New Superintendent Sets Path for Fresno Unified

Bob Nelson, named superintendent of Fresno Unified in September, will emphasize transparency, equity, accountability and connectivity as he leads the state’s fourth-largest district.

Nelson talked in depth about his vision and goals for the district during the State of Education luncheon Oct. 30 at the DoubleTree Hotel. Nelson was the keynote speaker for the event, which raised more than $35,000 for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund.

As Nelson enters his third month as superintendent, he said he is embracing the “new challenge to advance the great work that has already been accomplished here.” His goals are in collaboration with the Fresno Unified Board of Education.

Transparency

Nelson has announced that to increase the district’s transparency, the board-adopted District Data Dashboard will be available on the district’s webpage for all to access. Results will be updated in real-time as they become available, down to the school level.

Although the district has always shared results from the dashboard with the board and the public, this will be the first time that the public will have access to the board adopted measurements at their fingertips.

“This is our data. This is our district. These are our kids. I have no intention in hiding from these results, nor does our leadership team,” Nelson said. “If we are going to progress forward, we need to get real, honest and direct with our current reality.”

Equity

Fresno Unified is also focused on equity -- giving all students the resources they need to be successful. In Fresno Unified, nine out of 10 students fall into at least one of the following three categories: meeting requirements for free or reduced-price meals, English learner, or foster youth. In Fresno Unified, many students fall into more than one -- or even all three categories.

Nelson said that is Fresno Unified’s reality: 90% of students are considered disadvantaged under the state’s funding formula, known as the Local Control Funding Formula. The district is the only major urban district in California where nine out of 10 students require substantive additional support.

In addition, many of Fresno Unified’s students are English learners reading below grade level.

Equity is about providing additional services and funding for students who are struggling with these type of issues and are at a disadvantage, Nelson said.

“Our job is to provide the necessary resources to the students who need them when they need them to give every student an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options,” Nelson said.

A powerful example of providing equitable opportunities for students is through the district’s partnership with the College Board and the offering of...
Fresno Unified Awarded Honor for Work with Immigrants

The district has been recognized by the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CVIIC) for its innovative work supporting immigrants, including the opening of the Dream Resource Center.

The honor was accepted by Fresno Unified board trustee Elizabeth Jonasson Rosas on Oct. 25. The district was also recognized for the board’s passage of a Safe Place resolution March 8, which emphasized its commitment to serving all students, regardless of their immigration status.

The award was presented at the CVIIC’s annual conference in Fresno. The CVIIC is a regional network of organizations created in February 2014 to serve immigrant families.

Fresno Unified is committed to serving all of its students, regardless of their immigration status. In September, the district joined with students and community members to announce the opening of the Dream Resource Center (DRC) on the second floor of Manchester Center.

The DRC’s opening was expedited given the urgent community need created by federal action announced in early September that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program would be dismantled.

Since opening, the DRC has served 121 individuals with DACA renewal and naturalization applications, held four community events and hosted numerous training sessions for community partners.

On Oct. 12, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services notified the district that it had secured a $250,000 Citizenship and Assimilation Grant to support DRC efforts. The grant provides the opportunity to prepare lawful permanent residents for citizenship by offering citizenship instruction and naturalization application services.

Fresno Adult School provides citizenship classes required for the program and partners with the San Joaquin College of Law to provide naturalization application services.

El Distrito Gana Reconocimiento por Trabajar con Migrantes

El distrito ha sido reconocido por Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CVIIC) por su trabajo innovador apoyando a los migrantes, incluyendo la apertura del Centro de Recursos de Sueños (Dream Resource Center).

El honor fue aceptado por Elizabeth Jonasson Rosas del Consejo Directivo del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno el 25 de octubre. El distrito, también fue reconocido por el pasaje de la mesa directiva por la resolución del Lugar Seguro el 8 de marzo, el cual enfatizó su compromiso de servir a todos los estudiantes independientemente de su estado migratorio.

El reconocimiento fue presentado en la conferencia anual CVIIC en Fresno. El CVIIC es una red de enlace regional de organizaciones creadas en febrero del 2014 para servir a las familias migrantes.

El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno se compromete a servir a todos sus estudiantes, independientemente de su estatus migratorio. En septiembre, el distrito se reunió con los estudiantes y miembros comunitarios para anunciar la apertura del Centro de Recursos de Sueños (DRC) en el segundo piso del Centro Manchester.

La apertura del centro DRC fue agilizada debido a la urgencia comunitaria creada por la ciudad federal anunciada a principios de septiembre que se dio por terminado el programa de Acción Diferida (DACA).

Desde la apertura del centro DRC ha servido a 121 individuos con la renovación DACA y solicitudes de naturalización, llevó a cabo cuatro eventos comunitarios y varias sesiones de capacitación para socios comunitarios.

El 12 de octubre los servicios de Ciudadanía e Inmigración (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration) notificó al distrito de la Concesión de $250,000 para la Ciudadanía y Asimilación para apoyar los esfuerzos del DRC. La concesión provee la oportunidad de preparar a los residentes permanentes para la ciudadanía ofreciendo servicios de instrucción y solicitud de naturalización.

La Escuela de Adultos de Fresno provee clases de ciudadanía requeridas por el programa y asociados con San Joaquin College of Law para proveer los servicios para la solicitud de naturalización.

