Focus on Special Education

District Invests in Special Education, Expands Inclusion Efforts

Fresno Unified will make significant new investments to special education in the coming school year, including more classroom teachers, paraprofessionals and assistants, and new portable classrooms.

See SPECIAL ED INVESTMENTS
Continued on page 12

About this Edition

The July edition of Building Futures highlights the district’s special education program, with information and photos on pages 1, 3, 8, 12 and 14.

District Celebrates

Hoover High School seniors celebrate their graduation at the Save Mart Center June 5. Hoover was among 15 graduation ceremonies in Fresno Unified. See pages 4-6 for more graduation photos.

Benjamin De La Rosa works on his letters in kindergarten at Starr Elementary School. Starr is among several campuses that will benefit from the district’s investments in special education.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>One-Time Investments</th>
<th>Ongoing Investments</th>
<th>Full-time Equivalent Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>$3.3 million</td>
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<td>Paraprofessionals and Assistants</td>
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<td>Designated Instructional Services</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Residential Placements</td>
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<td>Portable Classrooms (four) and Materials</td>
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</table>
It’s summer, but Fresno Unified wants families to know that many campuses are still open for a variety of uses.

Looking for a place to cool off? Try swimming at the pools at Edison, Fresno, Hoover, Roosevelt or Sunnyside high schools. Community swimming will last through Aug. 2 in the afternoons weekdays and weekends. It’s free on the weekends and $1 for children and $2 for adults on weekdays. The city is providing lifeguards.

Need swimming lessons? The city of Fresno’s parks department is offering instruction at the pools at Bullard, Edison, Fresno, Hoover and Sunnyside. For more information call (559) 457-6250 or visit www.fresnounified.org.

Need a place to play or exercise on the weekends? The district is continuing its “green space” partnership with the city at 14 district schools on the weekends and holidays: Addams, Vang Pao, Vinland, Wilson and Yokomi elementary schools; Scandinavian, Terronez and Wawona middle schools; and Bullard, Edison, Fresno, Hoover, Roosevelt and Sunnyside high schools. The city provides supervision and programs.

Free summer lunch: The district offers a free nutritious lunch at more than 50 of its school sites for ages 1 through 18 through Aug. 11. No registration or application is needed. For more information, call (559) 457-6250 or go to www.fresnounified.org.

“Fresno Unified is committed to providing resources to our youth year-round and I truly hope to see students, parents and our community enjoying the safe and supervised options we have available through our Blue and Green Space partnership with the city of Fresno,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.

Escuelas Abiertas para Natación y Almuerzo Gratuito Durante el Verano

Ya llegó el verano, pero el Distrito de Fresno quiere dejarle saber a las familias que habrá muchos sitios escolares que permanecerán abiertos para una variedad de usos.

¿Busca un lugar donde ir a refrescarse? Intente nadar en las albercas de las preparatorias Edison, Fresno, Hoover, Roosevelt o Sunnyside. Natación en la comunidad durará hasta el 2 de agosto y será entre semana y fines de semanas por las tardes. Es gratis en los fines de semana y $1 para los niños y $2 para los adultos entre semana. La ciudad estará proveyendo los salvavidas.


“El Distrito de Fresno está comprometido a proveer los recursos a nuestros jóvenes durante todo el año y espero de corazón ver a los estudiantes, padres y a nuestra comunidad disfrutando de las opciones seguras y supervisadas que tenemos disponibles a través de nuestra asociación de espacio azul y verde con la Ciudad de Fresno,” dijo el superintendente Bob Nelson.

Cov Tsev Kawm Ntawv Qhib Da Dej thiab Su Dawb thoob plaws lub Caij Ntuj Qhua


“El Distrito de Fresno está comprometido a proveer los recursos a nuestros jóvenes durante todo el año y espero de corazón ver a los estudiantes, padres y a nuestra comunidad disfrutando de las opciones seguras y supervisadas que tenemos disponibles a través de nuestra asociación de espacio azul y verde con la Ciudad de Fresno,” dijo el superintendente Bob Nelson.

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“Fresno hauv paus tsev kawm ntawv tau cog lus los npaj muaj tej chaw muab kev gab rau peb cov me nyuam hlusas thawm xyoos thib kuv tso siab lug pom tej lub kawm ntawv, tej niam ttxiv thiab peb lub zej lub zos muaj kev lom kem kev nyob nyab xeeb thiab kev saib xxyus tej kev xaiy peb muaj los ntawv peb qhov “Blue and Green Space” koom tes rrog lub nrog Fresno,” Tuam Thaw Saib Kev Kawm Bob Nelson hais li.
**SUPERINTENDENT’S Message**

**Investments for 2019-20 will Better Support All Students**

The community is swimming in our pools, kids are spending time in our school libraries and playing on our fields and free summer meals are being served to children from 1 to 18 — it’s summer time in Fresno Unified. In addition, students have been engaged in summer learning at more than 40 school sites district wide. From summer school to enrichment classes to literacy programs and professional learning for our adults, academic learning doesn’t stop just because summer kicks in. Research shows that summer time can have a detrimental impact on student learning, creating a gap in a child’s academic achievement. Students who engage in summer learning or simply spend quality time reading can reduce that instructional loss, helping them stay on track. Thanks to our board of education’s commitment to academic achievement, students have had several learning options to choose from this summer.

