Convocation Unites Employees Under One Roof

For the first time in more than a decade, Fresno Unified employees from all sites and departments gathered in one location to officially launch the new academic year with a rally and inspirational remarks from several speakers.

Convocation 2013, held at the Save Mart Center on August 14, featured keynote speaker Dr. Rudy Crew, the new president at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, N.Y. and the former chief education officer for the state of Oregon. Crew offered encouraging and insightful remarks to Fresno Unified employees, urging them to provide love and structure to the children of Fresno Unified. In noting the obstacles that staff will face, he told the audience:

Spaces Still Available in Preschool

The district continues to enroll students in its expanded preschool program and is urging parents to take advantage of this opportunity for their children.

A large body of research connects student achievement with participation in preschool, and Fresno Unified’s Board of Education has placed a high priority on providing more students with the chance to attend a high-quality pre-kindergarten. The district offers a caring, structured program to launch students on their way to success in kindergarten and beyond.

With the infusion of Proposition 30 funds, the district has added 18 preschool teachers this year to bring the total number to 78. The district is offering slots for 2,873 students in 150 classes at 59 sites. As it continues to get the word out to parents about preschool, students are still being accepted at specific sites.

Students are still being accepted at specific sites. For information on enrolling in preschool, call 457-3803 or go to the Early Learning office at 2348 Mariposa St. Enrollment cannot be done at school sites.

Schools with preschool openings: Addams, Anthony, Birney, Burroughs, Calwa, Centennial, Columbia, Del Mar, Fremont, Hamilton, Homan, Jefferson, Kirk, Mayfair, Olmos, Pyle, Roeding, Rowell, Slater,
District Designates Money to Help Teachers

The Fresno Unified Board of Education last month unanimously approved the one-time spending of $1.5 million specifically targeted to provide support to the classroom efforts of the district’s 72,000 teachers.

In Fresno – the second-poorest city in America – many students entered the first day of school this year without a backpack or even a pencil in hand. The sad reality is that without the support of teachers reaching into their own pockets, many of these students would not have the necessary tools needed to maximize their educational school day.

To that end, $800,000 of the $1.5 million was earmarked specifically for additional teacher supplies – about $250 per teacher.

The totality of the funds will help purchase:
- Additional instructional supplies
- Support students in career technical education
- Supplies for preschool and transitional kindergarten
- Additional athletic equipment

The board’s decision to provide these additional funds demonstrates its support and commitment towards students and teachers, particularly as teachers begin the arduous task of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The money approved for teacher supplies is in addition to funds allocated prior to the start of the 2013-14 school year.
SUPERINTENDENT’S Message

(See Pg. 15 for Superintendent’s Message in Spanish and Hmong)

As we move into the second month of the 2013/2014 school year, I can say – without hesitation – that this school year’s opening has been the best we have experienced in nine years.

Both teachers and students were eager to get back into the classroom to continue learning and growing. As I traveled from campus to campus during the first few days of school, one thing was constant – everyone was eager and excited to be back. Part of that excitement comes from our commitment to creating better learning environments. Renovations continue at many of our schools, but we have also completed major projects at Bullard, Edison, Fresno, Hoover and Roosevelt to name a few. I’m extremely excited about the progress that has been made so far. It is good for our youth, our great teaching staff and the community.

I’m also convinced that this year’s great school opening was a direct result of the tremendous amount of energy and momentum that was generated by district employees, staff and teachers long before the first day of school. This year’s Convocation was a major reason for the burst of energy and excitement everyone took into their classrooms, and we are going to build on that momentum over the course of the year.

During Convocation, I challenged every Fresno Unified teacher to maintain high expectations not only for all of their students, but also for themselves. I believe that as high expectations become the norm for every Fresno Unified student, higher grades and other levels of student achievement will also become the norm.

Ultimately, if our young people are better prepared when they graduate from high school, then chances are they will be better prepared for all aspects of adulthood. The more students we set on a trajectory of success, the more Fresno will thrive. I recently had a meeting with Chancellor Blue of State Center Community College District and other college presidents, and we all believe in the same work. It is exciting!

Over the course of a lifetime, a college graduate will earn approximately $1 million more than a high school dropout. Pursuing a specific plan for molding Fresno Unified’s youth into positive contributors to society as college and career-ready graduates is an investment that we’re making in this community.

One of those necessary investments

See SUPT’S MESSAGE, Pg. 9
The State of Education will offer an informative overview of the district, where students are making great strides academically with a still-rising graduation rate and are receiving national attention for achievements even as district families struggle with poverty among the severest in the nation.

The 2012 event sold out, with supporters raising more than $35,000 for the scholarship fund. The luncheon is scheduled from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. More information is available at www.fresnounified.org or (559) 457-3733.