Hauv Paus Tsev Kawm Ntawv Tau Yim Ib Qho Dej Siab rau Kev Ua Hauj Lwm Nrog Cov Neeg Tsvi Teb Tsvi Chaw

Hauv paus tsev kawn ntawv tau rau nco txiaj ntisim los ntawm Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CVIIC) rau nws kev ua hauj lwm tshib los txhawb pab cov neeg tsvi teb tsvi chaw, xam nrog rau kev qhib lub Dream Resource Manchester.

Qhov kev saib muaj nqis tau rau txais los ntawm Fresno Unified board trustee Elizabeth Jonasson Rosas nyob rau lub Kaum Hli tim 25. Hauv paus tsev kawn ntawv kuj tsenm tau lees paub pawg thawj coj cov lus ntawm tsab cai Chaw Nyob Nyab Xeeb (Safe Place) thauf lub Peh Hlis tim 8, ua tau hais txog nws kev cog lus los pab txhua tus tub kawn ntawv, tab txawm lawv qhov neeg tsvi teb tsvi chaw yuav zoo li cas los xij.

Qhov dej siab tau rau muab nyob rau ntawm CVIIC lub roo siib tham niaj xyoo muaj hauv Fresno. CVIIC yog ib lub “network” hauv cheeb tsam ntawm tej koom haum tsim muaj nyob rau thau lub Ob Hlis 2014 los pab cov yim tsev neeg tsvi teb tsvi chaw.

Fresno Unified tau cog lus los pab txhua tus ntawm nws cov tub kawn ntawv, tab txawm lawv qhov tsvi teb tsvi chaw zoo li cas los xij. Nyob rau thau lub Cuaj Hli, hauv paus tsev kawn ntawv tau koom nrog tej tub kawn ntawv thib neeg zej zog los tsjaj txog kev qhib lub chaw Dream Resource Center (DRC) nyob rau theem ob ntawm Manchester Center.

DRC qhov kev qhib ua rau muaj kev pab nraum roos rau lub zej lub zos kev xav tau tsim los ntawm tsom fvwv teb chaws qhov kev ua tau thauj qhia nyob rau thau lub pib lub Cuaj Hli uas qhov kev pab (Tsab Cai Zam Me Nyuam Yaus Nkag Teb Chaws) “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” (DACA) raug muab tsjewn tawm.

Txij thauj qhib los, DRC twb tau pab txog 121 tus neeg rong ua tej ntaub ntawv thov DACA tshiab thib tej ntawv ua xam xaj, muaj nyob rau rau zog zplaub lub koob tsheej thib muaj nyob rau ntawj ntu kev cob qhia rau rau zog cov neeg koomb tawm.

Thau lub Kaum Ob Hlis tim 12, U.S. Citizenship thiab Immigration Services tau ceeb teem hauv paus tsev kawn ntawv tias nws tus muaj ib qho $250,000 Citizenship thiab Assimilation Grant los mus txhawb pab DRC tej kev pem uam. Qhov nyiaj qhib muaj los nqay ua neeg nyob ruaj raug caig rau rau ua neeg pej xeem los ntawm qhib muaj kev qhia pab ua cov ntawv “citizenship” thiab naturalization. Fresno Adult School npaj muaj cov chaw kawn “citizenship” tsee kom muaj rau qhov kev kawn thib koom tes nrog San Joaquin College of Law los npaj muaj tej kev pab ua cov ntawv thov ua xam xaj.
SUPERINTENDENT’S Message

Superintendent will Focus on Transparency, Equity, Accountability, Connectivity

A few weeks back, Fresno Unified held its annual State of Education luncheon, the district’s single largest fundraiser for our student scholarship fund. I am excited to share that with community support, we raised approximately $35,000, nearly $10,000 more than last year. The festivities also provided me the first opportunity to share my goals for our district, and our city. Developed with our board of education, my goals revolve around four major areas with a focus on transparency, equity, accountability and connectivity.

First, when it comes to transparency, we continue to experience growth in areas that are essential for our students to graduate college and career ready. From graduation rates, A-G completion, to the number of students who applied to at least one institution of higher education, we are seeing positive gains. In the spirit of transparency, we still have a lot of work to do within the district to get to where we want to be.

Last year, just over 59% of our students in second through 12th grade received at least one D or F during the quarter or semester. Also last year, approximately 31% of our students were reading at grade level or beyond and about 21% of our students were performing math at grade level. I have no intention of hiding from these results, nor does our leadership team. If we are going to progress forward, we need to get real, honest and direct with our current reality.

Second, because our students face tremendous obstacles, we must continue to look through the lens of equity to move student achievement. When everyone gets precisely the same thing when starting in a different spot (equality), we do nothing to close the gap between any two individuals.

Once we begin to give our students what they need (equity), they all have a better chance to succeed. Our job is to provide the necessary resources to the students who need them when they need them.

Continuing on to accountability, as we begin the budget development process for 2018-19, I expect our staff, and especially our executive team, to connect any new investments to tangible, measurable results so that we may know very quickly whether we are getting the return on investment we expect. We have an obligation to accept responsibility and improve student outcomes however that may look.

Finally, I firmly believe that education is about relationships and making connections. If we want our kids to be college and career ready, they need great interpersonal skills and to understand what it means to be respectful.

See SUPT. MESSAGE SPANISH AND HMONG

Continued on page 15

Message from Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer

Police Department Partners with District on Campuses and in Neighborhoods

Our children today are exposed to far too much violence, whether that is witnessing a gang shooting in their neighborhood or hearing about another mass killing. The trauma and fear caused to our youth as a result of this frequent exposure is difficult to measure, but it does have an impact on their ability to learn, sleep, and function as a child should.