On June 12, our Board approved the district’s 2019-20 annual budget, ensuring that students and staff continue to have the resources and supports needed to be both academically and socially/emotionally successful. Next year’s budget includes:

- Converting 3.5 hour pre-kindergarten paraprofessional positions into 7.0 hour positions and increasing hours for transitional kindergarten aides from 3 to 6 per position to better support classroom learning and recruiting efforts
- Increasing school site funding allocations
- Converting health assistants to LVNs and adding additional nurses, psychologists, social workers and academic school counselors
- Adding additional vice principals to five school sites to support growing student populations
- Adding positions in the skilled trades and converting all bus driver positions to full time to bridge driver shortages and improve service to students

The board’s largest investment is in support of our special education students and is guided by recent recommendations from the Council of the Great City Schools. With feedback from the district’s special education committee, parents and the community investments include additional special education teachers and aides, instructional coaches and program

**Message from Dr. Colleen Torgerson, Professor in Special Education at the Kremen School of Education and Human Development at Fresno State University**

**Inclusive Learning is a Call for Change**

“Every student can and must learn at grade level and beyond” (Fresno Unified Core Belief). Fresno State’s mission similarly states, “To boldly educate and empower students for success.”

As parents and citizens in our region, we want all of our students to be appreciated and accepted in classrooms, schools, and communities, throughout their life. These high expectations and a sense of belonging are required for success in schools.

Looking at the attitudes and environments that exist that may isolate learners or inhibit student growth, educators must identify and remove barriers (academic, social, physical), finding solutions to ensure access to the general education curriculum and to a community of peers. This human right is called inclusive education.

Inclusive education is when all students attend and are welcomed by the district’s schools and programs in age-appropriate, general education classes. It means the students are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life in Fresno Unified, often attending their neighborhood school. An inclusive education is not earned, but a right of all students.

In Fresno Unified this looks like different and diverse students learning side-by-side in the same classroom — attending activities together, using a student’s name (never defining children by a label), jointly participating in the arts and sports, recognizing the unique contributions of each student, and ensuring a sense of belonging.

Fresno State and Fresno Unified have been partners in residencies, which have elevated the preparation of new teachers with an inclusive mindset and provided them different ways to teach students of varying abilities. Since 2013, faculty and district education specialists have team taught candidates proven strategies with the lens of Fresno Unified. These new teachers are empowered to support this inclusive work in their classrooms. Future work in implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and in the preparation of new teachers in special education through a state residency grant will strengthen the core belief.

Inclusive education is a call for change and may challenge us to think differently about others, how we use labels, and how we work together. We are up to the challenge as all students are of value and can learn.
CLASS OF 2019

Bullard High School
June 4, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Valedictorians

Mansar Alloh
Melina Anguiano
Kenneth Ballard
Arman Bashian
Anastasia Bates
Leyton Beck
Alexander Bedard Dureza
Joshua Bertz
Abigail Blescher
Teresa Botts
Tyler Brown
Lauren Burgess
Casandra Carr
Nalani Cazares

Brenda Cossio
Jeremiah Cunningham
Rachel Dellanini
Connor Dukes
Hannah Fratina
Haley Gietz
Anna Gonzalez-Velez
Nicole Guerrero
Nevaeh Guizan
William Halvorsen
Madison Hintorne
Angelina Hoshiko
Elizabeth Hatzler
Allison Jack
Kylah Jordan
Noorjot Kaur
Xandra Lancaster
David Lara
Khavanjot Mann
Arianna Madrigal
Jenna Markbarian
Cynthia Mata
Caitlyn McCormick
Scott Mellon
Taylor Morgan
Raymond Padilla
Courtney Peters
Dylan Peterson
Audrey Quiroga
Anthony Ramirez
Rachel Regier
Layla Smithberg
Demetrios Stratigos
Nicholas Tom
Mark Topocian
Emily Ymm
Lukas Wagner
Emily Xiong
Kelly Zhou

Fresno High School
June 3, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Valedictorians

Maria Aguilar Perez
Isidro Almen Medina
Fabiola Alvarez Oceguera
Marisela Avila
Faith Ahobe
Carmen Cruz
Juan De La Pena Menendez
David Diaz-Alaniz
Joseph Downes
Eliza Gonzales
Gisselle Gutierrez-Bolas
Geysi Amador Herrera
Mason Hodge
Sean Hustedde
Gabriela Jimenez
Kenney Kenner III
Gavin Krantz
Mary Jane Martinez
Brooke Rowland
Cynthia Mathias
Monserah Medina Hernandez
Suela Mousa
Jacinta Nunez
Juan Pacheco Mendez
Steven Palermo
Martin Patel
Kasandra Rodriguez
Paola Santiago
Violet Syrisack
Wilma Tsutsui
Diana Vang
Melanie Vang
Jose Luis Velasco
Annabel Xiong
Phailin Yang

Design Science Middle College High School
May 31, 2019 | Old Administration Building

Valedictorians

Ashley Marie Allen
Alexis Nicole Cruz
Nestor Emanuel Diaz
Alex Michael Dominguez
Rodnea Deshayne Doyle
Seth Gifford Kroeker
Nathan Ichiro Nakaguchi
Gustavo Miguel Pichardo Villasenor
Lalitta Teda Rathasomasath
Alexandra Isabela Velasco-Sandoval
Jubie Ka Yang
Kenny Nymuyay Tsawipsoa Yang
Yuepeng Alex Yang