During the summer, thousands of existing computers were prepped for the start of school along with 3,200 new computers and 200 printers to classrooms across the district. Of course there were a few bumps in the road, such as when a construction crew accidentally dug up a large pipe at a school – the week before school started – cutting 100 phone lines and the fiber optic line for that school’s connection to the Internet.

Despite the challenges, the effort expended during the summer paid off as Information Technology teams worked shoulder-to-shoulder with other teams from across the district to make sure the start of the school year was a smooth one.

A sweeping transformational change in curriculum called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is gradually taking shape in every corner of Fresno Unified School District.

The new standards are raising the bar on academic success from students as early as kindergarten through 12th grade with the single focus of raising achievement and ensuring that all students are ready for college and career. The standards are a set of academic goals that were developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Fresno Unified School District officially implemented CCSS one year early to provide staff with the adequate amount of time needed for professional development and time in the classroom with skilled leaders.

Fresno Unified School District is using a systemic process to address the standards to ensure each teacher is trained successfully. Over the next seven months, more than 3,200 teachers and principals will engage in three distinct phases of English language arts (ELA) literacy and mathematics training. These trainings are strategic in nature, helping to create a sustainable professional model of success.

The Board of Education and Superintendent Michael Hanson have committed to providing more than 80 hours of interactive teacher training in district classrooms this year alone. Whether through grade specific training or more one-on-one opportunities with CCSS coaches, educators are taking clear and distinctive strides toward adopting the state standards and shifting how they teach.

Instruction will shift away from daily lecture series to more interactive, engaging, fact-finding conversations with students that support the Common Core curriculum. Teachers will have time and space to collaborate with colleagues, strategically plan lessons, and most importantly work more directly with students to provide high quality instruction.
Edison High Building Among World’s Best

Edison High School has attracted a new honor, this time for the dramatic academic building completed on campus last spring.

The 42,647-square-foot classroom and lab building is ranked 18th in the world among a list of 30 most impressive modern high school buildings compiled by BestEducationDegrees.com. The two-story building was built with funds from Measure Q, Fresno Unified School District’s $280 million local school bond passed by voters in November 2010.

“We are thrilled with not only the look of our new academic building, but the new technology, comfort and high-functioning space it offers our students and staff,” said Principal Lindsay Sanders. “It makes a bold statement for the school, the neighborhood and our district. This global recognition confirms that.”

The building was designed by Darden Architects and built by Turner Construction. It houses 20 standard classrooms, a special education classroom, four career technical education labs, a computer lab and presentation space with theater seating for 100. With the completion of the new building, the school was able to remove 16 portable classrooms and eight outdated labs.

Edison’s black and yellow school colors are used on the exterior and interior and the design establishes a new architectural vernacular for the campus and a dramatic visual identity that Edison High did not have before.

With its energy-efficient design, it has been approved as a “high performing” building. Features include solar panels producing 540,156 kilowatt hours annually, a two-story atrium with skylight and free-flowing planter walls outside the building for outdoor gathering and seating.

BestEducationDegrees.com noted in announcing the top building designs that “studies have found that students perform better in math, reading and standardized tests in certain environments – particularly in learning spaces that feature outdoor views, an abundance of natural light, and greater mobility and movement.”

Students Across the District Pledge to Graduate

For the second year in a row, Fresno Unified launched the new school year with an “I Pledge” campaign focused on preparing students for successful futures.

Teachers across the district spent time during the first week of school – and continue to do so – encouraging students to look ahead to high school graduation and set goals to make sure they graduate on time and have opportunities for college and career. The “I Pledge” campaign includes stickers for all students highlighting their graduation year and urges students to sign a pledge card committing to graduate from high school.

McLane High School emphasized the “I Pledge” campaign on Aug. 23 with a school-wide assembly in the stadium featuring McLane seniors delivering speeches that showed their own personal commitment toward graduation. The event was designed to urge students to not only commit to staying at their high school for four years, but to pledge to graduate and attend college.

Fresno Unified Board Member Christopher De La Cerda showed his support by speaking to students and even throwing I Pledge T-shirts out to the crowd while Principal Scott Lamm dressed up in cap and gown. At lunch, students participated in a school-wide pledge by signing an I Pledge banner.

Students and staff also returned to school this year to the completion of dozens of new classrooms as part of the district’s Measure Q building program and an expanded preschool program to better prepare greater numbers of students for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Hoover High’s New Academy Honors Local Heroes

Firefighters from Station 11 at Fresno and Barstow showed a strong presence at Hoover High School as they helped the school kick off its new Public Service Academy. This year’s homecoming theme is “A Heroes Homecoming.” The student body will honor “everyday heroes” including armed forces, emergency responders, firefighters, and life guards. Hoover’s new Public Service Academy includes the career technical education pathways in criminal justice careers, fire science, and emergency response.
**EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT**

**Bus Driver Builds Relationships with Students**

Twyla Hunt has been a bus driver for the district for 13 years and currently has Phoenix Academy routes. She has an exemplary record and a knack for connecting with students, making sure they feel welcome first thing in the morning and sent off with a warm goodbye at their stop in the afternoon.