Police officers play a vital role in shaping the minds of our youth by reducing their fears and keeping them safe. For many years, the police department and the school district have partnered to place a police officer on every high school and most recently on every middle school campus. The presence of officers on campus increases the feeling of safety for children, and allows officers to be more available to students who are in need of advice or guidance.

I have heard countless stories of Fresno police officers helping students navigate a crisis in their life by being that voice of encouragement for them or helping a student financially. Our latest partnership allows our officers to serve as role models to students through the school district’s mentoring program. So far, the program has been well received by officers and students.

We have also partnered with Fresno Unified on several technology initiatives that have served to increase the safety of students while at school and at home. Video policing cameras are strategically placed in neighborhoods and are monitored by officers assigned to the police department’s Real Time Crime Center.

These same officers also have the ability to activate and monitor hundreds of cameras located on school campuses in the event of a critical incident. In addition, we have joined together on an initiative to place gunshot detection in neighborhoods surrounding schools where there is a history of gunfire. All of these steps are critical to ensuring a safe and secure environment for our children to live, learn and play in Fresno.

As your police chief I am committed to working closely with Fresno Unified administrators and teachers to keep your child safe. Together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of our youth and their future.
District will Host Community Workshops on Funding

Fresno Unified’s 2017-18 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) includes $166 million in investments to increase or improve services for students living in disadvantaged circumstances.

In November, the district released a progress report and provided updates and highlights on the implementation to the Fresno Unified Board of Education. Some highlighted items included expansion of dual immersion programs, expanded after school tutoring and a focus on academic acceleration for the district’s African-American students.

The LCAP is a plan that outlines the district goals and spending priorities. The plan also demonstrates how the goals are aligned with the state’s eight priority areas. Integral to the planning process is engagement with parents, educators, students, employees and other community partners.

Beginning in December, the district will host regional workshops at the various high school campuses. The workshops provide an opportunity for stakeholders to hear updates on LCAP investments and exchange ideas on other action areas.

Also, Fresno Unified’s LCAP survey provides an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback and recommendations. For more information, access to the 2017-18 LCAP, regional workshop dates and how to take the LCAP survey, please visit the district website at www.fresnounified.org.

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hoover High School</td>
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<td>Design Science, Duncan and Patiño High Schools</td>
<td>December 6, 2017 at Patiño</td>
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<td>McLane High School</td>
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<td>Edison High School</td>
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<td>Roosevelt High School</td>
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<td>Sunnyside High School</td>
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SUPERINTENDENT GOALS

Continued from page 1

Khan Academy to all sixth through 12th grade students. Khan Academy offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empowers students to study at their own pace inside and outside of the classroom.

Last year in Fresno Unified, 4,400 juniors linked their accounts and completed over 17,000 hours of practice in Khan Academy to get ready for the SAT, which the district started offering during school hours as an equity measure. This has helped students have better access to and perform better on the SAT, which gives them more choices after high school.

Nelson said that equity is also about facilities. The Fresno community passed the Measure X local school bond in November 2016, allowing the district to continue its work providing equitable facilities to all students across the district, regardless of the campus they attend.

“This board has made it absolutely clear, and rightfully so, that they want equity in facilities for all students regardless of where a student lives or the imaginary boundaries of our board,” Nelson said.

Accountability

Another area of focus for Nelson and the board is accountability. Nelson said district administrators need to be held accountable for the programs they run to ensure those programs are delivering the maximum return on investment for taxpayers. The district is launching a new initiative to use the process of improvement science methodology to analyze projects, programs, and district investments to ensure they are producing the expected outcomes.

Following the lead of the board of education, as the district begins the budget development process for 2018-19, Nelson said he expects staff, especially the executive team, to connect any new investments to tangible, measurable results so that the district may know quickly whether it is getting the expected return on investment.

“We must learn at a fast pace, fail quickly if necessary, and maneuver rapidly and modify plans when things are not going in the direction we anticipate,” Nelson said.

Connectivity

The final focus of Nelson’s superintendent will be connectivity.

“Fundamentally, at its deepest core, I firmly believe that education is about relationships,” Nelson said.

Nelson said that it is crucially important to be intentional in teaching kids what it means to get along and to establish positive relationships with others.

“If we want our kids to be college and career ready, they need great interpersonal skills,” he said.
Students Create Art about Japanese-American Internment

Students from McLane High School’s ArtVenture Academy will unveil a project on the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II at ArtHop on Dec. 7.

McLane High School ArtVenture students Ying Vang, front, and Kongpeng Vang work on a panel depicting Japanese-American internment camps as part of a project on the 75th anniversary of the internment.

The event falls on the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which launched the U.S. into World War II and initiated the internment of Japanese-Americans 75 years ago. The exhibit is at the M Street Arts Complex from 5-7 p.m.

The project, “Gaman: the 75th Anniversary of the Japanese Internment,” features a 200-foot mural on 75 art panels depicting the timeline leading up to and including the incarceration. The exhibit also includes a sculpture/art performance installation, spoken word, video documentaries, and dramatic performances.

In Japanese, gaman translates as “enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.”

The Dec. 7 ArtHop is the culminating event for the project. The exhibit will be up during December and January. Students have been working on the exhibit since the school year began. Their work has included interviewing local Japanese-Americans who were sent to camps during World War II. The exhibit includes replication of authentic artifacts from those who were in internment camps. Forty-five students spent two days in Manzanar, one of the internment camps located in California.

