Are schools going to be shut down again? Our district has no intention of shutting down schools. Schools have established health protocols so that they can remain open safely, providing the in-person learning that is best for most students.

What happens if someone from my child’s school tests positive for COVID-19? If your student was determined to be a close contact to the positive person, you will be contacted directly by your school. A School Messenger is sent to all families at the school to notify them of a positive case on campus.

What happens if my student is determined to be a close contact? Your student may have to quarantine at home. This could change depending on whether modified quarantine is available or your child is fully vaccinated.

What is the definition of close contact? Someone who has been within six feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes (cumulative) or more over a 24-hour period.

See COVID UPDATE Continued on page 2
SCHOOL CHOICE
Continued from page 1

The district offers optional outside.
indoors and on school buses. Masks are
required for providing needed items to students.

middle, education universitaria temprana, educación vocacional y mucho más.

El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno se enorgullece de ser un distrito de elección escolar, preparado para satisfacer las necesidades únicas de una comunidad diversa.

La fecha límite para la solicitud es el 1 de diciembre para el año escolar 2022-23.

COVID UPDATE
Continued from page 1

but is fully vaccinated? If your student has no symptoms and is fully vaccinated (two weeks after the final injection) they do not have to quarantine.

What is modified quarantine? If your student is a close contact but has no symptoms and was wearing a mask and the infected person was wearing a mask, they may enter modified quarantine and continue to go to school (if your school offers this option). They will have to undergo testing on day 5 from last contact to the positive and will have to continue to quarantine from extracurricular activities, such as sports until day 7 with a negative test.

Are teachers and staff required to be vaccinated? A State Public Health Officer order on Aug. 11 required all K-12 staff to submit proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or submit to weekly COVID-19 testing. Any staff member who has not submitted proof of full vaccination by Sept. 30 is required to submit to weekly COVID-19 testing starting the week of Oct. 18.

Does the district offer testing or COVID-19 vaccinations? In September the district began holding free vaccination and testing clinics at several of our schools. Go to fresnounified.org for locations and details.

What if I want my student to return to online learning? The district offers eLearn Academy for transitional kindergarten through 12th grade.

Where can I find more information about COVID-19? Fresno Unified’s website contains COVID-19 information, including a COVID-19 Dashboard that provides the number of positive cases in the district.

Are students required to wear masks? Students and staff must wear masks indoors and on school buses. Masks are optional outside.

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ACHIEVING OUR GREATEST POTENTIAL

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www.FresnoUnified.org
SUPERINTENDENT’S Message

Moving Forward through the Tough Times

Greetings, #FUSDfamily! We are completely immersed in our fulltime return to learning on campuses and all the ups and downs that has entailed. I am beyond grateful that we have returned to in-person instruction – it’s how our students learn best and how our teachers and other staff can make those critical connections with students. But I’m not going to lie – our efforts to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and its increased strain on our district have been taxing on our staff, students and families. This pandemic has thrown us all for a loop time and time again, and unfortunately, we see no immediate relief. Despite the continued uncertainty of what the future holds, our district has never stopped working to bring as much clarity and stability on behalf of our students and families. It hasn’t been perfect, and it won’t be perfect, but I have never in all my years as an educator witnessed such hard work by our teachers, leaders and staff just to keep our day to day operations running. Thank you, Fresno Unified family, for your patience.

This is a good time to highlight one of our newly adopted district values: “We Value Accountability.” During the season that we are in, accountability includes doing all that we can to keep all students and staff safely coming to our campuses every day. We have taken significant steps to ensure that. More than half of our campuses have modified quarantine in place. This means that if a student is identified as a close contact to someone with COVID but has no symptoms and all involved were wearing masks at the time of exposure, the close contact may continue to go to school. As long as the student continues to have no symptoms, wears their mask at all times, and produces a negative COVID-19 test five days following their last exposure, they can stay in class and return to extra-curricular activities on day 7.

We are also excited to have opened free COVID-19 vaccination and testing clinics at several of our schools. This is a convenient way for students and staff to get vaccinated and tested and help keep our campuses healthy and safe.

We are grateful to several community organizations for partnering with us to open the clinics. Youth ages 12 to 17 will need to come with their parent or bring the required signed consent forms. Here’s a list of locations and how to access the consent forms. Please visit fresnounified.org for more on our safety guidelines and COVID-19 Dashboard, which provides information on positive cases by school.

We are battling COVID, and we are battling a substitute shortage, along with all other school districts. So help us spread the word that Fresno Unified is hiring substitute teachers, bus drivers, clerical staff and paraprofessionals. As part of our hiring campaign, we’ve increased our daily substitute pay to $208.04.