**What do you enjoy the most about being a bus driver?**

I love kids and I have always loved driving.

**What is the most challenging part of the job?**

The traffic.

**What part do bus drivers play in a student’s day?**

We are the first ones to greet the children in the morning. We have their trust that we will get them to and from school safely. We are the last ones to tell them to have a great evening and “see you tomorrow.”

**What’s the most unusual thing that ever happened to you on the job?**

I had a boy in high school six weeks before school got out that was in trouble. He was living with his mother’s church friends. He came to me and said he couldn’t take it there anymore so I asked him, “What are you going to do? You only have six weeks left to graduate from high school.” He told me he didn’t know. My heart sank so I told him he could come home with me and talk to my husband about living with us. He did come and live with us and graduated from high school. He is a grown man now and still part of our lives and has three children of his own and is doing well.

**If you couldn’t be a bus driver, what career would you choose?**

I would’ve liked to be a nurse helping people.

**What was your first job?**

At 16 years old I worked at Foster Freeze hamburger drive in.

**Name one thing most people don’t know about you:**

How very much my husband and family love me.

**On your down time, what do like to do?**

I love working around my house, seeing my grandchildren and riding my Harley Davidson.

**Star Baird Science Teacher is Galileo Fellow**

Teacher Ann Wimer, who has been making physical science come alive for students at Baird Middle School since 1997, is now receiving national recognition for her skills in the classroom. Wimer rose to the top during a highly competitive selection process and has been named a 2013 NASA Galileo Educator Fellow. She participated in an all-expenses paid professional learning conference at the Orlando Science Center in Florida Sept. 28-29.

**How long have you been a teacher and where have you taught?**

Over 20 years. In addition to Baird Middle School I’ve taught at Eaton Elementary and Wolters Elementary in Fresno Unified. I also taught for Tulare City Schools at Garden Elementary and Kohn Elementary.

**What’s your favorite aspect of teaching science?**

I enjoy showing my eighth grade students the extraordinary chemistry of ordinary things. I think they leave my class with greater appreciation of the world around them.

**What cracks you up about middle school students?**

I laugh at many of their off the wall comments and unique questions. They are funny when they try to get away with chewing gum in class.

**How did you come to apply for the NASA Galileo Educator Fellowship?**

A colleague sent me an email about the opportunity back in May. I applied that same day.

**How do you expect this training will enhance your teaching?**

It will be energizing to network with 17 other enthusiastic science teachers from around the country. The new NASA curriculum will be fun to try out with my students.

**If you couldn’t teach, what career would you choose?**

Environmental Law.

**What was your first job?**

I worked in a grape packing shed near Kerman. I counted boxes. I was about 10 years old.

**Name one thing most people don’t know about you.**

I am advanced scuba certified.

**What’s your dream vacation?**

I enjoy eco-travel. I’d like to travel in Namibia to see elephants and other wildlife.
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

New Principals Join Schools

Many students and families returned to campuses for the 2013-14 school year and were greeted by new principals. Eighteen schools in Fresno Unified have new principals this academic year due to retirements and other changes at sites.

Sandra Aguayo  
Winchell Elementary

Carol Badawi  
Kratt Elementary

Lisa Benavidez  
Williams Elementary

Beth Buettner  
Eaton Elementary

Carlos Castillo  
Wawona Middle

Ryan Duff  
Forkner Elementary

Lisa Harrington  
Tenaya Middle

Reba Joyner  
Thomas Elementary

Valerie Martinez  
Baird Middle

Edith Navarro  
Kings Canyon Middle

Andrae Pecina  
Cesar Chavez Adult School

Jesus Perez  
King Elementary

Felicia Quarles-Treadwell  
Gaston Middle

Bonifacio Sanchez  
Greenberg Elementary

Jeremy Shipman  
Terronez Middle

Stacey Swartout  
Balderas Elementary

Brett Taylor  
Duncan High

Cha Vang  
Burroughs Elementary
Middle School Redesign Underway
Students Will Have Opportunities for Electives

Fresno Unified has launched a middle school redesign model at 11 of its campuses that will provide students with a richer array of classes and more direct support from highly effective teachers.

The middle school redesign will change the traditional school schedule for more than 3,000 students and also provide teachers with additional opportunities for their individual professional development. Teachers will collaborate and plan together during a designated “common planning period” and during that same time students will receive additional personalized instruction focused on acceleration in literacy and math, as defined by Common Core State Standards.