The project comes under the broader, year-long theme for a district arts initiative, “Displacement: Leaving Home, Finding Home.” During the second semester, students will focus their work on foster care youth, homeless youth, and refugees, reflecting the essential question, “What is the meaning of home?”

Healthy Minute

Take a Minute for Your Health

Holiday Health & Safety Tips

For You & Your Family This Season

The holidays are a great opportunity to enjoy time with family and friends, celebrate life, to be grateful, and reflect on what’s important. They are also a time to appreciate the gift of health. Here are some holiday tips to support your efforts for health and safety this season.

Manage Stress: The holidays don’t need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, home and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep.

Stay Warm: Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in layers.

Get Check-ups and Vaccinations: Exams and screenings can help find potential problems early, when the chances for treatment and a cure are better. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for needed exams and screenings. Ask what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history and family health history.

Watch the Kids: Children are at high risk for injuries. Keep a watchful eye on your kids when they’re eating and playing. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards and other objects out of kids’ reach.

Prevent Injuries: Injuries can happen anywhere, and some often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of climbing on furniture when hanging decorations. Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or skateboarding to prevent head injuries.

Handle and Prepare Food Safely: As you prepare holiday meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illnesses. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contaminations and cook foods to the proper temperature.

Wash Your Hands Often: Keep your hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds.

Avoid Smoking and Breathing Other People’s Smoke: If you smoke, quit today! Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or talk to your health care provider for help.

Travel Safely: Whether you’re traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don’t drink and drive and don’t let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle.

Source: www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/index.htm

WellPATH seeks to foster a healthy work environment and engage Fresno Unified School District employees in their health and well-being. Participation in program activities is open to active employees, spouses, domestic partners, dependent children age 18+, early retirees, and retirees covered under the District’s health benefit plan.

www.FresnoUnified.org | PREPARING CAREER READY GRADUATES |
State of Education Luncheon Raises $35,000 for Scholarships

Thanks to the community’s support, the 2017 State of Education luncheon on Oct. 30 raised more than $35,000 for student scholarships -- $10,000 more than last year’s event.

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/stateofeducation2017

In addition, the district’s Goal 2 team presented a check for $5,455 at the luncheon for money raised at the Goal 2 golf tournament for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund.

More than 350 attended to hear Superintendent Bob Nelson speak for the first time to the broader community about his vision and goals for the district. Nelson, in collaboration with the Fresno Unified Board of Education, will focus on transparency, equity, accountability and connectivity.

“I am pleased to inform you that the state of education in Fresno Unified School District is strong and getting stronger,” Nelson told the audience. “We continue to experience growth in areas that are essential for our students to graduate college and career ready and we continue to see improvements across grade levels and student groups towards closing the achievement gap.”

Nelson highlighted success in the district as well as areas that continue to be a challenge. He also announced that as part of the district’s focus on transparency, the district’s data dashboard will be available at all times on the district web site with real time data.

In the area of equity, Nelson said the district will continue to provide supports and programs to improve equal access to success for all students, such as free online tutoring through the Khan Academy to prepare for the SAT and trips to outdoor school for all sixth graders.

While Nelson was the keynote speaker, students were the highlight of the event. The Junior ROTC from Duncan Polytechnical High School provided the color guard for the pledge of allegiance, Adrianna Cook from Malloch Elementary School led the flag salute and Sunnyside High School student Eli Xiong sang the Star Spangled Banner.

Greeters from Men’s and Women's Alliance helped guests find their seats. Throughout the event, student artists from Edison and McLane high schools were completing eight paintings, which were bid on during lunch through a silent auction. The paintings raised nearly $2,000 for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund, with pieces selling for $75 to $650.

Entertainment before the event and during lunch was provided by a Sunnyside High School orchestra ensemble.

The event featured a video about one of last year’s scholarship winners, Lou Vang, now studying to be a teacher at Fresno State. (See more about Vang on this page.)

The State of Education luncheon is the district’s largest fundraiser for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund, which last spring awarded $61,000 in scholarships to 49 students. To contribute to the scholarship fund, go to https://tinyurl.com/fusdscholarship.

Fresno Unified Highlights

At the State of Education luncheon Oct. 30, Fresno Unified Superintendent Bob Nelson outlined district highlights that included:

- Cohort graduation rate – In 2015-16, which is the most recently posted data from the California Department of Education (CDE), district graduated 85.5% of high school seniors who started as freshman in 2011-12, which surpasses the state average of 83.8% by 1.7%. Additionally, Hispanic and African-American students in 2015-16 outperformed the state average by 5.2% and 8.0% respectively. Based on preliminary data, the district believes the 2016-17 cohort graduation rate will be approximately 84.2%.

- A-G completion – This past year, the district estimates 51.5% of graduating seniors completed their a-g requirements, which allows those seniors admission to the UC system and to apply to more selective colleges and universities. This estimate is based on the cohort graduation rate; the district will report the final number once finalized by the CDE.

- College going rate – In 2016-17, 96% of graduates applied to at least one institution of higher education, and 62% of graduates applied to at least one four-year institution of higher education.

- Building program – District facilities and maintenance teams continue to work diligently on programs that will improve the conditions of schools for students, staff and the community. Last year, the

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Student, Teacher Reunited

Lou Vang was a refugee from a Thailand camp who knew very little English when she arrived at King Elementary School in 2004. But her second grade teacher gave her extra help, and Vang eventually flourished in school.