While the effects of the pandemic on our daily operations are substantial, it has not diminished the accomplishments of our students every day and their joy to be at school with their peers, on the field with...
School Choice Options for Elementary and Middle Schools

**Dual Language Immersion (Also See Dual Immersion Story on Page 7)**

- Spanish
  - Site-based – For Neighborhood Students
    - Burroughs, Calwa, Centennial, Hidalgo, Jackson, Lane, Roeding, Rowell and Winchell elementary schools
  - Magnet – Students can Apply from throughout the District
    - Ewing, Leavenworth and Sunset elementary schools
    - Wawona K-8 School
    - Yosemite Middle School
    - McLane High School

- Hmong
  - Vang Pao and Balderas elementary schools
  - Apply by Dec. 1 for Ewing, Leavenworth, Sunset, Wawona, Yosemite and McLane; random lottery

**Environmental Science**
- Ahwahnee Middle School: Apply by Dec. 1; random lottery

**Global Studies**
- Baird Middle School (grades 5-8): Apply by Dec. 1; random lottery; also offers agribusiness
- Hamilton K-8 School: Apply by Dec. 1; random lottery

**Gifted and Talented Education (Also See GATE Story on Page 8)**
- Manchester GATE Elementary

School Choice Options for High Schools

**Design Science Middle College High School:** Students also enroll in Fresno City College classes; housed at Fresno City College; apply by Dec. 1; random lottery.

**Duncan Polytechnical High School:** Numerous career pathways, including automotive, construction, electronics and medical; apply by Dec. 1; random lottery.

**Fresno High School:** Offers International Baccalaureate, an academically rigorous and relevant curriculum that teaches students to act responsibly, think critically and contribute to a changing society; apply by Dec. 1; random lottery.

**McLane High School:** Dual language immersion; apply by Dec. 1; language assessment exam.

**Patiño School of Entrepreneurship:** Apply by Dec. 1; random lottery.

**Roosevelt High School:** Performing arts; apply by Dec. 1; random lottery.

**Sunnyside High School:** Doctors Academy; apply by Dec. 1; additional application required; random lottery.

**Virtual Event to Explore Specialty Schools**

The district will host an online event Nov. 8-12 for families and students to explore magnet and specialized schools. The transfer deadline for the 2021-22 school year is Dec. 1.

With the online format, participants can attend Choose your Future Virtual Week any time during the week. Watch for more information from schools and social media on how to attend.

Students and families will be able to select what sites and unique program to explore from nearly 30 magnet and specialized schools. Programs range from visual and performing arts, International Baccalaureate, science/technology/engineering/and mathematics, dual language programs, world languages, early college to career technical education and many more.

High Schools Offer Career Pathway Options to Inspire Students

Seven of the district’s 10 high schools offer specialty magnet programs, ranging from the arts to career technical education (CTE) to an academy for aspiring doctors.

In addition to the high school magnet programs, high schools offer a variety of career pathways.

- **Baccalaureate Career-Related Programmes, Army JROTC, construction, heating and cooling, digital media and more**
- **Hoover High School:** Public service, arts/media/entertainment, construction, eco-technology and more
- **McLane High School:** Art, finance, medical, teaching and more
- **Patiño School of Entrepreneurship:** Business creation, marketing and more
- **Roosevelt High School:** Performing arts, business, culinary arts, fashion design, health, public service, teaching and more
- **Sunnyside High School:** Health sciences, agriscience, multimedia, teaching and more

The district’s four alternative high schools offer CTE options as well.
Patiño School of Entrepreneurship has Connection with Cal Poly

Patiño School of Entrepreneurship, Fresno Unified’s newest and smallest high school, has captured the attention of wildly popular California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

A unique partnership began in 2018 that is now paving the way for more Patiño students to be admitted to Cal Poly.

This past year, eight of Patiño’s 34 seniors were accepted into Cal Poly, with five attending this fall – two on full ride scholarships. The campus, with an acceptance rate of 28%, is the most difficult of the 23 California State University campuses to get into.

The connection began three years ago when Patiño’s staff visited Cal Poly’s business incubator, the Cal Poly Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Hot House.

With Patiño’s unique emphasis on entrepreneurship – all seniors launch their own businesses – Cal Poly took notice of what students were learning and accomplishing. Patiño opened in 2015 to give students the option of an integrated project-based curriculum focused on critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration. Enrollment is 267.

Patiño students and staff have been invited for the past few years to visit during Cal Poly’s annual Demo Days, where summer accelerator student business teams pitch for investment, mentorship, and involvement from industry partners.

This year, Patiño students were invited to set up a booth alongside the Demo Days finalists and share about their own businesses as high school students. Students were also given a tour of the campus, which focused on the entrepreneurship department and its business hatchery.

Perhaps most importantly, the partnership is helping more students get admitted to Cal Poly. Patiño students are given the same “point” that is given to local applicants when they apply for admissions.