Duncan Polytechnical High School
June 5, 2019 | Saroyan Theatre

Valedictorians

Elena Denise Barreto
Nayely Flor Hernandez Maldonado
Emily Our Jnthavong
Daniel G. Nire
Bordin Yang
Luz Jarolte Vargas Aburto
Sandra Vazquez
Mayly Yang
CLASS OF 2019

Roosevelt High School
June 3, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Valedictorians
Chantrea Samuel Chheng
April Natalie Garcia-Martinez
Tanet Marlen Garcia-Martinez
Marissa Marianna Gonzales

Hannah Maiiv Her
Phiphounpham Catlintha Hov
Viceua Kholu Khonepheng

Maya Karen Elizabeth Sosa
Lee Thao
Gabriela Vega Montano

Roosevelt High School
June 5, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Valedictorians
Catlyn Rose Bloomer
Randy Daniel Cardona
Megan F. Carey
Alyssa Marie De La Teja
Miguel Angel Flores Rosales
Kyle Ryan Gage
Kharma Yi Ting Garcia

Yorkabel Rezene Gebrehiwot
Filiberto Gonzalez
Nelda Dalaya Gonzalez Montoya
Yvette Jardon
Danny Joe Karamanian
Brandon Lee
Trinity Pajsiab Lee

Hoover High School
June 3, 2019 | Warnors Theater

Valedictorians
Mikayla Ann Marie Loera
Mercedes Linda Preston
Maynor Leonel Quiroz
Adriana Valles Romero
Miranda Yasmine Thor
Yosef Martin Villanueva Gaytan

Patiño School of Entrepreneurship
June 3, 2019 | Warnors Theater

Valedictorians
Jason D. Adams
Kyla Therese Vicente Aguilar
Destin Byrd
Layla Diane Gonzalez-Padilla
Alla Jamal Hassun
Jennifer Lopez
Nicholas Miskulin
Arin Ashley Montoya
Keerat Riar
Dashiel Rodriguez-Machin
Dawson Sihavong
Wippreet Singh
Christina Rose Weakley

Sunnyside High School
June 5, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Valedictorians
Mariam Fisal Altam
Denise Bautista-Figueroa
Jesus Cantor
Yamile Carrillo-Cruz
Alysia Elizabeth Chavez
Jonae’ Nicole Dejohnette
Jasmine Dilworth
Alex Bori Dorn

Cithali Belladria Eguia
Jordan Nou Yang Fang
Ciclo Arizbeth Flores Pena
Val Kyler Gonzalez
Yazmin Gonzalez
Anita E. Guerrero
Braelen Edward Head

Hannah Maiiv Her
Phiphounpham Catlintha Hov
Viceua Kholu Khonepheng

Rosie Michelle Sip
Elizabeth Yangui Sawamunah
Tania A. Starks
Linda Thao
Hugo Valencia
Jennifer Douchee Vang
Kathy Yang
Tai Chong Yang
Mark Yang

Sunnyside High School
June 5, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

Rata High School
May 31, 2019

www.FresnoUnified.org | PREPARING CAREER READY GRADUATES |
Valedictorians

Edison High School

June 4, 2019 | Save Mart Center

Mary Aricee Mateo Abrea
Mariela Alexandra Alvarado
Caroline Anaeha Alvarez
Roean Amer
Dominick Anthony Antuna
Marilyn Leslie Aranda
Soledad Arguelo
Zakia Inani Ashley
Amy Kaur Bains
Atticus Daniel Boone
Samantha Camarena
Gabriel Michael Camarillo
Sarah Christine Creviston
Torin Julius Deblieck,
Miguel Andy De La Cruz
Galilea Cielo De La Mora
Ivan Diaz
Darin Emily Claire Diep
Noah Fiori
Ariana Rose Fischer
Madeleine Leigh Fischer
Mason Seaton Freeny
Julisa Gaytan
Alycia Hope Gonzales
Daria Adine Goss
Abigail Guerrero-Nunez

Claire Elise Hall
Alexander Harper
Samuel David Hawley
Krysta Monet Haynes
Dillon Mark Heidenreich
Claudia Herrera
Ray Gerard Gelido Jacildone
Mirian Andine Janigian
Anthony Joseph Jorge
Uriel Lopez
Alejandra Lopez Gonzalez
Audrey Meredith Mack
Jocelyn Marquez
Cristian Martinez
Megan E. Matsubara
Robert William McCluskey
Lindsey Renee McNelly
Nalllely Mendizá
Zoe Mayn Miller
Carrie Patterson
David Perez
Katherine Pitcher
Jacob Plumb
Juan Carlos Puerto
Henry Quan
Jocelyn Marie Rabara

Nathan David Ribb
Daniel Rodriguez Salinas
Elisabeth Romero
Stephanie Ruiz
Amrinder Singh
Brendan James Smith
Cooper R. Smith
Oliver John F. Tanjoco
Mariah Grace Tellez
Jodie E. Teves
Khepri Lain Marie Urrea
Arianna Christine Valdez
Moua Kong Rocky Vang
Pachia Vang
Eden P. Van Suen
Eduardo Ibarra Vega
Paulina L. Vergara
Pricilla Vidal-Ramirez
Alisa Virasith
Chue Vue
Audrey Wilkinson
Trinity F. Williams
Der Yang
Kong Pheng Yang
Nkaujinou Yang

