Preschool students at Vang Pao Elementary School pay close attention in class, preparing them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Preschools throughout the city are anxiously preparing for the arrival of new students.

Advanced Placement testing allows students to earn college credit for a score of 3 or better, and more Fresno Unified test takers are earning passing scores. College Board’s Advanced Placement Program (AP) exposes students to college-level courses while still in high school, each culminating in a rigorous exam. AP provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both.

Last year, 616,412 public high school graduates nationwide reported AP scores to colleges and universities.

Several months ago, the California Department of Education (CDE) announced that a provision in this year’s state budget made it necessary for many school districts in the state to charge a $1 to $8.88 per day “family fee” for participation in state-funded preschool programs. This fee would be expected based upon enrollment, not actual attendance, requiring a charge for families whether the child attended every day or not. Fresno Unified will not be charging families any fees for participation in preschool this school year.
What Does Your Credit Say About You?

Plainly stated, your credit is your financial reputation. So what does this mean for you? It means that learning how to establish and maintain an excellent credit rating now could save you tens of thousands of dollars throughout your lifetime. It’s important to remember that anything you do to negatively affect your credit may stay with you for up to seven years – and that, unlike breaking a mirror, is much more than mere superstition.

Tips to Maintain Good Credit…
• Pay your bills on time.
• Credit reporting agencies are looking for 24 consecutive months of payments.
• Keep your balances on revolving credit lines below 35% of your credit limit.
• Maintain a well-rounded credit portfolio by having different types of credit lines.
• Limit credit applications. Every time you have your credit pulled it can have a negative impact on your credit score.

Additional Credit Tips…
• You are entitled to a free copy of your credit report from all three credit reporting agencies per year. This information can be found at annualcreditreport.com.
• Beware of imposter websites. These websites often use your personal information to steal your identity.
• Dispute any inaccuracies found within your credit report.
• Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Contact your creditors if you need payment extensions or help managing your debt.

For more financial information or credit counseling, visit the Resource Center at myEECU.org. You may also visit one of our 15 convenient branches, call us at 1-800-538-EECU, or email us at Info@myEECU.org.

Please do not email personally identifying information.
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SUPERINTENDENT’S Message

Spring is officially here and that means the school year is, believe it or not, nearly over. The final day of this school year is June 13 and we have a lot of work ahead of us between now and then. STAR testing begins April 22 for high school students and April 29 for elementary and middle grades. Teachers will be diligently working with students in the coming weeks to review the material that has been covered this year in preparation for testing. Fresno Unified students are making great strides academically, but it’s important that they take these exams seriously as they give us a good idea of whether they are truly mastering the material taught during the year. For our juniors and their parents and guardians, I want to remind you that the STAR tests for English language arts and math provide a measuring stick for college readiness and help to determine your senior year course placement in those subjects. I am confident that they will do well this year and I look forward to being able to share good news about the results in the months ahead.

Recently, Fresno Unified, along with several other school districts in the state, members of the California Office to Reform Education (CORE), including Clovis, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, Sanger and Santa Ana, requested a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations. We are requesting the ability to be able to forego those regulations in favor of our own more rigorous, and relevant to the needs of the children in this state, set of standards.

As I’ve mentioned here previously, Fresno Unified is moving towards full implementation of Common Core State Standards. This will help ensure that our students are hitting the same benchmarks as those in other parts of the country.

The move to Common Core State Standards, along with the ability to work with other districts in the state to adopt and utilize “best practices” would truly help improve academic outcomes for our students. It will take a lot of work, and we are committed to going the distance on behalf of our youth. Fresno Unified and the other CORE districts plan to demonstrate a higher level of shared responsibility and accountability for the academic outcomes of the children in this state. We have a unique set of challenges here in the Golden State, but I believe that by working together, we can help ensure that all students receive a high-quality education no matter where they are located.

I hope that you will help me in spreading the word about the

See SUPT’S MESSAGE, Pg. 5

Message From The Mayor

Ashley Swearengin
Fresno Mayor

Learn2Earn has been working with parents in the Fresno Unified School District to provide resources and information regarding adult education opportunities in Fresno. The Learn2Earn team is excited to be part of this growing concern surrounding education in Fresno. We recognize the importance of educating parents about the significance of not having a basic education in the world today.

There are changes happening in education currently that many residents in Fresno are not aware of. Understanding how these changes may affect education in the future is something that we all should be concerned about. For those adults who do not have a high school diploma or GED, the employment market continues to trend toward only hiring people that have this minimum requirement met. In addition, many parents have spoken to us who are concerned that their children will not complete high school and their ability to get a job in the future will be drastically altered. Current and future young adults who do not finish high school and obtain their diploma will lack the opportunity to be awarded financial aid to attend community college, universities, and career technical schools. Changes to the federal student aid regulations now require potential students to have a high school diploma or GED to qualify for student financial aid.