And the relationship has led to the establishment of a special fund for Patiño students that specific donors contribute to as part of the Cal Poly Scholars program. The Cal Poly Scholars program supports high-achieving California students from low-income backgrounds, providing financial, academic, and community resources.

All five of the Patiño graduates attending Cal Poly this fall received some funding, with two earning full ride scholarships.

“The Patiño School of Entrepreneurship staff and students look forward to seeing this partnership continue to grow every year,” said Christine Rodriguez, career education coordinator at Patiño. “It’s an exciting opportunity for Fresno Unified students to benefit from the innovation and entrepreneurship focus we share with Cal Poly.”

For more information on Patiño, call (559) 248-7360.

Bullard TALENT K-8 School: Where the Arts are Academic

Every school day morning, buses from all over Fresno arrive at Bullard TALENT K-8 School. Students carrying homework, costumes, scripts, and instruments head to class to start a day filled with rigorous core academics, art, theater, music and movement.

Bullard TALENT (Teaching all Learners through Exceptional New Techniques) is a visual and performing arts magnet school with high expectations for all students. Students come to Bullard TALENT via a district wide lottery bringing their diverse needs, multicultural backgrounds and academic readiness to be challenged and enriched in an environment where learning comes alive under the school’s philosophy, “The Arts are Academic.”

From the first day of kindergarten, all students participate in a Kodaly music program and a visual arts program taught by art and music specialty teachers. As students enter the intermediate and middle school grades, elective specialists provide daily instruction in visual art, media arts, choral music, band, strings, drama, dance and movement.

Grade level and school-wide productions are a central part of the learning process. Creative energy emanates from students rehearsing scenes on the outdoor amphitheater stage or as the beat of the jazz band practicing for an upcoming music festival pulses from "The Creative Zone."

None of this could be achieved without strong parent and community support, along with energetic staff members who model lifelong learning as they stretch, risk and collaborate to make learning dynamic for students.

Students from Bullard TALENT emerge with a solid foundation of skills and knowledge in the Common Core State Standards as well as the California Arts Standards. Students become self-assured and confident to speak before an audience. They learn to be organized as they juggle a hectic schedule in many diverse classes. Cooperation and teamwork responsibility are life skills learned at Bullard TALENT.

The goal is to develop each child to embrace their talents and abilities to reach their full potential.

For more information on Bullard TALENT, call (559) 248-7030.
Cooper Academy provides International Baccalaureate Program

Cooper Academy is an International Baccalaureate World School and is part of the IB continuum in Fresno Unified that also include Dailey Elementary Charter School and Fresno High School. The school offers grades 6-8, with a mission to foster a caring and compassionate environment that empowers students to actively engage in rigorous academic learning, develop positive relationships and embrace the differences within their community. Cooper Academy strives to be a school where high expectations and support creates responsible and productive 21st-century citizens.

The IB curriculum builds critical thinking skills and nurtures curiosity and ability to solve complex problems. The middle school IB program encourages students to make practical connections between their studies and the real world. Cooper offers 23 active clubs and all middle school sports, with 100% of students engaged in arts, athletics or activities. Students attend eight classes. Cooper has a schoolwide GPA of 3.0. It offers a before and after school program that is available to all students.

“Cooper is a place where everyone is welcome and is given the opportunity to grow and be successful,” said Principal Sandra Auble.

For more information on Cooper Academy, call (559) 248-7050.

Award-Winning Computech Middle School Focuses on Science, Tech

Edison-Computech Middle School promotes innovation and opportunities for all students, offering a cutting-edge curriculum to prepare students for an ever-changing world. This focus has led Computech to become one of the most awarded and top-rated middle schools in the nation.

Computech has been awarded the California Distinguished Schools Award seven times and recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School five times. It has been consistently recognized as a top-rated school by Niche and GreatSchools.org.

Computech prides itself on offering innovative classes and programs, including a two-year robotics track as an elective with six sections full of ambitious students. Computech introduces more than 200 students per year to the world of robotics, offering activities during lunch and after school in addition to classes.

Computech also offers a wide variety of career technical education classes and experiences. The Biomed class for eighth graders prepares students to go on to high school programs focused on medical fields. In addition to school day classes in engineering, Computech has also offered extracurricular activities in welding, junior lifeguarding, screen printing and machine embroidery and has the largest 3-D printing laboratory in the district as well as a state-of-the-art laser cutter and solar telescope.

True to its roots in science and technology, Computech has always been a fierce competitor in Science Olympiad, a regional, state and national science competition providing standards-based challenges to nearly 5,000 teams at 375 live and remote tournaments.

While COVID disrupted Computech team attendance in 2021, the 15-member Science Olympiad team will be back for the 2022 season to compete once again in 23 different life, earth and physical science events. In its more than 30-year history at Computech, Science Olympiad students have placed first in the regional competition every year except one and went on to compete at the state level every year, always representing FUSD with pride and striving for excellence and fun.