McLane High School

June 4, 2019 | McLane Stadium

Valedictorians

Yulitzy Anahi Arriola-Robles
Gabriel Alfonso Camacho
Yesenia Angel Carrillo
Yesenia Elizabeth Carvaz
Collie Ntxhiavmim Cha
Robert Chanthavongsa
Karen Lizette Garcia Rubio
Leslie Vianet Garibay
Genesis Alyssa Gonzalez
Jacqueline Gonzalez
Song Her
Luis Mario Jimenez
Chenrmin Benjamin Lee
Adriana Macias
Melina Mendez Lopez
Alyssa Michelle Montoya
Maider Moua
Eric Rojas
Chee Nou Thao
Julia Yue
Angelina Jaia Xiong
Chong Xiong

J.E. Young
Academic Center

May 30, 2019 | Saroyan Theatre

Nathan David Ribb
Daniel Rodriguez Salinas
Elisabeth Romero
Stephanie Ruiz
Amrinder Singh
Brendan James Smith
Cooper R. Smith
Oliver John F. Tanjoco
Mariah Grace Tellez
Jodie E. Teves
Khepri Lain Marie Urrea
Arianna Christine Valdez
Moua Kong Rocky Vang
Pachia Vang
Eden P. Van Suen
Eduardo Ibarra Vega
Paulina L. Vergara
Pricilla Vidal-Ramirez
Alisa Virasith
Chue Vue
Audrey Wilkinson
Trinity F. Williams
Der Yang
Kong Pheng Yang
Nkaujinou Yang

Fresno Adult
School

May 30, 2019 | Saroyan Theatre

Cambridge
High School

May 30, 2019 | Saroyan Theatre

DeWolf
High School

May 30, 2019 | Saroyan Theatre
The Tsutsui siblings – eight of them – have been a little tribe among Fresno High School Warriors.

But as of June 3, the last Tsutsui graduated from Fresno High, ending 11 years of Tsutsui siblings at the campus. Each sibling was a valedictorian and all but one a graduation speaker.

Among them, they served as student body or class officers 21 times and earned 28 varsity letters, along with a string of other accomplishments.

“The Tsutsui family has been an avid supporter of Fresno High School for many years. Each of the Tsutsui children have contributed their own unique quality to the tapestry of Fresno High School,” said Principal Linda Laettner. “Their character traits are truly captured in our Warrior way. A few of these traits include being a risk-taker, being caring, keeping an open-mind and being balanced in their approach to academic and extra-curricular activities.”

It started with Martha Tsutsui Billins, who graduated in 2008. She is completing her Ph.D. in linguistics at SOAS, University of London. Krista Tsutsui Steele (class of 2010) is a teacher at Muir Elementary School. Sarah Tsutsui (class of 2011) is a teacher at Pyle Elementary School. Laura Tsutsui (class of 2013) was a Smittcamp President’s Scholar and is now a reporter at KVPR.

Julia Tsutsui (class of 2014) graduated in May from Fresno State and is pursuing her teaching credential. Hannah Tsutsui (class of 2015) was a President’s Scholar at Long Beach State and graduated in May. She will go to Colombia with the Peace Corps in September. Takashi Tsutsui (class of 2018) is a student at Fresno City College. Wilma Tsutsui (class of 2019) will attend Fresno City College.

Wilma, in her graduation speech, spoke of the pressure she felt to do as well as her older siblings: “Jokingly I would say if I didn’t become valedictorian I would be disowned. However, despite all the expectations of everyone else, we have to fulfill our own.”

Through their years at Fresno High, the only teacher to have all the siblings was history teacher Richard Ochs. Ochs suggested their parents, Larry and Julie Tsutsui, should write a book on how to raise healthy, happy and productive children. Julie Tsutsui is a preschool teacher at Wolters Elementary School and Larry Tsutsui is a chiropractor with an office a block from Fresno High.

“Having the honor to be the only FHS teacher to have taught all eight siblings, I would have to say that while all of them are different and unique in their own way, they all share the same caring attitude towards others and a determination to do their absolute best at everything they attempt,” Ochs said. “I wish more of my colleagues could have had the chance to teach at least a couple of them.”
Focus on Special Education

Musicians Hit the Right Notes Partnering with Students in Special Ed

General education students and students with disabilities are playing beautiful music together. For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/unitedsound

Through the United Sound initiative, general education students at four high schools worked with students in special education to help them learn an instrument. The students worked together for about four months once a week. At the end of the school year, the students in special education were part of their school’s ensemble during the spring concert.

Fresno Unified piloted the United Sound program at Fresno, Hoover, McLane and Sunnyside high schools during the last school year, and will expand it to Bullard, Edison and Roosevelt high schools in the coming academic year.

United Sound has created a new bridge between students in general education and students in special education, fostering friendships and understanding. “It’s neat to see the relationship grow between our mentors and our new musicians,” said Catherine Aujero, manager of visual and performing arts for the district. “They don’t normally get to build those relationships and see the value of each other and really respect one another and grow to care about each other.”