Those adults who are currently seeking their GED or thinking about attending a GED course should take action now, changes to the GED testing process will occur in January 2014 as the GED test will become an on-line process. This creates an additional barrier for those students who lack computer skills. Any student who is in the testing process at the end of the year will be required to start over with the on-line process; there is no solution for transferring tests that may have already been passed. The importance of taking action and completing your GED prior to the end of this year is a significant change that is taking place. Learn2Earn would like to help you get through this process if you are interested and ready to get started. We have scholarships available to offset the cost of the GED and advise rs on hand to help you understand the process and complete your goals.

Learn2Earn and the Fresno

See MAYOR’S MESSAGE, Pg. 13
New Building at Roosevelt Helps Students Get Career Ready

Students and staff at Roosevelt High School are enjoying 16,000 square feet of new classroom space this spring following the completion of the “south wing” academic building.

It’s brand-new, but the building blends beautifully with the original architecture of the campus and provides the perfect anchor for the southeast corner of the campus.

On Feb. 21, the district celebrated the completion of the “south wing” with a program attended by parents, members of the community, students and district staff. Guests were entertained by the school’s steel drum band and had the opportunity to tour the new building.

The new academic building is among $100 million in projects completed or underway in the district following the community’s overwhelming support for Measure Q in November 2010. The $280 million local school bond is providing better teaching and learning environments, a boost to the local economy and reinvestment in Fresno neighborhoods.

Fresno Unified Board Member Luis Chavez noted that the building “represents the hopes and dreams of all of the students who will walk through these doors,” and called the Roosevelt campus “the heart and soul” of the Roosevelt community.

The L-shaped building includes expanded space for career technical education, science, and a variety of other academic focus areas. The design complements Roosevelt’s original Mediterranean revival architecture, providing a cohesive look between the older and new buildings.

The new wing features 12 classrooms, including four science labs, a small computer lab, pottery studio, photo lab, art room, classroom designed for special needs students that includes an easy-access entrance, as well as a media graphics room where students will operate a silk-screening business for creating spirit wear and learning creativity, marketing and entrepreneurial skills.

The “south wing” also includes expanded space for the school’s acclaimed Virtual Enterprise and Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) programs. Through global simulation, virtual enterprise students learn the small-business management skills they would need to own their own business. NFTE is a national program that inspires young people from low-income communities to find their paths to success.

The new academic building also features a variety of other specialized learning spaces. The “south wing” also includes expanded space for career technical education, science, and a variety of other academic focus areas. The design complements Roosevelt’s original Mediterranean revival architecture, providing a cohesive look between the older and new buildings.

Both programs are led by teacher Linda Jean Voth, who also spoke at the dedication: “Ultimately, it’s not about the buildings…but what’s going on in the buildings. We, the faculty and staff at Roosevelt, are dedicated to making a difference in this community.”

High School Guide Now Available

The 2013-2014 High School Guide is now available for both students and parents to begin the course planning process.

Fresno Unified’s comprehensive high schools offer a number of courses for students to choose from and guidance counselors can assist with making selections to ensure that they fit with college and career objectives. Parental involvement in the course planning process can help alleviate a number of concerns later in the school year and is greatly encouraged.

Students should consider this one of the most important decisions that they will make each of their four years of high school. Taking great care in choosing courses now can make a tremendous difference in how smoothly they transition from high school and into the world as an adult. Course guides are available at each high school and online at www.fresnounified.org where an electronic copy can be downloaded.
Middle School Students Dance for Fitness, Fun

Use Caution Around Running Canals

With warmer weather and longer daylight hours, canals can be very attractive to students eager to cool off. It is easy to underestimate the coldness of the water, the swift current and what garbage and other objects lie beneath. Canals are not built to swim in, and a quick dip can cost lives.

Walking, jogging or biking along canals should be done with caution and young children should never do so without an adult along. Follow these canal safety tips to avoid drowning or injury:

- Don’t swim in canals - ever!
- Keep a safe distance from the edge of the canals.
- Canal sides are extremely slick, making it difficult to get out.
- Canoeing, kayaking, water skiing and tubing are not allowed in canals.
- Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the canal banks.
- Stay away from automated equipment at water delivery gates.
- Never jump in to rescue pets or objects such as toys. Call 911 for help.

New Funding Formula Will Benefit Fresno Unified

Gov. Brown’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) will change the way California distributes resources to schools by creating a sustainable funding model, providing improved educational funding opportunities for Fresno Unified.

The proposal will potentially provide districts across the state with additional resources while holding school districts accountable for success in meeting academic goals for their students.

“The LCFF provides a consolidated approach to school funding through a single per-pupil formula focused on students living in poverty and English learners,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “We stand firmly with the governor in the belief that priorities are best set by local boards and local districts.”

Deputy Superintendent/Chief Financial Officer Ruthie Quinto explained the formula: “Simply put, the LCFF directs additional resources to districts with high concentrations of poverty and English learners. The governor’s formula supports our mission of producing career ready graduates.”

More than 80% of students in Fresno Unified live in poverty. The district serves more than 72,000 students and is the fourth largest district in the state.

SUPT’S MESSAGE

Continued from page 3

numerous preschool spaces available throughout the city. The diligent work of our Board of Education has made it possible for us to expand our preschool program and we are working to ensure that more parents are aware of this. Many of the spaces are available with income requirements, but many are available without income requirements. It’s important that interested parents contact the elementary school in their community to find out what is available to them. It takes very little time for requests to be processed, making it still possible for students to begin participating before this school year ends.