Athletics at Computech include track, cross country, soccer, baseball, basketball, softball, football, swimming, water polo, golf, tennis and more.

Computech focuses on the social-emotional needs of its students as well. In addition to a supportive administration, staff and counseling, the on-campus emotional support dog Coco is a frequent visitor to classrooms and the main office to help students who are experiencing stress or anxiety.

Also offering support to Computech Tigers is the Tiger Pantry, which provides school supplies, hygiene items and other resources for students. The referral is online, and once submitted students are contacted privately and provided with the requested items.

While the focus of Computech has always been technology and science, it also offers theater classes, including acting, directing, stagecraft and forensics. The music department frequently collaborates with the theater department to present musicals and additional performance experiences.

Extracurricular activities during lunch time are varied and numerous, including Asian Student Union, Latino Student Union, Black Student Union, guitar club, reading club, Life Club and more. The after-school program at Computech supports learning with a robust tutorial program and offers a wide variety of activities, including cooking, forensics, folklorico dance, sewing, leadership, anime, video and board games.

For more information on Computech, call (559) 457-2640.
FOCUS ON SCHOOL CHOICE

Nine Neighborhood Schools Offer Language Immersion Programs

The district continues to expand opportunities for students to be proficient in two languages, equipping them for future success in school and careers.

The district now has nine neighborhood campuses that offer the Spanish dual language immersion program. The program serves neighborhood students, although families do have to request to be in the dual immersion program.

The district also offers dual language immersion programs at four elementary and two secondary schools that recruit students from throughout the district and require a transfer.

The goals of dual language immersion programs are for students to develop bilingualism and biliteracy, grade level academic achievement or above, and develop socio-cultural competencies.

It is strongly recommended that students begin the dual immersion program in pre-kindergarten, transitional kindergarten, or kindergarten, with Spanish instruction for 90% of the day and English instruction for 10% of the day.

With each passing grade level, the percentage of instruction in English increases by 10%. By fourth grade, curriculum is taught 50% in English and 50% in Spanish. Students learn to read, write and speak in both languages.

The district also offers a 50:50 dual Hmong language immersion programs at Vang Pao and Balderas elementary schools. Students study English for 50% of the day and Hmong for 50%.

“The research is clear that dual language immersion instructional programs are the most effective in meeting the needs of not only our English learner students but also in advancing the academics of our English only students,” said Patricia Wolf, a manager who oversees the Spanish dual language immersion program.

The goal is for students to attain high academic achievement in Spanish and English or Hmong and English and be proficient in reading, writing, speaking and listening in two languages.

Neighborhood Schools Offer Benefits as Well

While Fresno Unified offers a variety of schools with magnet specialty programs, most families in the district choose to attend their neighborhood school.

All of Fresno Unified’s neighborhood schools offer high-quality teaching and programs, and nine offer dual language programs. When families choose their neighborhood school, they are usually close enough to walk, or a short drive away from campus.

Neighborhood schools provide a safe and welcoming hub in neighborhoods where families from the area can get to know each other and students can engage in activities with school friends outside of the school day. By going to school in their neighborhood, families and students develop pride in and connection to their region as they progress from elementary to middle school to high school.
District Expands Opportunities for Gifted and Talented Students

Fresno Unified is addressing the needs of its gifted students throughout the district with additional training for teachers. Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) professional learning for Fresno Unified teachers launched four years ago, when the district began encouraging teachers to join GATE Certification Cohorts.

The outcome of this is that 132 teachers at 35 campuses around the district have achieved their GATE certification. The district has specific GATE sites for grades 2-6 at Manchester GATE Elementary School and Yokomi Elementary School. But GATE certification means teachers across the district are prepared to meet the needs of gifted students in their classrooms.

“The certification helps teachers better serve GATE students in and out of a formal GATE program, and those students who may not have qualified for GATE but need accelerated instruction,” said Susana Montañez, manager of the district’s GATE program.

Through the GATE Certification Cohorts, teachers learn GATE strategies collaboratively with colleagues, increase classroom opportunities for acceleration and enrichment for all students and earn district certification and distinction.

District kindergarten through eighth grade classroom teachers are eligible for the yearly cohort, with members selected by lottery with consideration for parity in grade level and region.

The district has also expanded testing opportunities for students. Previous GATE screening was based on parent requests, teacher recommendations and some academic criteria.

Students who qualify for GATE services are provided with educational opportunities to realize their full potential. Following the initial screening, students are qualified as GATE based on criteria that includes scores on reasoning abilities, academic performance, and state tests in English language arts, math and reading.

For more information, contact the GATE Office (559) 457-6073

Making Fun Connections at Roeding Elementary

Second grade lead teacher Cera Brown works with her students at Roeding Elementary School on community building activities. The district’s Climate and Culture staff have designed lessons for the first few weeks of school to foster social emotional health, a thriving learning environment, connections with their peers and a sense of belonging.