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/louvang

Last spring, Vang was one of 49 Fresno Unified Scholarship winners and graduated from Duncan Polytechnical High School with a 3.9 GPA. She is now studying at Fresno State to be a teacher.

Her motivation, she said, was her second grade teacher, Thim Bounnhong-Sivilay.

At the State of Education luncheon Oct. 30, Vang and that inspirational teacher were reunited for the first time since Vang’s elementary years. They were guests of honor at the superintendent’s table.

Vang’s story was featured in a video shown at the luncheon, which is the district’s single largest fundraiser for the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund.

In an interview later, Vang said it was amazing to see her former teacher again: “I thought I would not be able to see her again and thank her for what she had done for me.”

Bounnhong-Sivilay was thrilled as well at the reunion.

“It's amazing how grown up she is. She still has the same sweet smile and a beautiful personality,” Bounnhong-Sivilay said. “I’m so proud of her for attending college and very pleased that she is choosing the same career path as me.”

See STUDENT AND TEACHER
Continued on page 7
HIGHLIGHTS
Continued from page 6

- Painted 16 schools
- Built new playgrounds at six elementary schools
- Added more compressed natural gas fueling stations for bus yard and purchased 25 new low emission buses
- Converted classrooms and outdoor spaces at Wawona School for dual immersion
- Opened two new classroom buildings at Figarden Elementary School
- Opened new classroom and administration building at Turner Elementary School

STUDENT AND TEACHER
Continued from page 6

It took some detective work to bring the two together again. While Vang had written about her teacher in her scholarship application, she did not know her first name or how to spell her last name. The staff at King has changed significantly since Vang was there, and no one knew who the teacher could have been.

King Principal Jesus Perez, however, did not give up and eventually learned that Vang’s former teacher was now teaching at Storey Elementary School.

In her scholarship application, Vang wrote that from kindergarten and into second grade, she came home from school crying almost every day because she was struggling with English and unable to complete assignments.

“One day, my second grade teacher asked me if I knew my alphabet. I told her, ‘no.’ Ever since then, I stayed in class during recess to receive additional support. My teacher demonstrated the fundamental role a teacher can play in a student’s development through their direct engagement. Her devotion to my success and encouragement inspired me to become a teacher.”

Vang also said in the application that Bounnhong-Sivilay “changed me into who I am today because of what she did for me.”

Despite Vang’s struggles, Bounnhong-Sivilay remembers Vang as a wonderful student.

“She was an eager learner and a hard-working person,” Bounnhong-Sivilay said. “She always gave her best effort on everything she did in class, even though her English was limited.”

Bounnhong-Sivilay said she is “honored and humbled” that she inspired Vang.

“It’s an indescribable feeling. I’m thrilled that she remembers me. I am confident that she will inspire many young lives herself in the future,” Bounnhong-Sivilay said.

Bounnhong-Sivilay, herself, was an immigrant and a product of Fresno Unified. She attended Rowell Elementary School, Yosemite Middle School and McLane High School. She obtained her teaching credential from Fresno State.

Left, Lou Vang, a June graduate of Duncan Polytechnical High School, is reunited with her second grade teacher, Thim Bounnhong-Sivilay, at the State of Education luncheon Oct. 30.
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Estela Coronado is a teacher on special assignment at Webster Elementary School, where she has taught her entire career, beginning in 1986. Over the years she has taught kindergarten, first, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. As a teacher on special assignment, Coronado provides extra help for students in all grades and is the go-to technology expert on campus. Her colleague, Ezequiel Zuniga, said she is a “leader of change” at their school and is known for building lasting relationships with students and their families. Coronado was an Excellence in Education finalist in February.

What made you go into teaching?
Since I could remember I wanted to teach, to make a difference.

After 30 years on the job, how do you stay inspired and energized?
The students. Yes, there are ups and downs, but you just can’t beat the “aha” smile when they get it or the look in their eyes when they know you care about them.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?
Inspiring and educating students.

What is the most challenging?
You can’t save them all.

You are often invited to former students’ graduations. How does this make you feel, and is it true you have not missed a single one?
It makes me feel wonderful that they actually remember this old teacher. I almost missed one. It was at the same time as the sixth grade Wild Waters field trip. I got off the bus and drove to the Save Mart Center in my shorts and flip flops. Made it inside in time to hear her name. I always tell them, “You may not see me, but I see you!”

How do you take new teachers under your wing? What is the most important thing you share with them to help them be successful teachers?
I don’t see myself that way. I’m helping them be successful teachers.

How do you use your own experience as a second language learner to connect with students?
I had no role models and it was not a good time to be a second language learner. I have terrible memories, but that was the drive for me, to treat all students with respect and kindness, and to never underestimate their abilities.

How do you try to break down those barriers?
With information. I want the families to feel comfortable coming to me so we can get some answers so they can feel healthier and stay in school. It’s not just about Band-Aids and cuts.

What health changes have you seen in students over the years?
A lot more asthma, obesity and mental health issues, being sick. Not being well enough to come to school.

What is the best part about your job?
I’m able to reach out to the families and help them get the services they need, and helping spread the word about what services are available.

What is the most challenging part about your job?
Not being able to be at a school long enough to help the kids who really need it. (She rotates among several schools.)