A team of specialized teachers, who are part of each middle school’s teaching staff, will deliver the enhanced instruction. Students will also have the opportunity to take elective classes such as music, art, journalism, or a foreign language.

With support from the Board of Education and Superintendent Michael Hanson, the overall vision for the middle school redesign is to establish a culture of high expectations where every student has a network of highly effective teachers supporting them. The redesign aligns strategically with Common Core State Standards, and the district’s mission of preparing high school, college and career-ready graduates.

The middle schools to launch the initiative are Ahwahnee, Fort Miller, Kings Canyon, Scandinavian, Sequoia, Tehipite, Tenaya, Terronez, Tioga, Wawona and Yosemite.
Heroes on Parade at Bullard TALENT

Students at Bullard TALENT K-8 School hold a parade Sept. 20 honoring local heroes, the focus on the school’s community service projects this year. The goal is to provide students with exemplary role models and promote positive character traits. Each classroom participated in the parade and recognized as local heroes police officer Mikal Clement (K-9 handler), firefighter and Bullard TALENT parent Carlton Jones, nurse Robin Munoz from the Children’s Hospital Craycroft Cancer Unit, Dr. Phillipe Vanderschelden from CMI Radiology, Sgt. First Class Bill Smith from the Army National Guard and Hannah Johnson from the Ronald McDonald House.

Community Medical Providers welcomes

Charles Hung, MD
Board Certified Internal Medicine
Located at
CMP Fresno
Community Site
2335 E. Kashian Lane #270, Fresno

For an appointment: call (559) 445-1251

Open to New Patients

Wenjing Liu, MD, PhD
Family Practice
Located at
CMP Care Center
South Suite
1570 E. Herndon
Fresno

For an appointment: call (559) 437-7311

Now accepting new patients including children

Mary Sadlek, MD
Board Certified Family Practice
Located at the
CMP West Site
5715 N. West Ave #102, Fresno

Office Hours:
Monday—Friday
8:00am—5:00pm

For an appointment call:
559-438-0800

SUPT’S MESSAGE
Continued from page 3

in the community is our middle school redesign. Early in September, we officially launched our middle school redesign model at 11 middle school campuses. The middle schools are Ahwahnee, Fort Miller, Kings Canyon, Scandinavian, Tehipite, Tenaya, Terronez, Tioga, Wawona and Yosemite.

Our vision, with the generous support of the Board of Education, was to create schools with a culture of high expectations where every student has a network of highly effective teachers supporting them.

At these schools, we are raising student expectations and creating a pipeline for students to remain in school and on track to graduate. With the redesign, we have made significant changes to the school day schedule to provide students more opportunities to take an elective class, like music, art, or journalism, as well as give teachers more opportunities to collaborate and plan lessons aligned with the new Common Core State Standards.

On Sept. 11, Fresno Unified’s Board of Education continued to show its commitment to student success as they made yet another investment of approximately $1.5 million for students and teachers.

Of that $1.5 million, $500,000 will be targeted to career and technical education, supporting our mission to prepare career ready graduates. An additional $125,000 will help schools update athletic equipment to ensure our students safety while competing, and $100,000 will support our earliest learners by providing additional equipment and supplies for art and music classes.

Not only are we making major investments in our students in Fresno Unified, we are also investing in our hard-working, dedicated teaching staff. An investment of $800,000 will help teachers pay for classroom and instructional supplies, minimizing the cost that teachers incur when stocking their classrooms with learning supplies. Each teacher will soon receive approximately $250 more to purchase or replenish classroom and instructional supplies as we build lessons for the Common Core State Standards.

We are doing everything we can to make sure that our students achieve at the highest level. While we are asking students to invest in their own futures, we are also asking teachers to invest in their own development. We are fully committed to investing in making Fresno the best place it can be – and that starts with our community and our young people.
Measure Q Buildings Open at Fresno High and Hoover

Fresno High School’s new north building houses the library media center, counseling/career center and 10 classrooms.

Measure Q funds continue to transform the look of Fresno Unified, with striking new academic buildings completed at Hoover and Fresno high schools for students and staff returning to school, and a variety of projects ready throughout the district.

At Fresno High School, students and staff are enjoying full use of two new buildings at the front of the school. The south building houses administrative offices, new Student Senate chambers and 10 classrooms. The north building houses the library media center, counseling/career center and 10 classrooms. The buildings are designed to complement the classical architecture of historic Royce Hall.

Construction of an expansive plaza area is targeted for completion at the end of 2013.

At Hoover, a new academic building is in full use at the southwest corner of the campus, with students and staff enjoying 16 classrooms, four science labs and teacher collaboration space. The district will remove approximately 15 portables with the addition of the new building to make way for a new pool.