Rowell Elementary School first grade teacher Alejandra Orozco-Bedolla listens as Mayra Santiago-Lopez describes the cultural doll she made. Orozco-Bedollo is among 132 teachers across the district who completed the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) training so they can better meet the needs of gifted students in their classrooms.
District's State of Education Fundraiser for Scholarships will Be Virtual

Due to the continuing COVID-19 crisis in the community, Fresno Unified made the difficult decision to move the State of Education program to a virtual format this year.

The district will share a virtual program at 6 p.m. on Oct. 18 through fresnounified.org, Facebook Live and Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC). The program will include scholarship winners from last spring, a message from Superintendent Bob Nelson and recognition of this year’s sponsors.

The district is grateful to sponsors for the continued support of the Fresno Unified Scholarship Fund, which has helped hundreds of graduates each year as they move on to post-secondary education.

Gold Level sponsors:
- Fresno Housing,
- SIMPBK, CalViva Health, EECU,
- AALRR, Darden Architects,
- Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission,
- HAW-Fifty Six

Silver Level sponsor:
- Fresno State University of Advancement

Bronze Level sponsors:
- Fresno County Superintendent of Schools,
- MetEOR Education, ACSA, Central Unified School District

Hidalgo Elementary Celebrates Mexico’s Independence

Hidalgo Elementary School students welcomed members of the Mexican Consulate in Fresno to their school to commemorate Mexican independence on Sept. 14. The celebration included a donation of books in Spanish for the library from the consulate to support the school’s dual immersion program. Hidalgo Elementary is named for a priest – Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla – who launched Mexico’s war of independence in 1810.

Terronez Students Learn about Suicide Prevention

Julia Salinas, clinical school social worker at Terronez Middle School, instructs students as part of the district’s Signs of Suicide (SOS) curriculum presented to all students in grades 8-10 in September and October. SOS teaches students how to identify signs of depression and suicide in themselves and their peers, while providing materials that train school professionals, parents, and communities to recognize at-risk students and take appropriate action.
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Sunnyside High Kitchen Manager Has the Right Ingredients

Thou Khoun Rios, kitchen manager at Sunnyside High School, was part of the tremendous effort by food services staff during the pandemic shutdown of schools that began in March 2020. Food services began providing meals not only to students and families, but those in the community. Khoun Rios has worked for the district since 2005, been a manager since 2011 and at Sunnyside since 2014. She was an Excellence in Education finalist in January. Principal Michele Anderson said about Khoun Rios: “Her work ethic and natural leadership are crucial to keeping our students and staff fed and healthy.”

How did you get into food services? At the time, my daughter attended Aynsworth Elementary School. I met the kitchen manager and she introduced me to the job, explaining to me that it was a good opportunity for me to get started.

What do you enjoy the most about your job? I enjoy serving and meeting children every year, seeing them grow and seeing the new generations develop.

What is the most challenging part of your job? The most challenging part of my job is ensuring the food we serve is properly prepared in an efficient and timely manner – making sure no child is left behind.

What was it like to serve meals to families and the community when schools were closed? It was a very honorable and happy moment since every time they came to get food, they showed their appreciation. It feels good knowing I am helping families not to be hungry. Also, it was very nice meeting all these families and building a relationship.

What connection do healthy meals have to students’ academic success? Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. A healthy meal allows students to focus on class knowing that it is bright and early. As students are still sleepy, breakfast can boost their energy leading them to pay attention in class. I believe without the proper nutrition, students can often be distracted with their stomach grumbling and/or dozing off in class. Paying attention leads to a successful class lesson.

What do you enjoy the most about the Sunnyside campus? My most favorite thing about Sunnyside campus is the staff. The staff are all so friendly and outgoing, and really make you feel like family. Seeing their smiles really passes on the positivity to one another. Another thing I enjoy about the campus is the diversity we have. I am proud to be part of a school that is very diverse. And before the pandemic, how Sunnyside truly showed the appreciation through the diversity assembly.

What food item do kids enjoy the most? The curly fries with mini corndogs.

Wawona Teacher Believes in ‘People First, Learners Second’

Candace Cano, a seventh and eighth grade English language arts (ELA) teacher at Wawona K-8 School, is a leader and mentor among her colleagues who has influenced teachers throughout the district. She is beloved by students for her caring approach to the entire student. Cano began at the district in 2016 when she joined a single subject cohort in the district’s Teacher Residency Program. She was placed at Wawona for the 2017-18 school year. Cano was a finalist for the district’s Excellence in Education awards in January. Wawona Principal Kimberly Villescaz said this about Cano: “She is much more than an English teacher at Wawona. She can go into any class, demonstrate a non-planned lesson and earn the respect of the students, build rapport with teachers and implement small strategies that help improve instruction.”