We know that preschool participation makes a tremendous difference in the academic well-being of students and far too many of our students begin the kindergarten year woefully unprepared so we have a greater responsibility to begin working together. It’s important that we set a good example for our youth, because as any parent well knows, they conduct themselves and they respond to us. Let’s do all that we can to help change this. Let’s start now.

Thank you for being valuable members of the Fresno Unified community and thank you for taking an interest in the well-being of this district. We can only truly make a difference in this city by working together. It’s important that we set a good example for our youth, because as any parent well knows, they pay very close attention to how adults conduct themselves and they respond in-kind. Have a great rest of the school year.

PRESCHOOL

Continued from page 1

A growing body of research has shown a direct connection between student academic achievement and participation in preschool programs. Fresno Unified students are making tremendous academic improvement. The District’s graduation rate is up and fewer students are making the decision to drop out. However, one of the greatest factors in sustained, future improvement is ensuring that every eligible child participates in a high-quality preschool program.

There is no deadline for admissions, but participating children must have turned 4 years old by November 2 and parents must meet certain income requirements. Families should contact Fresno Unified’s Early Learning Office at 457-3682 for more information.

Baird Dad’s Day

Fifth-grader Jordyne Puentes enjoys time with her father, Aaron Hall, at Baird Middle School’s Distinguished Dad’s Day Feb. 27.

Students Sharpen Technology Skills

From left to right, Computech students Micah Lawrence, Ryan Schlotthauer, Patrick Lewis and Kellen O’Rourke work together at the Tournament of Technology on March 16.
Employee Spotlight

Five top winners were selected from a stellar field of 80 finalists for this year’s Excellence in Education awards. They are mobile unit electrician Gale Kent (classified), Lane Elementary School teacher Daniel Gomez (elementary teacher), Tenaya Middle School teacher Jodi Saldivar (middle school teacher), Hoover High School teacher Sebastian Benavidez (high school teacher) and Wawona Middle School counselor Kimberly Lewis (administrator). Learn more about these outstanding employees through the Q and A’s below.

Electrician Strives to Spark Students’ Interest in School, How Things Work

Name: Gale Kent
Job: electrician/mobile maintenance

Years with the district: 13
Best advice you ever got: From my father -- Love your wife.

I know I am successful in my job when: All electrical is working properly.

My favorite part of my job is: Sharing with staff and kids.

I like to learn about: Anything that ticks, clicks, moves or makes a sound I like to find out how it works.

First job: Fresno Bee carrier delivering 175 papers daily and 324 on Sunday.

Most people don’t know that I: Am a huge Tar Heels fan.

Dream vacation: A train trip across the United States, spending July 4 in Washington D.C.

Lane Teacher Loves Teaching and the Tar Heels

Name: Daniel Gomez
School: Lane Elementary School
Grade: Fifth
Years as a teacher: Nine

Favorite teacher tip: Before you can teach, you must reach. When you teach a student to read and write, you give them an opportunity to succeed academically. When you inspire a child to believe in themselves, that is when we change the world.

I know I am successful with a student when: They believe that they can accomplish anything.

My favorite lesson to teach is: Anything that applies to the real world. The most rewarding lessons are the ones where a child learns to be a positive contributor to their community.

I like to learn about: My students’ interests and dreams.

First job: Wendy’s.

It really frustrates me when: I look into the eyes of some students and I see they are empty and the student seems lost.

If I couldn’t be an electrician I would: Be an inventor.

In my down time I like to: Go to Grizzlies baseball games with my sons, sing songs with my daughter, and go shopping with my wife… anything with my family.

It really frustrates me when: I hear people say “You can’t save them all.” My response is always, “Why can’t we?”

If I couldn’t be a teacher I would: Go crazy! Seriously, I’d probably be a sports journalist or a community organizer.

Dream vacation: North Carolina (I’m a huge Tar Heels fan).

Autism Inclusion Teacher Prepares Students for Life Beyond the Classroom

Name: Jodi Saldivar
School: Tenaya Middle School

Grades: 7th/8th Autism Inclusion
Years as a teacher: 2 years

Favorite teacher tip: Hold an unwavering belief that your students will be successful and communicate that belief to them.

I know I am successful with a student when: Their growth and learning moves beyond my classroom and positively affects them in other areas of their lives.

My favorite lesson to teach is: Autism Awareness. Throughout this lesson we explore the characteristics of the disability and we discuss the strengths that individuals with autism possess.

I like to learn about: Child development and anything related to psychology.

First job: Camp counselor for the YMCA.

Most people don’t know that I: Was a private investigator for several years in my early twenties.

In my down time I like to: Attend my children’s sporting events. I am their biggest fan!

It really frustrates me when: Others do not see the potential in my students or my children.

If I couldn’t be a teacher I would: Make documentary films about fascinating and amazing people.

Dream vacation: I would love to travel to Hawaii. My dream itinerary: Swim with dolphins, zip line, bike ride, relax on the beach, and attend a luau.