“This is just the start of extensive work we are looking forward to on our campus, but it’s a great start,” said Principal Lori Grace. “The academic building creates an outstanding place for students to learn and teachers to teach. And because it is at the front of our campus, it sends a highly visible message to our community about the great things going on at Hoover.”

In southwest Fresno, the Rutherford B. Gaston Sr. Middle School is well underway using Measure K and Measure Q funds. It will open in the fall of 2014, providing the first traditional middle school for the community since Irwin Junior High School closed in 1978 and the district began busing students to other middle schools.

A number of other projects are recently completed or underway throughout the district:

- Aynesworth Elementary School: classroom building to be completed this fall
- Baird Middle School: construction on gym expected to begin in early 2014; planning underway for a classroom building
- Bullard High School: planning underway for two classroom buildings, library/career center, administration building
- Centennial Elementary School: construction on gym expected to start in early 2014; planning underway for a classroom building
- Columbia Elementary School: planning underway for a new classroom building
- DeWolf and Design Science high schools: spring construction for classroom building and renovation of multipurpose building
- Easterby Elementary School: spring completion for classroom and kindergarten buildings
- Figarden Elementary School: planning underway for two classroom buildings
- Hamilton K-8: school-wide modernization to be completed this fall; parking reconfiguration
- Hoover High: former science classrooms remodel to accommodate special education classes; construction on a new pool is expected to start next spring
- King Elementary School: planning underway for new classroom building
- McLane High School: construction on a new classroom building expected to start in the coming months; upgrade/reconfiguration on locker rooms under way
- Robinson Elementary School: new kindergarten/preschool building is in design
- Roosevelt High School: old arts and technology buildings have been demolished to provide for a new spacious quad area; campus lighting and decorative fencing is also being installed
- Sequoia Middle School: Phase I of school-wide modernization is underway
- Turner Elementary School: planning underway for a new classroom building and office

Rutherford B. Gaston Sr. Middle School is taking shape and will open for the 2014-15 school year.
“There is no doubt in my mind that you have the capacity to do this work.” He also told employees: “You are an artist and this next year, take your brush and paint a picture every day.”

Speakers also included Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin and Dr. Joseph Castro, Fresno State’s new president, as well as Superintendent Michael Hanson. Hanson urged employees to focus on the work they do in “small spaces,” such as taking extra time after school with a student: “It’s in those small spaces where kids live that we make the big changes.”

Hanson also said: “I challenge every single one of you to keep the highest expectations and I promise you our students won’t disappoint you.”

The event also featured remarks from Hoover High School graduate Daniel Lee, a video created by last year’s student advisory board and a video highlighting recent Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund recipients with an opportunity for employees to donate to the scholarship fund. As of Sept. 20, the district had raised over $12,500 since the Convocation, with the high school regions battling among themselves to raise the money. To pledge, go to go.fresnou.org/pledge.

Last year, $52,000 in scholarships were awarded to Fresno Unified students and since the inception of the scholarships five years ago, nearly $100,000 has been awarded. The scholarships provide an avenue for the community and Fresno Unified employees to have a direct impact on the future of deserving Fresno Unified graduates.

Supporters of Convocation 2013 included the Educational Employees Credit Union, Delta Health Systems, Association of California School Administrators, McCormick Barstow LLP, Atkinson, Andelson Loya, Ruud & Romo, and Harris Construction.
Fire Up Your Feet and Thrive This School Year

By Jeff Collins  
Senior Vice President and Area Manager  
Kaiser Permanente Fresno

It’s the start of a new school year, a time of excitement for Fresno Unified families as their children return to the classroom eager to learn and grow. Although most of the focus is on making sure our children succeed academically in the coming year, we also need to make sure they remain healthy as well. Research shows healthy children have more academic successes because they have better attendance and fewer discipline problems, and as a result spend more time learning in the classroom.

Kaiser Permanente Fresno is committed to improving the total health of the communities we serve, and we are focused on making healthy choices easy, accessible and a part of everyday life in our schools.

That’s why we’ve launched a new initiative called Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools, which is aimed at creating a culture of health in the place where our children spend a good part of their day. Schools are a common focal point for just about every member of our community, and can serve as the hub for teaching wellness in our community.

The Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools website at kp.org/thravingschools offers free wellness resources that any school can use, along with links to health and wellness organizations and initiatives, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” campaign.

A key component of the Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools initiative is an interactive program called “Fire Up Your Feet,” which offers resources for schools that encourage students, parents, teachers and staff who want to engage in healthy activities throughout the day, and provides simple tools to track activity, earn awards and raise funds for their schools. Check it out at www.fireuyourfeet.org

Fire Up Your Feet is one of those programs that makes it easy for everyone to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Centered around the school day, the program provides age-appropriate resources to encourage children to engage in physical activity on their way to, from, and at school. Any school or PTA can take advantage of these free online resources.