What sets Wawona K-8 School apart? At Wawona, we are unafraid to try new things! I’ve had the opportunity to be a part of a couple different program pilots and trusted with guiding inquiry as a site. We at Wawona are not afraid to jump in and try new things in the name of learning, and I love that very much.

What made you decide to be a teacher? I truly believe that teachers are one of those careers where you get to make a positive impact in someone else’s life. I love going to work knowing that I have showed up for kids and get to make a positive impact.

What do you enjoy the most about your job? Usually when I tell someone that I teach seventh and eighth grade, I get some interesting looks. I totally understand; young teens can be a lot. But what is also true is that they are hilarious. Their stories, their perspectives... the kids offer a unique lens into our ever-changing world and I love getting to learn alongside them.

What is the most difficult part of your job? At schools, teachers are often expected to know, see, and do all, especially to the students, who are looking to us adults to keep them safe and informed. Being that for someone (or a few hundred people) is a heavy weight to carry, especially in the last two years when there were many questions and very few answers. Teaching was already hard before entering a pandemic, but this new world is even more complex.

Why is it important to encompass social emotional learning along with the subject curriculum? For me, social and emotional learning is the entrance to our subject curriculum and other academic studies. A mantra I often tell myself is “people first, learners second,” which reminds me to see our students exactly where they are and meet them there first. We cannot learn from those and in spaces where we do not feel safe.

What are your favorite ways to connect with students and get them interested in learning? I love connecting concepts to feelings and stories. For me, those can often be the easiest entry point for getting students engaged in the learning. I often challenge myself to think as creatively as I can to make sure that what we are learning can be accessed in multiple ways.

Why do you enjoy teaching English language arts? One of my favorite things to do is to make connections in words and vocabulary. As an ELA teacher, I’m fascinated with the power of language and connecting our more casual vernacular to academic concepts.

If you could choose another career, See CANDACE CANO Continued on page 12
Ascend provides a safe and supportive environment where teens struggling mentally and emotionally can find the support they need to grow and flourish.

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Student Art Exhibits to Reopen for Community Viewing in October

Art from Fresno Unified students is back on public display, with three shows included in ArtHop on Oct. 7 in downtown Fresno from 5-8 p.m. 

**ArtHop downtown** is on the first Thursday of every month. Fresno Unified student art can be found at the **M Street Arts Complex**, where the district rents gallery space. Fresno Unified exhibits will include spoken word presentations by students. The student art shows have been on a hiatus for more than a year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The art can also be viewed by appointment by calling (559) 646-4259. Most of the pieces will be up through October, with the “Carrying Stories” exhibit heading to The Big Fresno Fair Oct. 8.

The shows, in three separate galleries, are part of the district’s REAL collaborative – Relevant Engagement through Art and Literacy. REAL launched in the 2016-17 school year with 12 teachers from across the district. More than 40 teachers are involved now.

Guided by socially relevant themes, students produce projects of art, writing and the spoken word. Their work culminates with public shows at ArtHop. Students participating range from transitional kindergarten through 12th grade.

**Gallery 1: Art from this year and the REAL Virtual Gallery**

The art in Gallery 1 is original student art from this year and the lockdown. Some pieces are in the district’s **virtual gallery**. Since the lockdown, the REAL collaborative has continued its program to provide students with a venue to showcase their art and writing. The art in Gallery 1 represents the creative expression from three high schools across the district: Edison High School (charcoal), Sunnyside High School (painting) and Bullard High School (photography).

**Gallery 2: Fresno High School – “Carrying Stories: Becoming the Butterfly”**

These butterfly art panels were created by Fresno High School International Baccalaureate (IB) juniors in Marina Santos’ English literature virtual class during the lockdown. Identity, culture, and community are some of the primary focuses for Fresno High IB learners. “Carrying Stories” helped to bring stories forward among individuals, families, and the community to the learning environment extending students’ intellectual, emotional, and spiritual reach during one of the most challenging experiences, the isolation of a pandemic. Metaphors are common to every culture and, in some, even play very dominant spiritual and sacred roles as they symbolize spiritual rebirth associated with spring.

Through the power of the butterfly metaphor, learners were able to express the processes of struggle and transformation. The most inspiring transformation was not just their artwork, but their transformation from learner to reader, to writer, and especially to artist during the challenge of the pandemic. Students chose a butterfly design, drew the butterfly on the panel, then cut and pasted magazine colors and textures into their design. Students selected a background color to complement their collaged butterfly, and lastly, hand-lettered their stories around their butterfly with a permanent, black marker.

**Gallery 3: J.E. Young Academic Center – “Sheroes”**

Several months prior to the lockdown, more than 300 J.E. Young Academic Center students participated in a project-based learning art and writing project. That year was the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage, so in keeping with this milestone, students were asked to write a story about their “shero.”