Hoover High English Teacher Strives to Encourage Students

Name: Sebastian Benavidez
School: Hoover High School
Grade: English II
Years as a teacher: 10

Favorite teacher tip: Try to remember we were all once, and still may be, students who look to our teachers for enlightenment and encouragement.

I know I am successful with a student when: My student’s...
My favorite lesson to teach is: On theme. I enjoy the discussions my classes have concerning the life lessons they learn as a result of reading various works of literature.

I like to learn about: The diverse cultural traditions of my students.

First job: I was a shop custodian for Valley Air Conditioning and Repair.

Most people don’t know that I: Am extremely superstitious. Every day I write the date on my whiteboard, except on the 13th of each month.

In my down time I like to: Travel with my wife, Aida.

It really frustrates me when: When it comes to teaching, I don’t get frustrated. I enjoy my job, and I see the challenges of my job as another opportunity to teach.

If I couldn’t be a teacher I would: Retire, because I can’t see myself in any other profession.

Dream vacation: New York for a month, with tickets to Broadway shows and a hotel with a Niagara Falls view.

Counselor Perseveres Through Tough Childhood

Name: Kimberly Lewis
School: Wawona Middle School
Position: Counselor
Years as an educator: 13
First job as an educator: Work placement specialist (Pace Program counselor for teen parents)

I know I am successful with a student when: When I see evidence of academic improvement, i.e. grades as well as on-going positive change in academic behaviors.

I became a guidance counselor because: I love kids and helping students become successful college and career ready adults.

You did not have a storybook childhood. What were some of the challenges you went through? Having a parent who battled with chemical dependency taught me how to be streetwise, and I learned from these experiences. We moved around a lot; I attended several schools in the district. For a short period of time we were homeless and lived in a hotel or with other people.

What was school like for you at this time? I enjoyed going to school because of the teachers and school officials who took the time to connect with me. At the time I didn’t believe in myself and was very angry because of the way things were at home. School was a reprieve for me.

What happened your senior year? I let my anger I had from my unstable home life control me instead of me controlling my anger which lead to an altercation that resulted in negative consequence that changed my life forever. I will never know what it is like to walk across the stage as a high school graduate.

How did you get your life back on track? I learned from my mistakes. I believe my intrinsic motivation came from my life experiences and former educators who told me education can change my future outcome. I enrolled in Fresno City College and attained my AA degree. I transferred to California State University, Fresno, where I went on to attain a BA in Africana Studies, BS in Criminology, and separate master’s degrees in Counseling and Education Leadership and Administration.

Most people don’t know that I: I am from Fresno and I have faced many of the challenge students are facing in school today.

In my down time I like to: Spend time with my children; go to church; do community service; dance; read; listen to music.

It really frustrates me when: People are negative.

If I couldn’t be an educator I would: Be a politician who advocates for students’ educational needs.

Dream vacation: Hawaii, which I have planned for next summer.

Kaiser Permanente thrive

Kaiser Permanente’s mission is to provide high-quality, accessible health care services and to help promote health, prevent illness, and prolong the years of healthy life for our members, patients, and communities. Kaiser Permanente’s approach to preventive medicine is to focus on early detection, education, and treatment—before illness occurs. When illness happens, Kaiser Permanente offers members around-the-clock access to an eboundary® care team.* When you’re not well, your eboundary® care team* is there to help. Whether you’re dealing with a new illness, chronic condition, or recent surgery, your care team can help you stay on track with your preventive care and illness management. Kaiser Permanente offers a variety of tools and resources to help members and their families manage health and care. For more information, visit kp.org. Kaiser Permanente is not responsible for the content of this advertisement.
Winchell Classrooms Are Among Newest Completed Measure Q Projects

A new classroom building and new kindergarten building are completed at Winchell Elementary School, making it possible for the district to remove 10 portable buildings housing 14 classrooms from the campus, creating a new look for Winchell.

The $2.7 million classroom building was constructed with funds from the State Building Program leveraged with Measure Q funds. The $1.3 million kindergarten building was funded from Measure Q, the local school bond the Fresno community overwhelmingly approved in November 2010.

With the Measure Q projects completed or under construction, the district has already – or will be able to – eliminate approximately 140 portables.

“One of the primary goals of our Facilities Master Plan was to drastically reduce – by at least 70 percent – the number of portables on our campuses,” said Superintendent Michael Hanson. “We are steadily making progress on this goal. Replacing portable classrooms with permanent classrooms provides a far superior learning and teaching environment for our students and staff.”