All of these are valuable tools to use to help combat childhood obesity – an ongoing struggle for many in our community. According to recent data from the California Health Interview Survey, nearly 15% of children in Fresno County are overweight for their age. These statistics are troubling, but schools can help students establish lifelong healthy habits and behaviors. Nutritious school lunches, access to physical activities, and educating students about the importance of good health can leave a lasting impression.

Teachers and staff can make a difference in students’ lives by engaging in healthy behaviors themselves. School employees who are interested in their own health are more likely to promote healthy behaviors and practices, and by modeling these behaviors, they encourage students to duplicate them. And when parents model these behaviors at home – though nutritious meals and active family outings – they have an even more profound influence on their children living more healthy, active lives.

So as you embark on the new school year ahead, check out some of the resources available on the Thriving Schools and Fire Up Your Feet websites. There is plenty there for anyone interested in adopting and fostering a culture of good health at their school.

District Arts Takes Center Stage

The Fresno Community Arts Team has announced plans to greatly enhance arts education for Fresno Unified students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade as part of the Any Given Child initiative, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Focus on the arts team’s new goals and action plan on Sept. 11 coincided with National Arts in Education Week (Sept. 8-14). As part of arts-focused events, Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin visited Rowell and McCardle elementary schools.

The community-wide action plan highlights three goals:

- Increase professional learning opportunities in the arts for all stakeholders, focusing on integrating the arts with Common Core State Standards
- Create a systematic process to provide access to professional arts experiences for all students
- Address the identified systems-wide gaps to provide equity and access for all pre-K through eighth-grade students to receive a high-quality arts education in all disciplines

The announcement follows months of work by a community arts team in assessing current arts education and incorporating the Any Given Child model, which focuses on “ensuring the arts for any given child.” The goal is to create an affordable arts education program combining the existing resources of Fresno Unified, local arts groups and the Kennedy Center. Fresno Unified, the Fresno County Office of Education and the city of Fresno launched a collaboration with the Kennedy Center a year ago when Fresno was selected as the 10th city for the Any Given Child program.

Over the past year, the district has continued to expand its emphasis on arts, including a $1 million increased investment to the music program to broaden offerings for students in choral and instrumental music and purchase and repair equipment.

Students at Rowell Elementary School perform on the recorders as part of Any Given Child action plan events.

Mayor Ashley Swearengin gathers with students at Rowell Elementary School as part of activities to launch the new arts plan through the Any Given Child initiative.
**District Employees Aid Woman**

Grounds maintenance workers Jose Rodriguez and Charles Dailey were in transit from their scheduled work locations on Sept. 24 when they saw an individual breaking car windows and physically battering a woman. The workers intervened and detained the person until police arrived. Supervisor Derek Venedoff, who arrived to make sure the employees were not harmed, said police praised their efforts and described them as “heroes.”

**Fresno High Hosts Fall Lectures in New Building**

Fresno High School has launched a new lecture series highlighting a number of diverse topics of interest to the school as well as the larger community, and will host speakers in its brand-new administration building. All lectures will be held from 6-7 p.m. in the Senate Chambers. Spring lectures will be announced in November.

**Remaining fall lineup:**

*Thursday, Oct. 17:*
James Tyner, poet laureate of Fresno, “What is Poetry?” Tyner will speak about the value of poetry, the type of knowledge that comes only from a poet and the role and purpose of a poet laureate. He will also present a selection of his works.

*Thursday, Nov. 14:*
Priscilla Del Bosque-Schouten, Senior Foreign Service Officer (RET), “Do Revolutions Matter?” Schouten will discuss the current conflict in the Middle East, focusing particularly on Egypt and Syria. Through the unique lens of her service in the Middle East, she will detail the causes and effects of the conflicts and their potential impact on the United States and the international community.

The series began on Aug. 29 with a presentation by landscape architect Bob Boro, who designed the green space being installed in front of historic Royce Hall at Fresno High, followed by a talk Sept. 18 by UC admissions specialist Frank Ramirez.

**Walk at Bullard will Support Down Syndrome**

The annual Step Up for Down Syndrome walk is Saturday, Oct. 12 at Bullard High School from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This one-mile walk is the largest Down Syndrome awareness event in the Central Valley and also helps to raise funds for programs. Visit [http://www.dscacc.org](http://www.dscacc.org) to register as a participant, sponsor, or vendor.

**Assembly Member Donates Red Ribbon Materials**

Assembly Member Jim Patterson of Fresno is graciously providing Red Ribbon Week materials to district school sites. Red Ribbon Week is Oct. 23-31.