The term “shero” comes from a poem written by the late Maya Angelou. Students at J.E. Young have a variety of class schedules, which made the studio lessons a challenge. Most students had no art experience but were excited about the challenge.

Groups of students were brought into a large classroom at the J.E. Young site, which was used as an art studio for a couple hours a week. Students began by drawing their shero from a photograph, then taught how to paint portraits using acrylic paints. The project’s conclusion was interrupted by the lockdown, but a few students managed to finish their portraits at home.

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**The Arts Soar in Fresno Unified**

The arts are back in business at Fresno Unified schools, including an elementary ballet class at Bullard TALENT K-8 School.

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**CANDACE CANO**

Continued from page 10

**what would it be?** I found out the hard way that I can be pretty particular about my materials. Yes, I’m that teacher who gets the special fonts and spends that extra time formulating the handout to look exactly the way I want it. Because of that, I think I could’ve been in the graphic design field also.

**What is your dream vacation?** A dream vacation would include rest, rejuvenation, and exploration. My favorites include getting a massage, wandering around museums and nature, and decompressing. Any where I could do that, sounds great!

**Name one thing most people don’t know about you.** I’ve been an intern at Disneyland, where I was a photographer and worked in the entertainment department. I loved getting to photograph peoples’ magic memories and add to my own. And yes, it definitely still feels like a “real job.”
Duncan Polytechnical High School officially broke ground on Sept. 17 for a new building that will house its Medical Academy of Science and Health (MASH) programs. The building, expected to be done in fall of 2022, will support students in the medical pathways of Nursing Services (certified nursing assistant), Rehabilitation Therapy and Pharmacy Technician. Each of the pathways offers students the opportunity to go immediately into the workforce and/or higher education after graduation. Students start the MASH academy in ninth grade and during their four years can earn industry recognized certifications in CPR, Blood Borne Pathogens, HIPAA and OSHA 10 for Healthcare leading up to their 12th grade pathway certification as a CNA, in rehabilitation therapy, or as a pharmacy technician.

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/duncangroundbreaking
Every edition of Building Futures features a Student Spotlight. This month, as part of a focus on school choice, magnet school student Ivan Villalobos of Bullard TALENT K-8 School is highlighted.

Ivan Villalobos, an eighth grader at Bullard TALENT K-8 School, has taken full advantage of the opportunities at his school.

He was in various plays through the years and had art class, and this year is involved in the percussion ensemble, advanced band, jazz band, Leadership 2, concert choir, Showcase and the middle school play. He plays the alto saxophone.

Although Bullard TALENT offers an array of arts options, Ivan enjoys music the most.

“The best part of music is the performing aspect and the emotions it can cause. The music I play or sing and how I show emotions with it can have an impact on the audience members,” Ivan said.

He said he has enjoyed performing in middle school plays as well because of the opportunity to evoke emotions in the audience. He’s loved going to a school where the focus is on the arts.

Ivan also enjoys the familiarity of Bullard TALENT, where he has attended since kindergarten. He knows most of the teachers and staff.

A straight-A student, his favorite subjects are math and history: “I love how logical and exact math is and the thinking that goes into it. History is very interesting and important. It is fun to compare our logic nowadays to the logic of the past,” Ivan said.

In his spare time, Ivan likes to play video games and play music and he has achieved a black belt in karate.

“I have been doing karate since I was 5 and I go to the karate school to teach students and take classes,” Ivan said.

Ivan said he has not missed going to a traditional middle school “because going to Bullard TALENT has been such a great experience.”

He plans to go to University High School or his neighborhood high school, Bullard.

“The only downside to going to a K-8 school is that the transfer to high school will be harder for us than other kids. Since many of us have never changed schools before, the separation of our friend groups to different schools will be challenging,” he said.

Child Tax Credit Program Available for Families

Millions of families across the country have not taken advantage of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) program, which provides $300 a month per child under 6 and $250 per child ages 6-17.

Families do not have to file a tax form to receive the credit. The ChildTaxCredit.gov is a one-stop-shop for information about the CTC, including information about how those who have not filed taxes can sign up for payments.

Those who filed taxes in the last two years or used the IRS non-filer portal to get a stimulus check do not need to do anything. The IRS will have automatically begun sending a monthly payment by direct deposit or check by July 15.

For those who did not file taxes in the last two years, a simple form can be filled out to start getting the CTC payments. The form is accessed through ChildTaxCredit.gov. Those applying will need a reliable mailing address, email address, children’s Social Security numbers, their Social Security number (or ITIN) and bank account information if they want to receive direct deposit.

Most families, even those with little to no income, can receive the full amount. A single parent making less than $112,000 or a married couple making less than $150,000 are likely eligible.