Details of the two buildings at Winchell include:

- Kindergarten building: four classrooms in 5,707 square feet
- High tech features: Smartboards and wall mount short-throw projectors, wireless connectivity, and energy-saving lighting control system
- Extensive use of windows and high ceilings to maximize use of daylight
- Lower windows in the kindergarten classes to maximize sunlight for the smaller students
- Reading nooks in each kindergarten classroom
- Energy management system (EMS) to control lighting and heating and cooling systems and maximize energy efficiency
- Central study group space in the larger classroom building
- Increased open green space for the campus

The Winchell projects are among more than $100 million in Measure Q projects underway or completed 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 Measure Q 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 compliment 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
- Design of classroom buildings at Bullard High School to replace portable classrooms
- Modernization of Hamilton K-8 School
- Classroom building at Hoover High School
- Classroom buildings at Aynesworth, Easterby and Centennial elementary schools to replace portables
- Planning for a new classroom building and locker room remodel for McLane High School

In addition to Winchell, completed Measure Q projects include Hoover baseball and softball fields; classroom buildings at Mayfair, Rowell and Wilson elementary schools and Roosevelt and Edison high schools; upgrades throughout the district including heating/air conditioning, irrigation, play courts, concrete walkways and security enhancements; and a remodel/upgrade to the Roosevelt girls locker room.

School Attendance Boundaries Set to Change

The Fresno Unified Board of Education’s unanimous decision to change the district’s feeder progression and/or school attendance boundaries could mean changes for where your child attends school.

The changes go into effect for the 2013-2014 school year and will affect a number of students. In late January, the district hosted a series of community meetings to offer parents and the community an opportunity to hear and discuss the plan prior to the vote.

The changes are consistent with the Facilities Master Plan adopted by the Board in 2009, reflecting the second of three phases to achieve the objective of clear and consistent feeder progression in every high school region. Aligning student progression from elementary through middle school to high school allows improved alignment of academic, arts and athletic programs; promotes continuity of learning communities; and strengthens neighborhood cohesion and community spirit.

The feeder progression and boundary changes primarily affects the McLane, Roosevelt and Sunnyside high school areas, with some changes also in the Edison, Fresno and Hoover high school areas. Letters were sent home with maps that show the new boundaries, but they can also be found on the Fresno Unified website, www.fresnounified.org, under the “Quick Links” section.
T2T Program Helps Recruit Diverse, Effective Teachers

Fresno Unified is in its fourth year implementing an exciting program to increase the diversity of highly effective teachers in low-performing schools through a non-traditional approach.

Transition to Teaching, or T2T, is a federally funded program that recruits paraprofessionals, recent college graduates and second-career participants and provides the necessary training to support excellence.

Over the past three years, Fresno Unified has placed 36 teachers from the T2T program into classrooms, with 35.4% of Hispanic ethnicity, 28.3% Caucasian, 23.3% African American, 11.1% Asian and 2.0% other. Fourteen of the 36 T2T teachers were previously paraprofessionals or classified employees in Fresno Unified.

“Through this program, we have been able to attract outstanding employees from diverse backgrounds – who know and love our district and students – to join our corps of teachers and really make a difference in the classroom,” said Kim Mecum, associate superintendent for Human Resources and Labor Relations.

The program will begin recruitment for cohort 5 this summer and is also recruiting teachers interested in mentoring T2T participants. For more information, go to www.fresnounified.org/dept/hr.

T2T attracts diverse, high-quality candidates by first and foremost providing professional learning that is directly connected with the realities of teaching in a classroom. In addition, the program helps participants prepare for pre-credential tests and provides academic advising and mentoring.

Highlights of the program include:

• Participants receive a $5,000 stipend to assist with tuition, books, testing fees and other expenses and mentors receive a stipend.
• Participants attend Saturday Seminars focused on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and creating teacher-leaders in classrooms, and have the opportunity to observe teachers using best practices.
• Through a partnership with the Extended Learning Department, T2T participants who have passed the necessary exams teach in the district’s Extended Learning summer school program and receive professional learning, observation, and feedback.

The program has vital partnerships Fresno Unified has developed with California State University, Fresno, the Teacher Recruitment Center at Fresno State, Tulare County Office of Education, Fresno Pacific University and Fresno City College.

Chavez’s Legacy Lives On

Hundreds gathered March 22 for the annual Day of Service and Learning in honor of Cesar E. Chavez, beginning with a program at the Saroyan Theatre and followed by a march to the Cesar Chavez Adult Education Center with a garlanding ceremony.

This inspirational event not only annually commemorates the service of Cesar Chavez, but ensures that his accomplishments and dedication to others continues to inspire students and community members despite the passage of time since Chavez’s death on April 23, 1993.

Chavez founded the United Farm Workers union in 1962 and was instrumental in improving working conditions for farm laborers and bringing national attention to the problems of farm workers. He was an advocate of education and a life-long learner.

“Since we first held this program in 2001, it has been a wonderful way to honor the life and legacy of Cesar E. Chavez,” said Sally Fowler, principal of the adult school.

The event, organized by Fresno Adult School and El Concilio de Fresno, featured an essay contest for students and student performers.

www.FresnoUnified.org
2013 Excellence in Education Finalists

Eighty finalists were honored at Fresno Unified School District’s annual Excellence in Education dinner and awards ceremony, this year held March 5. The finalists, nominated by their peers for their exemplary performance and dedication to students, were recognized in three categories: classified, teachers and administrators, with teachers selected for elementary, middle school and high school.

### CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

- **Merida Diaz-Silva**
  - Adelanto Elementary School

- **Gail Evans**
  - Bakman Elementary School

- **Rosalinda Hernandez**
  - Bakman Elementary School

- **Conrad Gonzales**
  - Balboa High School

- **Eric Ovalle**
  - Cesar Chavez Adult School

- **Linda Tvo**
  - Del Mar Elementary School

- **Cecilia Aguayo**
  - Easterly Elementary School

- **Georgina Young**
  - Easterly Elementary School

- **Connie Samaniego**
  - Ewing Elementary School

- **Sammy Hasson**
  - Figarden Elementary School

- **Lucie Long**
  - Greenberg Elementary School

- **Rachel Andrade**
  - Homan Elementary School

- **Michael Dyangko**
  - Homan Elementary School

- **Grace Ornelas**
  - Homan Elementary School

- **Levi Alonzo**
  - Maintenance & Operations

- **Jeff Scharnick**
  - Maintenance & Operations

- **Gale Kent**
  - Mobile Maintenance

- **Danielle Sandoval**
  - Olmos Elementary School

- **Barbara Stewart**
  - Purchasing

- **Israel Delgado**
  - Robinson Elementary School

- **Gary Moore**
  - Safety & Security

- **Rose Muniz**
  - Sequoia Middle School

- **Pam Chester**
  - Special Education

- **Pao Xiong**
  - Tehapi Middle School

- **Maribel Avalos**
  - Tenaya Middle School

- **Elissa Millar**
  - Vang Pao Elementary School

- **Mario Villarama**
  - Wilson Elementary School

- **Margaret Ketner**
  - Wolters Elementary School

- **Dominique Avila**
  - Duncan Polytechnical High School

- **MaryJo Meader**
  - Duncan Polytechnical High School

- **Anna Magana**
  - Ewing Elementary School

- **Lisa Markus**
  - Greenberg Elementary School

- **Anna Zamora**
  - Greenberg Elementary School

- **Janis Young**
  - Heaton Elementary School

- **Jolene Zamudio**
  - Heaton Elementary School

- **Sherry Champ**
  - Homan Elementary School

- **Micaela Garcia**
  - Homan Elementary School

- **Sebastian Benavidez III**
  - Hoover High School

- **Leslie Loewen**
  - Hoover High School

- **Daniel Gomez**
  - Lane Elementary School
2013 Excellence in Education Finalists

The five top winners* were mobile unit electrician Gale Kent (classified), Lane Elementary School teacher Daniel Gomez, Tenaya Middle School teacher Jodi Saldivar, Hoover High School teacher Sebastian Benavidez and Wawona Middle School counselor Kimberly Lewis (administrator). Kent and Lewis as the classified and administrative winners moved on to the county Educator of the Year competition, as well as teacher Daniel Gomez.
Keeping Allergies in Check

Get ready for the itchy, watery eyes and keep a box of tissue handy. Allergy season is coming.

During the spring, trees and grasses stir to life in the Valley, releasing the pollens that can trigger allergies. Watery eyes, runny noses, sneezing and coughing are just some of the common symptoms of seasonal allergies—and children, in particular, often have a difficult time dealing with the effects of allergies.

We are not exactly sure why some children have allergies and others don’t. We know that genetics have some part, and that if parents have allergies, there is a greater tendency for their children to inherit them.

Allergies stem from the body’s immune system trying to protect against an attack from a microscopic antigen, such as pollen, which it recognizes as foreign to the body. The immune system sees these tiny foreign pollen proteins, and makes antibodies to repel them. When these pollen antigens come in contact with the antibodies, our bodies try to remove those invaders by washing them away with tears, or nasal mucus or by “sneezing and coughing” them away.

So how do you know the difference between allergies and a common cold? Typically, colds do not last longer than a week to 10 days. Allergies can last much longer. If your child is battling a perpetual runny nose for weeks on end, chances are it’s due to allergies. Also, allergies usually happen around the same time every year, with spring being most common because trees and grasses are pollinating, sending millions of tiny pollens into the air.

What can you do to ease the symptoms? The first line of defense with allergies is to avoid those things that trigger the allergies. That is more easily said than done because children enjoy being outdoors, but limiting outdoor play on windy days helps them avoid the worst conditions for pollen circulation.

Treating the symptoms early is important, and one way to do that is by using appropriate over-the-counter medications. Some parents are concerned that giving children an antihistamine medication can cause drowsiness, especially during school. But the newer classes of antihistamines, referred to as “less-sedating” antihistamines, have a lower chance of causing drowsiness, and they are generally safe to give to children during the day. As with all medications, individuals respond differently, and so it is best to introduce any new medication, prescription or over-the-counter, to children while they are home, and the medication’s effects can be observed.

Prescription nasal sprays are another good option. Nasal sprays have a very low dose of medication that mostly stays on the inside surface of the nose, and is not absorbed into the system. This is enough to control the allergy reaction in the nose, which can relieve most sniffles and tearing eyes. Taking an over-the-counter antihistamine medication and using a prescription nasal spray can be a good course of treatment for children during allergy season.

If over-the-counter medications don’t help your child, you should see a doctor. If it appears that allergies are starting to affect your child’s breathing, then asthma could become a concern, and your child should be evaluated by a physician.