What is the most important thing you share with them to help them be successful teachers?
Not being able to be at a school long enough to help the kids who really need it.

See RACHEL ANDRADA
Continued on page 12

Health Services Assistant is Advocate for Students and Families

Rachel Andrada, a health services assistant, has worked for the district since 1987, starting as a noontime assistant and teacher’s aide in kindergarten. She was an Excellence in Education finalist last February. Gail Williams, the district’s director of health services, said Andrada does far more than apply bandages and take temperatures: “She is a strong advocate for students and families, assisting them in obtaining medical coverage, immunizations, physicals, vision and dental care and resources for food and housing.”

What is the best part about your job?
I’m able to reach out to the families and help them get the services they need, and helping spread the word about what services are available.

What is the most challenging part about your job?
Not being able to be at a school long enough to help the kids who really need it. (She rotates among several schools.)

What health changes have you seen in students over the years?
A lot more asthma, obesity and mental health issues, being sick. Not being well enough to come to school.

What are some of the common health barriers that keep students from coming to school?
No medical care and not knowing where to get it. They stay home for things like rashes, needing glasses, mental health issues, being sick. Not being well enough to come to school.

See RACHEL ANDRADA
Continued on page 12
Rata High School Supports Adult Students with New Program

The district has launched an Adult Transition Program at Rata High School for the severely disabled, allowing students past the 12th grade to remain at Rata.

In the past, students would graduate from Rata and then go to Fresno County Office of Education’s Ramacher Educational Complex adult program. Rata’s adult program began with the start of this school year.

The Adult Transition Program (ATP) has 13 students.

“For students to be able to stay at Rata after 12th grade, it means a great deal for their continued success in life,” said Gina Boni, principal at Rata. “Many of our students have severe medical needs, so the consistency is key for them.

“They will continue to be on a site where the adults are familiar with the needs of the students, and the students are familiar with the adults. It also allows for continued interaction between students as they will have attended Rata for high school prior to the Adult Transition Program.”

The school is still developing the ATP and still aligning the curriculum and plans with the needs of students, but some of the goals for the program include providing community based training, vocational training, and domestic training.

“Our goal is to help students become the most productive members of society that they can, while supporting their needs both medically and intellectually,” Boni said.

Boni said Rata’s students have high needs, but with the appropriate structures and supports in place, the ATP will be a wonderful addition to the campus and will support the needs of adult students as they prepare to transition out into the community.

Rata and Rata’s ATP are housed temporarily at McLane High School currently as Rata undergoes extensive remodeling.

Alex Vann, a student in Rata High School’s new Adult Transition Program, works on recognizing street signs with teacher is Julia Smith.

Health Message from Dr. Ken Bird

Whooping Cough Could Peak Next Year -- Get Vaccinated

Whooping cough, also called pertussis, was one of the most common childhood diseases and major cause of childhood death in the U.S. before a vaccine was developed. Whooping cough is caused by the bacteria Bordetella pertussis and is spread from person to person through coughing, sneezing, laughing, etc.

The toxin it produces in the respiratory tract causes debris to accumulate in the airway, resulting in uncontrollable coughing spasms that end in the characteristic high-pitched intake of air -- the whoop.

Symptoms of whooping cough can develop from six to 20 days after being exposed, and begin as cold-like symptoms that last one to two weeks. The next stage begins with fits of coughing that increase in severity over another one to six weeks. Coughing is severe enough to cause vomiting, passing out, exhaustion, and even rib fractures. During a convalescent stage, coughing lessens gradually over two to three weeks.

Whooping cough is particularly dangerous to babies younger than one year where, rather than the characteristic cough, the illness presents as apnea (episodes of interrupted breathing). Other complications of whooping cough in babies include pneumonia, seizures, encephalopathy, and death.

Before a vaccine was developed, the illness was epidemic, with cycles every two to five years. Although a dramatic reduction in numbers of cases followed introduction of the vaccine, the cyclical nature of epidemic continued.

Vaccination is critical to the protection of our infants from serious effects of the next epidemic. All children should be vaccinated against whooping cough at 2, 4, 6, and 15 to 18 months of age, then again at 4 to 6 years of age and at 11 years of age. Adults need a vaccination if not vaccinated as a pre-teen or teen.

The best way to protect newborns is for ALL pregnant women to receive vaccination at the earliest opportunity between 27 and 36 weeks gestation during EVERY pregnancy regardless of prior vaccination. This provides protection to the newborn through maternal antibodies until the infant is old enough to be vaccinated.

The last peak whooping cough years in California were 2010 and 2014. The next epidemic peak may well occur next year. Vaccinate!
Bullard Cheer Room Named for Cheer Coach

Bullard High School unveiled a plaque Oct. 26 naming the cheer room on campus in honor of Sandi Cliff, a cheer coach and P.E. teacher at the school from 1996-2010. Cliff, who died Aug. 21 of cancer, is credited with helping re-establish Bullard’s cheer program as a top program that places in national competitions. Her most recent assignment in the district had been as a P.E. teacher at Computech Middle School. Bullard Principal Carlos Castillo said Cliff was a much-loved teacher and coach with a positive attitude with students.

Forum Held on Student Intervention

Students, parents, staff and community members attended Fresno Unified’s first community forum on school climate, discipline and student supports at the district on Oct. 24. The forum highlighted the district’s efforts to improve school climate, discipline and disproportionality, as well as recent data related to suspensions.