Duncan Polytechnical High School held a ceremony Sept. 10 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11. The event not only honored the memory of those who lost their lives but paid tribute to local veterans, police officers and firefighters. The ceremony featured the Duncan Air Force Junior ROTC color guard and cadets, as well as leadership students with American flags. Students pictured are cadet Major Miryam Ramirez, front, and leadership student Librado Camorlinga.

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/9/112021
En medio de tiempos difíciles, seguimos avanzando.

Durante la temporada en que estamos, la escuela sigue sin estar libre de trastornos. Esto ha sido enriquecedor, pero también ha sido difícil. Pero lo que vemos es que nuestra comunidad está unida y está luchando contra la pandemia de COVID-19. Durante la temporada en que estamos, la escuela sigue sin estar libre de trastornos. Esto ha sido enriquecedor, pero también ha sido difícil. Pero lo que vemos es que nuestra comunidad está unida y está luchando contra la pandemia de COVID-19.

Hay personas que han tenido COVID pero no tienen síntomas. No hay nadie que esté totalmente a salvo. Un método importante para garantizarlo es seguir viniendo a nuestras escuelas todos los días. Durante la temporada en que estamos, la escuela sigue sin estar libre de trastornos. Esto ha sido enriquecedor, pero también ha sido difícil. Pero lo que vemos es que nuestra comunidad está unida y está luchando contra la pandemia de COVID-19.

Además de esto, hay que seguir las medidas de seguridad. Esto incluye el uso de mascarillas y la distancia social. También es importante seguir las pautas de COVID-19, como la limpieza frecuente de las áreas comunes y el uso de equipos de protección personal.

En el distrito, cosas interesantes están sucediendo. Hemos abierto una nueva escuela, que incluye una ceremonia de inauguración. En la nueva escuela, se albergarán programas de enseñanza y de preparación para el campo. Esto es importante porque ayuda a mantener nuestras operaciones diarias, incluso durante tiempos difíciles. Cada día, seguimos trabajando para que todos podamos seguir aprendiendo.

Esta es una época de incertidumbre, pero también es una época de oportunidades. Aunque no ha sido perfecto, y no será perfecto, pero nuestro distrito nunca ha dejado de trabajar. Nos hemos encontrado con retos, pero también con logros. En el distrito, cosas interesantes están sucediendo. Hemos abierto una nueva escuela, que incluye una ceremonia de inauguración. En la nueva escuela, se albergarán programas de enseñanza y de preparación para el campo. Esto es importante porque ayuda a mantener nuestras operaciones diarias, incluso durante tiempos difíciles. Cada día, seguimos trabajando para que todos podamos seguir aprendiendo. Durante la temporada en que estamos, la escuela sigue sin estar libre de trastornos. Esto ha sido enriquecedor, pero también ha sido difícil. Pero lo que vemos es que nuestra comunidad está unida y está luchando contra la pandemia de COVID-19.

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Manchester Students Create Clay Mural

Manchester GATE Elementary School began the school year with a new piece of permanent art. Completed at the end of last year, a clay mural now adorns the school depicting famous African Americans throughout the years. The mural was created by combining portions handcrafted by fifth grade students at Manchester.

Manchester GATE Elementary School to participate in a World Clean Up Day event. Volunteers picked up trash on Peach Avenue between Butler and Jensen avenues. Beautify Fresno donated all the cleaning supplies.

Easterby Families Clean Up Neighborhood

Families and the community got together at Easterby Elementary School to participate in a World Clean Up Day event. Volunteers picked up trash on Peach Avenue between Butler and Jensen avenues. Beautify Fresno donated all the cleaning supplies.

Roeding Students Create Newscast

Roeding Elementary School students have launched the Rocket News! newscast, dedicated to informing their community of school announcements, events, and activities. The newscast features students going through the week’s news in a style that is easy for their peers to understand.

Holland Elementary Creates Heart Wall

Taylor Freund’s fifth grade class at Holland Elementary School is creating a Heart Wall featuring messages to encourage and uplift their peers. Inspired by Suicide Prevention Week learning, students contribute messages of kindness and support. Students will continue to add to the Heart Wall throughout the year.

Roosevelt Public Service Students Investigate Biomes

Roosevelt High School’s Public Service Pathway students are learning how to investigate the effect of different biomes on biological evidence. Students recreated the five biomes of California in small plastic aquariums. Students were tasked to work in groups and design their assigned biome to fit into a plastic aquarium. Students will observe a piece of metal with simulated blood and a fingerprint for any changes over time. By the end of the project students will learn what biome can support the preservation of biological evidence such as blood and a fingerprint.

JOIN US FOR TWO FREE OUTDOOR CONCERTS on the West Lawn at Fresno City College!

Bring your blanket or chair and support the arts!

Food trucks, activities for kids and more!

$25 - includes adult beverages

5:00 – 8:00PM

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.fresnocitycollege.edu/performingarts or call 559-442-8260