Anthony Duran, who will be a sophomore at Hoover this year, said he had always wanted to learn how to play an instrument.

“I like playing music. It makes me feel happy. I play the trombone. I like doing that,” Anthony said.

Adult Transition Program Helps Students Learn Independence

Students with developmental disabilities in Fresno Unified have the option of continuing their education with the district up until age 22 to help them transition to independence.

This past school year was a significant one for the Adult Transition Program (ATP), launched in 2009. Students and staff returned to school in August 2018 to a renovated campus that provided more flexibility in classroom and support spaces for different activities.

The drop-off area and entry were also improved.

“Having a new facility has been exciting for both students and staff. The investment in ATP shows the commitment the district and the board have made for our students,” said Derrick Flake, who oversees ATP.

In another milestone, ATP recognized 31 students during a festive promotion ceremony June 4, the largest number since the program began. ATP serves about 185 students. The campus is on Fairmont Avenue near First Street and Shaw Avenue.

The program, for students 18 to 22, offers training, support and education, with the goal of helping students become as independent as possible. Students learn skills such as navigating the city bus system, preparing their own meals, washing their clothes, managing money, and other independent life skills.

Through WorkAbility, many of the students learn marketable job skills and work at jobs or internships. Calen Jones, for example, worked at a hardware store using the skills he had learned while attending ATP. Having a job was extremely satisfying to Jones, giving him an opportunity to earn money, learn on-the-job skills and work with others.
Design Science High School Moves to Fresno City College Campus

When the new school year starts in August, Design Science Middle College High School will be in its new location on the Fresno City College campus.

Design Science is one of Fresno Unified’s specialty high schools, offering concurrent enrollment in Fresno City College classes. The school had been housed in temporary buildings east of the college across Blackstone Avenue on Cambridge Avenue and sharing space with Patiño School of Entrepreneurship.

“This move is an example of educational systems working together on behalf of students. We know this move will impact our students in a powerful way. Being on a college campus and feeling at home is very important for college students, especially first generation college students,” said Principal Tressa Overstreet. “We believe in the power of place. We cannot wait to start our new school year in our new home!”

The school’s new home is within the Business Education Building. Over the summer, seven classrooms and seven offices/flexible spaces on the first and second floors are being renovated for Design Science classrooms and lab. As part of the collaboration, Fresno City College will take over use of Design Science’s former modular buildings.

As part of the Fresno City College campus, students will have easy access to their college courses as well as tutoring and other services. The long-range plan calls for Design Science to eventually move to a new science building at Fresno City College, targeted for completion in 2023.

Design Science, which opened in 2005, has 265 students and a 100% graduation rate. The California Department of Education named it a California Distinguished School this past year. For the past three years, 100% of seniors applied for college and were accepted by at least one college or university. Many of its students are the first in their families to attend college.

New Expanded Campus Planned for Phoenix Secondary Academy

A new campus is underway for Phoenix Secondary Academy in southeast Fresno, using $11.7 million in Measure X funds.

The master-planned campus will include 23 modular buildings: 15 classrooms, a career technical education classroom, multipurpose room, administration building, social/emotional support space, three restroom buildings and a custodial/electrical/storage facility.

The school is planned to open in early 2020 at a district-owned site on Church Avenue east of Peach Avenue.

The project also includes play courts, playfields and a shade structure. The new school is among several projects underway thanks to the community’s support of Measure X, the $225 million local bond passed in November 2016.

The Fresno Unified Board of Education approved Phoenix Secondary Academy at Fresno City College in southeast Fresno, using $11.7 million in Measure X funds. The board approved construction in late 2019.

Phoenix Secondary offers community day classes for seventh through 12th grades – a challenging educational program for at-risk students with attendance or behavior issues.

“We are thrilled to have the support from Fresno Unified’s board members and district leaders to begin this exciting project,” said Mark McAleenan, principal at Phoenix Secondary. “The redesigned classrooms will provide opportunities to enrich our classroom instruction. The new playing field and courts will allow us to enhance our athletic program and provide us the opportunity to host games and tournaments. We will also be able to expand our social emotional support services with the increased office space in our new facility.”

DISTRICT ROUNDUP

Olympian Named Wrestling Coach at Fresno High School

Steven Abas, silver medalist in the 2004 Olympic Games in wrestling and a three-time NCAA champion (125) while at Fresno State, has been named the varsity wrestling coach at Fresno High School.

Abas was a four-time All-American while at Fresno State from 1998-2002 and won numerous other awards and honors. He also had a brief career in mixed martial arts.

“We are excited to welcome Coach Abas to Fresno Unified, knowing that he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with our Fresno High student-athletes,” said Superintendent Bob Nelson.

Communications Specialist Wins Award

Jeff Cook, a media production specialist in the district’s Communications Department, has won a Telly award for his Faces of Fresno Unified video of former student neighborhoood resource officer Conrado Martin. The video is an emotional depiction of Cooper Academy’s farewell to Officer Martin after he was promoted to sergeant in December. The video won in the category of General Documentary: Individual for Non Broadcast.