Bullard, Edison Host AP Celebrations

Bullard and Edison high schools hosted celebrations for students receiving qualifying scores on at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam in the past school year. Bullard held AP Honoray Knight on Nov. 7, recognizing 75 current students with qualifying scores. Bullard had 224 students earn at least one qualifying score in the last school year. Bullard offers 72 sections of AP in 23 different subjects. AP classes provide college-level courses for students. At the end of courses, students have the option of taking AP tests administered by the College Board at high schools. Colleges may accept a score of 3 or better on an AP test as credit toward completing the corresponding course.

Full Court Press for Ahwahnee Coach

Ahwahnee Middle School named its basketball court for Joe Padilla, who taught and coached at Ahwahnee for 30 years before retiring after the last school year. The school and community held a ceremony Nov. 1. Padilla was a dedicated teacher and leader on campus who was supportive of all students and was a role model for teachers and students. He remains a support to Ahwahnee by keeping score at basketball games.

Black Student Union Members Attend Fresno State Conference

Black Student Union (BSU) club members totaling 205, and representing all seven comprehensive and five specialty high schools, participated in the African American Student Success Conference at Fresno State on Oct. 4. The conference theme was “Reclaiming My Time,” and was designed to provide African-American students the resources needed to attend Fresno State, get involved with African-American student clubs and organizations on campus, and to network with other students throughout the district.

Bullard Law Students Meet with Professionals

Twelve professionals from a variety of law-related fields met with 31 students in Bullard High School’s revamped Law and Social Justice Pathway on Nov. 1 to answer questions and provide career information. This is the first law mentor luncheon since the school relaunched its more robust law pathway this school year.

Sunnyside Region Featured at ArtHop

An exhibit by artists from Sunnyside High School, Kings Canyon Middle School and Aynesworth Elementary School was featured at ArtHop Nov. 2 at the M Street Arts Complex. The show was “Only What We Could Carry/Let it Not Happen Again,” honoring the Japanese-Americans who were incarcerated during World War II.

Students with Autism Honored for Art Work

Students with autism who are in special day classes at Ewing Elementary School were awarded first-place ribbons and a check for $5 for the art work they entered in The Big Fresno Fair at a ceremony Nov. 8. Each student in the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class entered a puzzle piece on canvas; the first through third grade students entered a beach scene that had their own footprints on the canvas; and the fourth through sixth grade students entered tie dye T-shirts and a Ewing eagle made with triangles.

For the last two years, students with autism who are taught in special day classes at Ewing have entered at the fair in the Special Division. Their artwork is displayed in the Junior Exhibits Building.

Sunnyside Region Featured at ArtHop

An exhibit by artists from Sunnyside High School, Kings Canyon Middle School and Aynesworth Elementary School was featured at ArtHop Nov. 2 at the M Street Arts Complex. The show was “Only What We Could Carry/Let it Not Happen Again,” honoring the Japanese-Americans who were incarcerated during World War II.

Student-Athletes Commit to Colleges

District high schools held athletic signing ceremonies Nov. 8 to highlight athletes who are committing to colleges and universities. At Edison High School, three athletes signed with universities to play softball: Kristen Arias, San Jose State; Kayla Bowen, New Mexico State; and Mackenzie Soper, Howard University. At Bullard High School, Christian Collins signed to play baseball at Fresno Pacific University and Kylee Jansen signed to play water polo at Cal State Northridge. At Sunnyside High School, Jose Lemus signed to play baseball at Fresno State.
Sixth-graders from Turner and King elementary schools hiked and participated in science lessons and a variety of other activities at Camp Green Meadows near Fish Camp Oct. 17-20 as part of the district’s initiative to give all sixth-graders an outdoor school experience. The district expects about 90% of sixth-graders to participate this year – 5,125 students. For many students, it is their first trip to the mountains.

Left, students from King and Turner elementary schools learn about the Miwok Indians near a replica of a Miwok ceremonial structure. Middle left, students Mikiyla Royal, left, and Reagan Vang from Turner conquer the rock climbing wall. Climbing the wall promotes teamwork and trust. Bottom left, students from King and Turner elementary schools participate in an outdoor school class, Nature Detectives, taught by Turner teacher Alejo de Leon. Below, students from King and Turner elementary schools have fun playing gaga ball, a type of dodge ball. Below right, Jesse Wong Espinoza from Turner checks out needles and pinecones. Below middle, from left, Karina Espinoza, Perla Alonso-Ramirez, Kay Cha and Angel Jimenez-Rodriguez from Turner have a chance to learn in the outdoors. Bottom right, Luz Vera-Salvatierra from Turner works on his outdoor school notebook.
Bullard Area Students Gather for Leadership Conference

Students from the Bullard High School region gathered on Oct. 24 at Bullard High for the annual regional leadership conference. Students of all ages from feeder schools in the Bullard area worked together on leadership skills and establishing common goals within the area to go back and share with students on their various campuses.

Sugar Mejia, a fifth-grader at Del Mar Elementary School, picks out free new glasses through the See 2 Succeed program. The program is a partnership between Fresno Unified, Tzu-Chi Buddhist Foundation’s vision mobile unit, CalViva Health, and Fresno County Superintendent of Schools. See 2 Succeed provides comprehensive vision exams to all students referred and glasses for those who need them. An optometrist conducts full eye exams on students and prescribes glasses for free. The program targets students who did not pass their school’s vision screening. At a press event Nov. 8 at Del Mar, organizers announced that the program has been expanded from eight schools to 18.