So, we have now treated the symptoms. But what about the cause? Allergies can last much longer. If your child is battling a perpetual runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing and coughing are just some of the common symptoms of perennial allergies. Treating the symptoms early is important, and one way to do that is by using appropriate over-the-counter medications. Some parents are concerned that giving children an antihistamine medication can cause drowsiness, especially during school. But the newer classes of antihistamines, referred to as “less-sedating” antihistamines, have a lower chance of causing drowsiness, and they are generally safe to give to children during the day. As with all medications, individuals respond differently, and so it is best to introduce any new medication, prescription or over-the-counter, to children while they are home, and the medication’s effects can be observed.

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If over-the-counter medications don’t help your child, you should see a doctor. If it appears that allergies are starting to affect your child’s breathing, then asthma could become a concern, and your child should be evaluated by a physician.

Having healthy, active children is a top priority for us all and we don’t want to let allergies slow them down. Watch for symptoms in your children and track when they occur. Try an over-the-counter antihistamine or see your doctor to get a prescription nasal spray to provide relief. For more information about colds and allergies—and other free online resources—please go to kp.org/fresno.

Roosevelt High Lands Bass Fishing Club

The students practice tying knots in Spencer’s classroom and cast into the pool and on the lawn, throwing to targets. The club has hosted speakers from local bass clubs who share their knowledge and demonstrate technique.

Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 to compete and are expected to increase their GPA as the year progresses. One freshman club member began with a .83 GPA and is on track to achieve a 3.0 GPA by the end of the third quarter.

The students are also required to perform community service, recently completing more than 250 hours of community service as a club. The club has adopted two neighbor “pocket parks” to help maintain, working every Thursday on one of them. Club members are also assisting with Tree Fresno and Shinzen Japanese Garden projects and will help with Kids’ Fishing Day at Hensley Lake Saturday, April 27 and with a Wounded Warriors Fishing Day hosted by Fresno Bass Club Saturday, May 4.

Clovis Unified students were invited after a local bass club member inquired about including his grandson. Spencer said it’s been beneficial for the Roosevelt students to expand friendships.

“I wanted to give students the opportunity to do something they would not otherwise be able to, but structure it in a way that benefits their academics, character, and community,” Spencer said.

For more information, check out the club’s Face Book page: Roosevelt High School Bass Fishing Club.

Terronez Middle School Represents the Central Valley

Terronez Middle School’s concert band performs at Fresno State’s Invitational Wind Festival. Terronez represented the valley as one of only four middle school bands invited to this prestigious event.
Former Fresno State Star Goes One-on-One With Sequoia Students

Carl Ray Harris, a campus assistant and former pro basketball player, greets students at Sequoia Middle School, where he has established a reputation for encouraging students and improving the campus culture.

Carl Ray Harris, a former all-conference guard at Fresno State who played professional basketball in Europe for a decade, clearly brings a wealth of knowledge as an assistant coach for Sequoia Middle School’s girls basketball team. But he’s had the most impact through his work for the past three years as a campus assistant at Sequoia.

Harris makes a point of greeting all 950 students as they arrive on the southeast Fresno campus every day and has through the years made a significant difference in the lives of many students by listening to them and offering guidance. Harris starred for the Fresno State Bulldogs from 1989-1994, and still holds the single-season scoring records – 694 points in 1994.

“I speak to them all. I make them speak back,” said Harris, one of about 90 campus assistants throughout the district who help keep middle and high schools secure and safe. “I listen to them. That’s my main thing. A lot of people don’t like to listen to kids. But they have opinions too.”

Sequoia Principal Matt Ward praised Harris’ work ethic and dedication to the safety and academic achievement of students at Sequoia.

“Carl cares about the students, sees their potential, and works to help students rise to that potential,” Ward said.

Through his rapport with students, Harris is adept at getting to the bottom of rumors and rumblings among students to head off fights and confrontations. Through efforts by the entire Sequoia team, suspensions for fighting and related incidents have decreased 26.5% over the past two years, Ward said.

Ward said the culture of the campus has changed significantly over the years because of a variety of programs designed to provide a better learning and teaching environment. For example, for the past two years the school has paired academically struggling students with leadership students at Roosevelt High School for peer counseling sessions. The initiative has resulted in noticeably positive results.

Between the first semester of 2010-11 and the first semester of 2012-13, the number of students with a GPA below 2.0 has decreased by 7.5% (26.1% to 18.6%). In the same time period, the number of students with at least one “D” or “F” has decreased 14.5% (58.4% to 43.9%).

Other programs include the Olweus bullying prevention program; peer mediation; Young Men’s Alliance; and intramurals, game room activities, clubs and other activities at lunch. In addition, Ward said that about half of the school’s students are involved in either the school’s athletic program or technology program: “These are huge opportunities for many of our students to be positively connected.”

Harris praised Ward and the staff for caring deeply about the students and said he thoroughly enjoys coming to work every day as a campus assistant and assistant coach. Harris said that although he was never in a gang, he grew up in a tough neighborhood heavily influenced by gangs. He readily shares his experiences to try to help students steer clear of trouble. Harris, 42, grew up in west Fresno, attending Kirk Elementary School, West Fresno Middle School and Washington Union High School.