Wawona Honors Donors to Library

Wawona School honored the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, the Camunez Means Family and Edison International for donations totaling $5,000 to the library during a special ceremony June 4. The funds will be used to develop a dual immersion language collection to better serve Wawona students. Wawona, formerly a middle school, became a dual immersion campus in 2017. It will eventually serve preschool through eighth grade. This fall, the school will offer a dual immersion program in pre-kindergarten through second grade.

Employees Raise $11,000 for Babies

Fresno Unified raised more than $11,000 during the 2019 March for Babies campaign for March of Dimes. The district’s efforts will help ensure that one day, every baby will be born healthy. Burroughs Elementary School was the top fundraising school this year.

Donors to Library Wawona Honors

The school’s new home is within the Business Education Building. Over the summer, seven classrooms and seven offices/flexible spaces on the first and second floors are being renovated for Design Science classrooms and lab. As part of the collaboration, Fresno City College will take over use of Design Science’s former modular buildings.

As part of the Fresno City College campus, students will have easy access to their college courses as well as tutoring and other services. The long-range plan calls for Design Science
Alternative Education Students Building Boxes for Book Sharing

Through a summer Geometry in Construction class, students can knock out math and elective requirements needed for graduation.

Students in the class are also helping their community. As one of the construction projects, students are building book-sharing boxes to encourage reading.

The district piloted the Geometry in Construction last summer, but for the first time this summer, offered the class to alternative education students from Cambridge, DeWolf and J.E. Young high schools.

“The Geometry in Construction course provides a unique opportunity for students. Not only do they get to recover credits for geometry, but students also get to provide service to the school and the community by building these Little Free Libraries,” said Tom Nixon, manager for On-Line Learning and Library Services.

Little Free Library is a non-profit organization that promotes book sharing through book boxes on posts in the community. The organization offers blueprints and measurements to construct the boxes.

Through the Fresno Unified summer course, students will build Little Free Library boxes for placement at Calwa, Columbia, Heaton, King, Norseman, Olmos, Pyle, Slater and Sunset elementary schools.

Students will also build Adirondack-style chairs, bird boxes and roof trusses.

The course teaches math skills through hands-on construction projects, team-taught by geometry and construction teachers. Students take the class in the construction shop at Fresno High School from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. for 22 days, ending on July 11. Students can earn 10 credits.

Along with 20 alternative education students, 20 Fresno High students are taking the class.

Staff from Fresno High, Alternative Education, Curriculum and Instructional and College and Career Readiness worked together on the summer class. The district worked with the Reading Heart and Every Neighborhood Partnership organizations to select schools most in need of Little Free Libraries.

McLane Stadium Gets Makeover

McLane Stadium will have a new look when the 2019 football season gets underway in August. Over the summer, the stadium is undergoing a $2.7 million makeover, including replacing the natural grass with synthetic turf, a first for the district. The project also included infrastructure and utility updates, adding portable restrooms and improving accessibility.
Testing Technician has all the Answers to Support Adult Students

Say Xiong has spent her entire 20-year career with Fresno Unified at the adult school, first as a bilingual instructional assistant and since 2000 as a testing technician. Her outstanding technology and people skills make her an invaluable employee and a huge support for adult school students. She was an Excellence in Education finalist in February. Xiong immigrated to the United States from Thailand in 1980, first arriving in San Diego. Raine Bumatay, principal at the Cesar E. Chavez Adult Education Center, said about Xiong: “Say Xiong makes work an extra special place with her positive spirit and desire to brighten our students’ and staff’s day.”

What do you enjoy the most about your job? I enjoy meeting new students and engaging with them, giving them tests to measure their educational levels and placing them into the class that is right for them. I feel like I am giving them a second chance to achieve their educational goals so they may have a good opportunity to get a job to help support their family.

What is the most challenging about your job? Communicating with second-language students that come to the test center with very limited English speaking and trying to capture all students with their progress post-test after a certain amount of instructional hours has been a challenge for me.

What are some of the ways you help students relax so that they can do their best during testing? I talk to them. I encourage them to do their best and calm them by keeping a positive attitude as they enter the test center.

I understand you play in a Christian rock band and play volleyball in your spare time. Tell us about those activities. This year, I have the opportunity to lead the female band for our church and our goals are to lead praise and worship songs once a month. We also have a few projects as part of serving our church. In June, we will be performing at the Sacramento New Generation Festival. We are also working on a CD to be out soon. I was also in a Hmong recreational volleyball league. This is a way of trying to get involved in the community and engaging with young and older adults.

Name one thing most people do not know about you. One thing most people do not know about me is that I am a certified SCUBA diver.

See SAY XIONG
Continued on page 12

Scandinavian Science Teacher Loves to Explore with Middle-Schoolers

Kellen Dart, a seventh grade science teacher at Scandinavian Middle School, began working for the district right out of high school and has been a teacher for six years. She began at Scandinavian Middle School two years ago, and was a finalist for the district’s Excellence in Education awards in February. Eugene Reinor, a guidance and learning advisor at Scandinavian, said about Dart: “Our students love Kellen’s classroom as she teaches with great joy and passion, which promotes a joy for learning in our students.”

What made you go into teaching? I began my journey in education when I started working in after school programs right after high school. Through this experience, I learned that I am passionate about the youth in Fresno and wanted to help them become successful and genuinely happy.