Fresno Unified is getting social!

Superintendent Bob Nelson has asked FTA to join the district in committing to accepting and implementing the major recommendations of the fact-finding panel.

If attempts to settle after that process are unsuccessful, only then can the union legally go on strike.

Nelson said that if the two sides cannot reach agreement and teachers strike, the district has made preparations to keep schools open, including processing nearly 2,000 new substitute applicants. The substitute teachers hired will meet the same high standards the district expects from those who substitute during the regular school year.

“Schools will continue to be a safe place for students to learn,” Nelson said. “Our students remain our top priority and we are committed to their uninterrupted education.”

Nelson said that the district and its board of education are doing everything possible to minimize the effect of a possible teachers strike on the district’s more than 74,000 students.

RACHEL ANDRADA
Continued from page 8

health issues. It’s not just a toothache and all that stuff. But we have solutions. My dream is to have at every high school a dietician and someone to help with exercise for student and parents. We could have Fresno State students help through internships.

What is the connection between your job and students doing well on academics?
Listening to their needs, talking to parents and finding a solution together.

Name one thing most people do not know about you.
That I want to be a stand-up comedian.

What’s one of the funny things students have said that you could use as a comedian?
My stomach is having a heart attack.

If you were not a health assistant, what profession would you choose?
A preschool teacher.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
Ride my bike and hang out with my family.

What is your dream vacation?
I want to go to Niagara Falls with all my family and ride a boat.
Sequoia Middle School Eighth-Grader Starts Service Club

Daisy Gonzales, an eighth-grader at Sequoia Middle School, organized a fund drive earlier this fall to raise money for victims of the Mexico earthquake.

Since rallying her peers, teachers, staff, and community to raise more than $600, Daisy has continued to make a difference in her community by starting the Lumberjack Community Service Club at Sequoia.

The service club has 20 student members who meet weekly with adviser Lisa Milazzo to discuss ways they could serve the community. Last month, the service club sought donations from students and staff to arrange Thanksgiving dinner baskets for families.

The club is also discussing visiting a homeless shelter and Valley Children’s Hospital.

“I want to help people in need. It makes me happy and I can continue to do this through the community service club,” Daisy said.

Daisy’s friends describe her as trustworthy, caring, and responsible. Daisy is thankful for the support of teachers at Sequoia, but two of her teachers have influenced her the most. She is especially thankful to Hector Lopez and Heidi Braswell for believing in her and inspiring her to never give up.

Daisy ran for class president this year and lost, but she says losing has made her stronger.

“My teachers have taught me that in life you will win sometimes and you will lose sometimes, but when you lose, you have to keep going and not give up,” Daisy said.

Daisy Gonzales, right, organized a fundraiser for the victims of the Mexico earthquake. On Sept. 23, she presented a check for $616 to Lisa Condonian from the Red Cross.

Next year, Daisy has hopes of going to Bullard High School or Sunnyside High School. She likes her current science class for the hands-on learning and her future career aspiration is to be a homicide detective.
Patiño Students Learn from Bitwise Professionals

Through a unique partnership with Bitwise Industries, students at the Patiño School of Entrepreneurship are getting instruction from industry professionals with direct knowledge of what skills employers are looking for.

Two Geekwise Academy consultants teach at Patiño daily this school year: 10th-graders take an Online Marketing and Web Development course and 11th-graders take Advanced Online Marketing and Advanced Web Development courses.

The curriculum includes visits to tech companies housed at Bitwise.

Bitwise describes itself as “the mother ship of technology education (Geekwise Academy), execution (Shift3 Technologies) and place (Hashtag) to empower the next generation of tech leaders.”

Patiño teacher Michael Padilla said the partnership has been beneficial to both parties.

“We have experts from Geekwise who are professionals who work in the industry and they know exactly what the students need to be successful when they leave the classroom,” Padilla said.

“There is also a classroom teacher in the class with the Geekwise consultant who is the instructional expert. The consultant gains instructional knowledge that they would not otherwise get and the teacher gains content knowledge they do not have.”

“We have experts from Geekwise who are professionals who work in the industry and know exactly what the students need to be successful when they leave the classroom.”

-- Patiño teacher Michael Padilla

The Bitwise collaboration has been part of Patiño’s curriculum since the cutting-edge school opened in August 2015. Classes are re-evaluated every year and the content is modified to meet the current industry standards.

Bitwise has also been instrumental in connecting Patiño with internships, with every 10th-grader at Patiño interning with Shift3 Technologies, creating websites and online marketing campaigns for local companies.

“I think we can build upon what we have created and continue to be innovative and change the way we educate students,” Padilla said.

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No tengo la intención de escondernos de estos resultados, ni tampoco nuestro equipo de liderazgo. Si vamos a progresar, debemos ser realistas, honestos y directos con nuestra realidad actual.

En segundo lugar, debido a que nuestros estudiantes enfrentan enormes obstáculos, debemos continuar mirando a través del lente de equidad para mover el logro del estudiante. Cuando todos obtienen exactamente lo mismo cuando comienzan en un lugar diferente (igualdad), no hacemos nada para cerrar la brecha entre dos individuos. Una vez que comenzamos a darles a nuestros estudiantes lo que necesitan (equidad), todos tienen una mayor oportunidad de tener éxito. Nuestro trabajo es proporcionar los recursos necesarios a los estudiantes que los necesiten cuando los necesiten.

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