**Pancake Breakfast Benefits Homeless Students**

The district’s Project ACCESS, which supports the needs of homeless students, held the Matt Mueller Memorial Pancake Breakfast on Sept. 8, raising $3,000 to benefit the education of students enrolled in the program. Donations will be used to purchase clothing and shoes and pay graduation expenses and other school-related costs in support of homeless students who may be living in shelters, motels, with others or in unsheltered situations. This is the 13th annual breakfast organized following the death of educator Matt Mueller, who cared deeply for the less fortunate and would often bring food to the homeless.

**McLane Students Commemorate 9/11 Victims With Poetry, Art**

The ArtVenture Academy at McLane High School commemorated the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks with a focus on the workers who perished in the Windows on the World restaurant in the World Trade Center’s North Tower. During a lunchtime event, about 50 students shared visual and poetic portraits they created.

Approximately 300 students were involved in the memorial project from across courses of study at McLane, including English language arts, drama, art, digital media and social science. ArtVenture lead teacher Marc Patterson said students focused on the 72 restaurant employees to give recognition to a group of largely unknown victims. He also noted that the employees represented people of many ethnicities and cultures, similar to McLane High’s student body.

**Motorcycle Club Donates Backpacks to Kirk Elementary**

Members of a local motorcycle club, Poncho Villa Riders, visited Kirk Elementary School Sept. 18 to deliver 70 backpacks as part of a commitment to help students succeed in school. The motorcycle club is among the many generous community donors who are helping support Fresno Unified students in need.

**Sunnyside High School Kicks Off Bullying Prevention Program with Rally**

Sunnyside High School students kicked off new bullying prevention efforts with a “Work Hard…Treat People Right” rally on Aug. 23 featuring Fresno police Chief Jerry Dyer as the keynote speaker. The assembly also included a “Don’t Laugh at Me” rap and a video produced by the school’s Video Production Academy. The school’s new bullying prevention efforts will include expanded discussions in homeroom classes once a week for 40 minutes on bullying-related topics such as how to build a positive school climate, confronting a bully and cyber bullying. Similar weekly class discussions, derived from the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, were implemented in middle schools last year and drastically changed campus climates.

**Bullard TALENT Activities Featured in National Sampler**

Two of Bullard TALENT K-8 School’s family-focused activities are featured in National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) best-practices publications. The selected activities were compiled in brochures to give readers a few useful examples of how research-based family and community involvement activities can address important goals for student success and for improved school climate.

Bullard TALENT’s promising practices featured are “Marching into Middle School,” with tips on how students and parents can successfully transition from elementary to middle school, and “All the World’s a Stage,” which describes how a middle school play can involve parents and community.

**Got Milk? Fresno High Does**

Fresno High School has won the district’s 2013 Got Milk Breakfast Challenge, increasing breakfast participation by 5.7% over the same period last year. In 2012, Fresno High’s breakfast participation was 24.9% during the designated time period and this year it jumped to 30.6%. Fresno High School not only gets bragging rights but receives $3,000 for increasing its breakfast participation.
District Gives Away Backpacks, Highlights Student’s Story

During an initiative to provide new backpacks and supplies to needy students in the district, many came to know Gabriela Morales, a recent Fresno Unified graduate who persevered through difficulties but with the district’s help is now on her way to becoming a teacher.

Gabriela’s inspirational story is a stark reminder of the high number of students in the district who struggle every day with immense barriers to achieving academic success. One of those barriers is when students don’t have the necessary tools for academic success – items sometimes as basic as a backpack and school supplies.

Through the backpack giveaway, 10 of the district’s neediest schools each received 50 backpacks to distribute, filled with supplies. Donations for the school supplies came from Clear Channel, Walmart, Fresno Grizzlies and the Fresno County Office of Education.

Gabriela participated in an Aug. 23 event to announce the backpack giveaway for 500 students, sharing her story of overcoming obstacles despite being homeless for a time. She did not know her father growing up and her mother left her with an aunt when she was 12. When she could no longer live with the aunt she moved in with a friend, joining the 2,400 students in the district considered homeless because they are living in motels, shelters, doubled up with relatives or friends or in an unsheltered situation.

With support from the district’s Project ACCESS program for homeless and foster-care students, Gabriela graduated from Roosevelt High School last June, completing her high school career in Fresno Unified with all A’s her final semester.

In a surprise development at the backpack event, Superintendent Michael Hanson announced that the district had a job for Gabriela to further support her as she continues her education at Fresno City College. Gabriela now works in the after-school program at Vang Pao Elementary School, which will provide invaluable experience toward her goal of becoming a teacher.

Student Movement Seeks to Instill Unity

Each school took the challenge back to their campus in their leadership classes and returned with many ideas. Through a democratic voting process, The Human Element was selected.