What do you enjoy the most about your job? I enjoy getting to know my students. I love being in space with them and creating a relationship that gets stronger throughout the year.

What is the most challenging about your job? The most challenging part of my job is creating daily lessons that are worthy of my students. I want to be sure each lesson presents enough challenge, engagement, relevance, and autonomy for them. Everything must be exactly right for optimal learning to take place. It is continuously challenging to be sure every day I am meeting the needs of every student in my classroom. No day is perfect, but every day presents a new opportunity to be better than the day before.

What do you enjoy the most about middle school students? Middle school students are the best! They are beginning to gain independence and learn who they are. You get to see them blossom from a child to an adolescent and have the unique opportunity to be a part of that transition. Students at this age are exploring different parts of their identity and learning about the world from new lenses. I find great joy in having moments of shared vulnerability to expose them to new perceptions and ideas.

Name one thing most people do not know about you. One thing most people do not know about me is that I am a certified SCUBA diver.

If you could choose a different career, what would it be? If I were to be in a career other than teaching, I would be a school social worker.

What is your dream vacation? My dream vacation includes a body of water, warmth, good food, and adventure! As long as I have those four ingredients, I’ll be happy!
SAY XIONG
Continued from page 11

**Special Education Department Vision**

The vision of the Special Education Department is that all students with special needs will receive high quality instruction with the greatest number of inclusionary opportunities from the widest array of options.

**Congrats for the Grads**

Roeding Elementary School students have lots of love, signs and high-fives for Fresno High School seniors during a Grad Walk on May 23. Grad Walks give seniors the chance to inspire their younger peers and reconnect with former teachers.

**Special Education Costs**

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</table>

50% Increase since 2013/14

**SPECIAL ED INVESTMENTS**

Continued from page 1

The new investment totals $11.4 million in ongoing money that includes the full-time equivalent of 110 positions, as well as a one-time investment of $1.7 million for portable classrooms and professional learning.

Even prior to the infusion for 2019-20, funding for special education had risen steadily, up 50% since 2013-14.

Following recommendations from the Council of the Great City Schools in summer 2018, the district has redoubled efforts to provide the best possible services to students in special education programs. It has also solicited feedback – nearly 500 suggestions – from parents, staff and the community in determining the most recent investments.

The Fresno Unified Board of Education unanimously approved new investments at its June 12 meeting.

Superintendent Bob Nelson said that the board of education and staff spent a great deal of time during the past school year on a strategic plan to improve special education supports and services.

“In collaboration with our labor partners, staff spent the year diving into recommendations from the recent special education report from the Council of the Great City Schools, identifying our best practices as well as recommendations for improvement,” Nelson said. “Our special education budget for 2019-20 reflects that work, and the input of community members and staff. While the road may be long, for the sake of our students, staff and parents, the district is committed to further support our strengths while bridging our gaps.”

**Congrats for the Grads**

Roeding Elementary School students have lots of love, signs and high-fives for Fresno High School seniors during a Grad Walk on May 23. Grad Walks give seniors the chance to inspire their younger peers and reconnect with former teachers.

know about you. I am a grandma.

If you could choose a different career, what would it be? I would definitely still be in the teaching profession because I love learning and teaching others to better themselves.

What is your dream vacation? When I was younger, I had this desire to travel to all 50 states and this is one of my dreams that I haven’t fulfilled yet. One day, I hope to do at least a few states.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Student Flourishes in the Environment of J.E. Young Academy

When you hear senior Cassiddy Gonzales describe her love for school, her face lights up and it’s hard to imagine that two years ago, she was struggling with severe anxiety and depression.

“I get excited about learning. When I get it, it is an amazing feeling and if I can get anyone else excited about learning, it’s just the best feeling,” Cassiddy said. “I wish I had a better vocabulary to express how happy it makes me, but you can tell by my face.”

Cassiddy graduated May 30 from J.E. Young Academy. She will start her next educational journey at Fresno City College with college credits she earned during her senior year and a solid plan for transferring to Fresno State.

Her sophomore year in high school, Cassiddy’s struggles had become an obstacle to a normal academic life. She started missing school and her grades dropped. With the support of her grandparents and administrative staff from Roosevelt High School, she transferred to J.E. Young, where she transformed herself and bloomed.

The smaller setting at the new school provided Cassiddy with the perfect amount of support and encouragement to excel in all aspects of her life. Smaller class sizes, going from seven to two classes and attending school three days a week helped her to get back on track, although she was never behind on credits to graduate on time.

“So much has changed since being here. I don’t get anxiety any more when I am around people,” Cassiddy said. Her family has played an important role in helping her achieve her dream.

Cassidy’s grandparents, Georgia and Richard Aguilar, always encouraged her and her siblings to pursue college with a simple message “Don’t worry about the cost. Just worry about getting the grades to go to college,” Cassiddy said.

Cassidy finished high school strong as president of the Black Student Union club, participating in the school’s first senior trip and dancing joyfully at prom.

Cassidy said: “I see a future for myself.”

GET THE FACTS ABOUT

Plastics, Metals & Glass!

Did you know…

- Every year, Americans throw away 35 billion plastic bottles.
- Recycling just 1 soda can saves enough electricity to operate a TV for up to 3 hours.
- Glass bottles take over 1 million years to decompose in landfills.

