle. Most Improved School Awards went to Addicott and employee Anatoliy Milkerin; Eaton and employees Celia Ojeda. Ly N. Yang and Fue Yang; Homan and employees Mike Dyanko, Ya N. Her and Rosario Lara; and Hoover and employees Richard Bagay, Serewyat Oum, Raul Quinto, Angel Ortega, Chia Moua, George Yang, Carlos Obeso, Karla Sapien, Mario Montoya, Jose Serquina and Frank Zumudio.

What’s for Breakfast?
Vamos a Desayunar!

Most Important Meal of the Day

Students at Homan Elementary School enjoy a nutritious breakfast. The district this year launched a new five-year “What’s for Breakfast” campaign with rubber bracelets, T-shirts and banners to promote a healthy start to the school day. A Kellogg’s grant helps fund the campaign, which has been highly successful in increasing the number of students participating in the district’s breakfast program.
Cambridge High Online Courses
Key to Successful Learning

After changing schools several times, Christian Turner was behind in credits and discouraged about finishing school. He enrolled at Fresno Unified’s Cambridge High School last fall, where he is flourishing.

One of the keys to Christian’s success this year is online courses offered for the first time at Cambridge, which allow students to complete core classes at their own pace. Christian, 16, has completed five Apex Learning digital courses this year, the most of any student in Fresno Unified School District. He is highly motivated because the online style of learning fits his needs.

“I’m interested in doing work on the computer,” Christian said.

Principal Yolanda Jimenez-Ruiz said Apex provides another support to students behind in credits, which describes the majority of Cambridge students.

“My goal is options for students,” Jimenez-Ruiz said. “When students have an interest in a program on campus, they regain their confidence and begin to excel.”

Cambridge is one of two high schools in the district for students who were failing at their home high school or who prefer non-traditional options, including an earlier release time than most high schools, smaller classes and independent study. The school also offers Saturday courses.

The school had 130 graduates last June and sent 20 additional students who were back on track to their home schools for graduation. Jimenez-Ruiz expects about the same number of graduates in June and sent at the semester an additional 30 students back to graduate with their home schools.

Christian, who wants to be a lawyer, has completed the equivalent of a year of both U.S. History and Modern World History as well as the equivalent of half a year of geometry already this year, in addition to taking four regular classes.

Cambridge teacher Jeff Belcher said the online courses allow students to work at their own pace, even at home after school hours. As soon as they complete a course, they can move on without the constraints of a traditional school semester format. Belcher frequently checks student progress to make sure they are moving forward. All high schools in the district now offer Apex Learning digital courses, which are taught by fully-credentialed FUSD teachers.

“These kids love it. I have a waiting list,” Belcher said.

Students from throughout the district will have recovered more than 6,000 credits through online courses this year by the end of the semester, said Tom Nixon, a teacher on special assignment in charge of online learning.

“Clearly online courses are a good choice for Christian, but they are also a good choice for many of our students,” Nixon said. “Increasingly, we have students walking into counselor offices and asking to take courses online.”

Aaron Bankston, 16, has completed three courses this year at Cambridge.

“I think it’s a great program,” Aaron said. “It’s a great way to catch up on credits.”
Expanded Learning Summer Program

Fresno Unified School District will once again provide students with opportunities to recover credits, accelerate learning, and receive targeted academic support through an expanded learning summer program.

The goal of the district’s expanded learning program is to provide the maximum number of high-quality educational options for students beyond the regular school day and school year. This year’s summer program will include a full array of educational opportunities for elementary, middle and high school students, including migrant education and special education students.

Parents of students who have been recommended for summer school programs will receive notification letters by May 1, 2012. All programs will observe the July 4 holiday. Below is a summary of the programs offered.

For additional information, contact the Expanded Learning Program office at (559) 248-7461.

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**ELEMENTARY**

**JUNE 19 - JULY 13**

Regular elementary program: For grades K-3; see www.fresnounified.org for sites
Special education: For grades K-6 at Addicott, CSUF preschool, Storey, Powers, Leavenworth and Hidalgo
Migrant education program: For grades K-6 at Burroughs, Hidalgo and Birney
English Language program: For grades 4 and 5 at Balderas, Burroughs, Calwa, Greenberg, Hidalgo, Jackson and Lane

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**JUNE 19 - JULY 13 FOR INCOMING 7TH & 8TH GRADERS**

Regular middle school program: www.fresnounified.org for sites
Special education: Fort Miller and Terronez

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**HIGH SCHOOL**

**TWO SESSIONS: JUNE 19 - JULY 3 AND JULY 5 - JULY 19**

Day session: 8 a.m.-1:55 p.m. at all high schools
Mid-day session: 2:30-6:30 p.m. (online courses only at Fresno Adult School)
Evening session: 4:30-8:30 p.m. (online courses only at Bullard and McLane)
Special education: Rata and McLane

See district website for locations www.fresnounified.org
Seventh-grader Vincent Belmonte says being in the Young Men’s Alliance at Baird Middle School has changed his future -- to one that includes graduating from high school and going on to college.

“I wasn’t doing half my homework, but Young Men’s Alliance taught me to be responsible,” Vincent said.

Young Men’s Alliance at Baird and a Women’s Alliance program for sophomores at Fresno High School are both new to the Fresno Unified School District. Along with the Men’s Alliance program started last year, the programs form the core of Fresno Unified’s flourishing mentoring program, which is connecting more than 1,400 students to mentors at about 60 sites throughout the district. Nearly 700 mentors are involved to support Fresno Unified’s efforts to connect students with positive role models.

Men’s Alliance, which started at Edison, Hoover and Sunnyside high schools in 2010-11, expanded to Fresno and Roosevelt high schools this year.

The programs help students develop personal behavior and academic skills that lead to success in the classroom, career and in life. Students were selected for the elective class based on past behavior and academic issues. For example, students chosen for the Women’s Alliance had two or more suspensions.

All three of the programs are producing clear results:
• None of the 14 students in Young Men’s Alliance have been suspended since entering the program and their teachers report an improvement in the boys’ behavior
• Grade-point averages are up 80 percent over last year for students in the Women’s Alliance and behavior citations are down from last year
• In comparing data for Men’s Alliance students in 2010-11 to the previous year (before they were in Men’s Alliance) the average GPA rose from 1.0 to 1.5, unexcused absences dropped from 86 to 60, suspension incidents dropped from 43 to 18 and suspension days dropped from 269 to 51

“I think the sky’s the limit for the programs,” said Valerie Martinez, vice principal at Baird, said the program has plans to add a new set of seventh graders each year to the program.

Kelly Colwell, who co-teaches the Women’s Alliance at Fresno High with Laurie Billings, said the program’s 24 students, who had little in common when the class began, now serve as a support group to each other. They receive academic assistance from tutors every Thursday and listen to guest speakers every Friday. They have gone on field trips to University of California, Merced and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

Desiray Shull said before becoming part of the Women’s Alliance she had all D’s and F’s. Because she has lifted her grades, her parents are allowing her more freedom. Yajaira Gonzalez will pursue college because of Women’s Alliance and Crystal Valadez said the class has restored her confidence and she plans to join the Marines after graduation, a dream since seventh grade.

Crystal said, “They push us to do well.”
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