“I tell them, what’s on the streets is really nothing, and I tell them they need to get an education,” Harris said.

Harris’ first connection with helping students in Fresno Unified was volunteering at Carver Academy when he retired from professional basketball. The principal at the time, the late Michael Ribera, recognized Harris’ natural ability to connect with and influence students, which led to his paid campus assistant position.

“It is a very mindful of the huge importance of his job and how he contributes to a safe and academically focused campus,” Ward said. “The students respect and look up to him, so he often is able to get through to a troubled student when others have failed.”

Learn2Earn is located at Manchester Center, on the second floor, suite 225. We have intake sessions for the Learn2Earn program every Friday. If you are interested in exploring career opportunities, or need information about GED classes that are available, scholarships for testing, or just need to speak with our advisers about your own goals, please attend one of our intake sessions. It is a great opportunity to take the first step in completing your education. Many Learn2Earn students continue to move on to secondary education programs like Fresno City College, Fresno State, Institute of Technology and Heald Colleges.

Many participants have said that the individual attention they received made a difference to them and was the encouragement and support they needed to get started on an education plan. We are so proud of our Learn2Earn team, and we look forward to continued success for our participants.

If you are interested in helping Learn2Earn with outreach in the community, or would like a presentation at your neighborhood center, local church, or association, please contact Linda Davidson-Gafford at 559-230-4084.

If you are interested in getting started with Learn2Earn today please stop by one of our intake sessions or submit an interest form at www.learn2earnfresno.org and meet with an Advisor today.
FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ACADEMIC CALENDAR

SCHOOL YEAR 2013-2014


JULY, 2013


HOLIDAYS FOR CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL


PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONTH - APRIL, 2014

CA DAY OF THE TEACHER - MAY 14, 2014

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE WEEK - MAY 19-25, 2014

Are you pregnant or have children under 5?
Limited income? You may qualify for WIC!

www.FresnoEOC.org/WIC

No appointments or referrals necessary!
Migrants welcome to apply

Six locations to serve you
Downtown Fulton Mall
Shields & First
Ashlan
6215 N. Fresno St., Suite 101 - (559) 439-1245

Women, infants, and children
Families grow healthy with WIC

Our no-cost services include:
• Healthy foods
• Nutrition information
• Breastfeeding support
• Referrals to other health and social services

(559) 263-1150

Mark W. Stagis, D.D.S.
Nathan E. Vick, D.D.S.
Christopher R. Gates, D.M.D.

• Delta Dental PPO providers
• Text message & email appointment reminders
• CEREC - technology to do crowns in a single appointment
• Invisalign - straight teeth without braces
• Kid friendly office
• Friendly patient financing
Data Shows Parent University Improves Achievement

Data indicates that the district’s Parent University is helping boost student achievement.

In comparing student scores on the California Standards Tests (CST) between Fresno Unified students and a pilot group of students whose parents attended the Parent University Baseline Module Series classes, the Parent University students had a larger increase in the percentage of students proficient or advanced on the CST over three years.

The district examined the scores of the students in the year prior to their parents’ Parent University participation and the subsequent two years. Those scores were compared with Fresno Unified students’ scores as a whole for the same years.

• On the English language arts CST, 39% of Parent University pilot students scored proficient or advanced on the spring 2012 tests, a 6% gain over three years, while 42% of Fresno Unified students as a whole were proficient or advanced in 2012, a 3% gain over three years.

• On the math CST, 46% of Parent University students were proficient or advanced on the spring 2012 tests, a 5% gain over three years, while 43% of Fresno Unified students as a whole were proficient or advanced in 2012, for a 3% gain.

Parent University, launched in the fall of 2010, provides free classes to help parents better understand public education, how Fresno Unified operates and what it offers and how to be involved, supportive parents. Courses are available to Fresno Unified parents, guardians, and families, and are taught in English, Spanish and Hmong. A full listing is available at www.fresnounified.org/dept/parentuniversity. The Parent University team can be contacted at Parent.University@fresnounified.org or by calling (559)457-6006.

FREE SCIENCE CAMP

THE DYNAMIC EARTH — EARTH SCIENCE EXPLORATORIUM!

Join us: June 17th-21st, 2013 – 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
A second session may be added July 8-12, 2013

Discover how Dynamic Earth Processes such as plate tectonics operating over time have shaped our planet and have changed California.

Explore Earth’s place in the Universe – What has the Mars Curiosity Rover found in comparison to what we find here on Earth?

As part of your learning experience we will be visiting Boyden Cavern and Kings Canyon National Park with the possible addition of other nearby locations!

Space is limited, registration due May 28, 2013
Accepting Jr. High and High School students

Program held on California State University, Fresno Campus (Cedar/Glaslow), College of Science and Mathematics
For more information about the program or to register, please visit us online at Cessences.METRO or contact Ronna Crones at rcrones@csufresno.edu or 278-6076.
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

Sleep apnea is a deadly disease and is associated with most other medical problems including daytime tiredness, fatigue, stroke, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, sexual dysfunction and cancer.

Approved by the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association and the FDA.

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