The Human Element seeks to instill a sense of unity. Everyone, no matter who they are, shares one thing in common: everyone is human. Although we all have this in common, no two humans are the same. Thus, The Human Element is a project that celebrates our similarities and differences alike to promote kindness as a rule of thumb rather than refraining from bullying.

With this we ask you to help us spread this campaign throughout the Central Valley. Our goal is to make The Human Element live and breathe in Fresno County so that all humans treat each other with kindness regardless of ethnicity, relationship preference, gender, age, or socioeconomic status.

As Gandhi once said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”
Mensage del Superintendente

Conforme avanzamos al segundo mes completo del año escolar 2013-2014, puedo decir – sin temor a equivocarme – que este inicio del año escolar ha sido uno de los mejores que he experimentado en nueve años.

Ambos, tanto maestros como estudiantes están ansiosos de regresar al salón de clase y continuar aprendiendo y creciendo. Cuando fui de visita de campus en campus los primeros días de clase, una de las cosas que encontré constante fue la de que todos estaban deseosos y contentos de estar de regreso. Parte de esa emoción fue a raíz de nuestro compromiso de crear mejores ambientes de aprendizaje. Las renovaciones continúan en muchas de nuestras escuelas, pero también hemos terminado grandes proyectos en Bullard, Edison, Fresno, Hoover y Roosevelt por nombrar sólo algunos. Estoy extremadamente contento por el avance hecho hasta ahora. Es bueno para nuestros jóvenes, nuestro gran personal de maestros y la comunidad.

También estoy convenciéndome de que el gran inicio del año escolar de este año, fue el resultado directo de la tremenda cantidad de energía y el momento que fue generado por los empleados del distrito, personal y maestros, mucho antes del primer día de clase. La Convocatoria de este año fue una buena oportunidad para recargar energía y motivación que todos se llevaron a sus salones de clase y vamos a seguir avanzando sobre ese momento durante el transcurso del año.

Durante la Convocatoria, Yo reté a cada maestro del Distrito Escolar de Fresno a mantener expectativas altas no sólo para todos sus estudiantes, sino también para ellos mismos. Creo que conforme las altas expectativas se convierten en normas para cada escuela, el Distrito Escolar de Fresno, altas calificaciones y otros niveles de aprovechamiento estudiantil también serán la norma.

Ultimadamente, si nuestros jóvenes están mejor preparados cuando se gradúen de la escuela preparatoria, entonces, las mayores probabilidades de que ellos estén mejor preparados para todos los aspectos de la edad adulta. Entre más estudiantes pongamos en la trayectoria al éxito, lo más que Fresno puede hacer será una realidad. Ellos estarían más listos para una carrera, es una inversión que estamos haciendo en esta comunidad.


Nuestra visión, con el apoyo generoso de la Mesa de Educación, fue la de crear escuelas con una cultura de altas expectativas donde cada estudiante tiene una red de maestros altamente efectivos para apoyarlos.

En estas escuelas, estamos incrementando las expectativas de los estudiantes y creando un conducto para que los estudiantes permanezcan en la escuela en camino a la graduación. Con el rediseño, hemos hecho algunos cambios significativos al horario diario de la escuela para proveer más oportunidades a los estudiantes para que tomen una clase electiva – como música, arte o periodismo, así mismo, dar más oportunidades a los maestros de colaborar y planear lecciones alineadas con los nuevos Estándares Académicos Fundamentales.

El 11 de septiembre, la Mesa de Educación del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno continuó mostrando su compromiso con el éxito estudiantil haciendo otra inversión de aproximadamente $1.5 millones para estudiantes y maestros.

De esos $1.5 millones, $500,000 serán destinados a la Educación de Carreras Técnicas, apoyando nuestra misión de preparar graduados listos para una carrera. Los dos diagramas, $125,000 ayudarán a las escuelas a actualizar su equipo deportivo y garantizar la seguridad de nuestros estudiantes mientras compiten y $100,000 apoyará a nuestros aprendices más tempranos proveyendo equipo adicional y material para clases de arte y música.

No sólo estamos haciendo una inversión mayor en los estudiantes del Distrito Escolar de Fresno, sino también estamos invitando en nuestro personal de maestros dedicados y trabajadores. Uno de estos es Chancellor Blue del Centro Estatal del Distrito de Colegios Comunitarios y otros presidentes de colegios y todos creemos en el mismo trabajo. ¡Es emocionante!

Durante el curso de nuestra vida, un graduado del colegio ganará aproximadamente $1 millón más que un estudiante que abandona la preparatoria. Siguiendo un plan específico para moldear a los jóvenes del Distrito Escolar de Fresno en contribuyentes en lugar de contribuyentes en un hogar de colegio listos para una carrera, es una inversión que estamos haciendo en esta comunidad.

Tus thawj coj c ov lus tsjha tawm

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