Rosa Perez and Aiden Yang from Sequoia Middle School try out some of the items that will be served over the summer for free meals during an event June 3 to announce the summer meals program and locations.

Free Summer Lunches

Fresno Unified is getting social!

Tag us and share posts!
#FresnoUnifiedIAmReady

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Get Involved!
Grant will Help the District Expand Inclusion Practices for Students in Special Education

The district is participating in a three-year grant as part of its efforts to increase access to the general education environment for students in special education.

The goals of the Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) Grant are to:

- Improve students’ performance on state measures, such as math, English language arts and social emotional skills
- Increase opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in the general education environment and to increase their academic achievement

Campuses directly involved in the SIP Grant work are Holland, Heaton, Starr, Anthony, Wishon and Fremont elementary schools. Susan Kalpakoff, program manager for the Special Education Department, is excited about the work ahead in 2019-20.

“The grant schools’ dedicated work, professional learning and student by student intentional inclusive planning will begin the 19-20 school year as inclusive schools, where all students are presumed to be competent, can develop positive social relationships with peers, and are fully participating members of the school community,” Kalpakoff said.

Women's Alliance Hosts Prom for Students with Special Needs

Roosevelt High School students Kongmeng Xiong and Maria Pulido dance the afternoon away at a prom for students in special education on May 24, hosted by Roosevelt's Women's Alliance. Students from Women's Alliance created a special event for their peers with special needs, complete with D.J., photographer, videographer and refreshments.

Joshua Verduzco, left, and Danny Wharton from Holland Elementary School have fun with a kaleidoscope. Holland is one of the schools that will participate in a grant that encourages inclusion.
El 12 de junio, nuestra Junta Educativa aprobó el presupuesto anual del distrito para el ciclo escolar 2019-20, asegurando que los estudiantes y el personal continúe teniendo los recursos y el apoyo necesarios para un ambiente de aprendizaje acogedor y socioemocional. El presupuesto para el próximo año incluye:

- Convertir las posiciones para paraprofesionales de pre-kindergarten de 3.5 horas a 7.0 horas y aumentar las horas de las posiciones de asistentes de kindergarten transitoria de 3 a 6 para apoyar mejor el aprendizaje del salón de clase y esfuerzos de reclutamiento.
- Aumentar las distribuciones de fondos escolares.
- Convertir a los asistentes de salud a Enfermera Vocacional con Licenciatura (LVN) y agregar enfermeras adicionales, psicólogos, trabajadores sociales y consejeros académicos escolares.
- Agregar subdirectorados adicionales a cinco escuelas para apoyar la creciente población estudiantil.
- Agregar posiciones de especialistas comerciantes (trade specialist) y convertir todos a un nivel profesional con el tiempo completo.

Antes de la temporada, se hizo un esfuerzo para preparar las escuelas para el ciclo escolar de 2019-20 para el año nuevo académico. Además, con la cantidad de progreso que se puede hacer en nuestro distrito, dice mucho de lo que hemos logrado en los últimos años.

La inversión superior de la Junta de Educación es un signo de que estamos convencidos de que el tiempo que invertimos en el aprendizaje de nuestro suelo, así como en otras áreas de la escuela, es un gran logro. Aseguramos que seguirá siendo un gran esfuerzo para el próximo año.

Iremos ahora a una nueva escuela para 2019-20, que nos da una oportunidad para seguir mejorando la educación en nuestras escuelas de manera continua y eficiente.
BOARD ADOPTED
February 7, 2018

TEACHER INSTITUTE DAYS
August 8 & 9

DISTRICT BUYBACK DAY
August 7, 2019
October 28, 2019
March 2, 2020

INSTITUTE & BUYBACK DAYS ARE
NON-STUDENT DAYS

VACATION & HOLIDAYS

Independence Day: July 4, 2019
Labor Day: Sept. 2, 2019
Thanksgiving: Nov. 28 & 29, Dec. 24 & 25
Christmas Break: Dec. 16-Jan. 3
New Year’s Day: Jan. 1, 2020

HOLIDAYS FOR CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

2019: July 4, Sept. 2, Nov. 11, Dec. 25
2020: Jan. 20, Feb. 10, Mar. 16, 20-21, April 10, May 25, July 4

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

2nd & 4th Wednesdays unless otherwise specified
Board Meetings are held at the FUSD Education Center
2309 Tulare Street, 2nd Floor

Public Schools Week - April 28, 2020
CA Day of the Teacher - May 2, 2020
 Classified Employees Week - May 18-22, 2020

FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ACADEMIC CALENDAR
SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

JULY, 2019

HOLIDAY INSTITUTE DAY NOT IN SESSION BUYBACK DAY

AUGUST, 2019

SEPTEMBER, 2019

OCTOBER, 2019

NOVEMBER, 2019

DECEMBER, 2019

JANUARY, 2020

FEBRUARY, 2020

MARCH, 2020

APRIL, 2020

MAY, 2020

JUNE, 2020

JULY, 2020

STANDARDIZED TESTING WINDOWS

Interim 1 Interim 2 October - Jan-Feb State Testing
April 1 - May 31

END OF SEMESTER DATES

Elementary & Secondary

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Public Schools Week - April 28, 2020
CA Day of the Teacher - May 2, 2020
 Classified Employees Week - May 18-22, 2020

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