

BUILDING futures

A Publication of the Fresno Unified School District

A C H I E V I N G O U R G R E A T E S T P O T E N T I A L

District Supports Inclusive Practices for Students

Fresno Unified continues to broaden its inclusive practices for students receiving support services from the [Special Education Department](#).

This enhances the educational experience of students of all abilities. What is inclusion? Inclusive education is educating all students receiving Individualized Education Program (IEP) services in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood schools, with high-quality instruction, interventions and supports so all students can be successful in the core curriculum.

Expanding inclusive practices helps ensure all students have equitable opportunities to participate and be successful in their education.

Expansion of inclusion began more than a decade ago in the district with a pilot at a high school classroom that combined students receiving IEP services and students without IEPs. The district broadened this co-teaching model to all comprehensive high schools, then middle schools.

The strategy is now expanding in district preschools, with 17 classrooms using a co-teaching model.

Inclusive practices also include:

- United Sound, which partners students receiving IEP services with other students to learn how to play instruments and perform together
- United Sports, which partners students receiving IEP services with student athletes to play various sports
- A significant increase in the number of students receiving IEP services taking career technical education (CTE) classes and participating in CTE activities

Inclusive schools have a collaborative and respectful school culture where students receiving IEP services are presumed to be competent, develop positive social relationships with peers, and are fully participating members of the school community.

Specialized programs are available throughout the district to meet the needs of students. Alternative Learning Pathways classes support students with moderate to severe disabilities. Students with mild to moderate disabilities are supported with Special Day Classes, Resource Specialist Program classes and Emotional Disturbance classes.

Connection to [District Goals](#): “We nurture and cultivate the interests, intellect, and leadership of our students by providing an excellent, equitable education in a culturally proficient environment.”

The mission of the Special Education Department is to provide equal access to high-quality inclusive educational options with comprehensive services that support the academic and social-emotional achievement, family, and community engagement of our students that receive Individualized Education Program (IEP) services.

The vision of the Special Education Department is that all students receiving IEP services have equitable educational options to engage in high-quality instruction in the least restrictive environment with high expectations, individualized for each student to be college, career and community ready.

Indoor Mask Mandate Lifted at Schools

Fresno Unified marked a significant milestone on March 14 when students and staff were given the choice of whether to wear masks indoors.

The protocol change followed the lifting of the statewide indoor mask mandate for schools. This was almost two years to the day when schools shut down in 2020 due to COVID-19.

Superintendent Bob Nelson noted that “this news is not a celebration to everyone.” But he said the lifting of the mandate relieves teachers and staff from the burden of enforcing governmental regulations.

“We’re thankful to have that go by the wayside,” Nelson said.

Masks indoors are still strongly recommended, masks continue to be available for students and staff, and the district continues weekly COVID-19 testing at schools.



Cyrax Vang, an eighth grader at Tioga Middle School, smiles at the camera on the first day of school following the lifting of the indoor mask mandate for schools.

Enroll Now for High Quality Preschool for Students 3 and 4 Years Old

Preschool registration opens on April 4 for Fresno Unified’s high-quality early learning programs for the 2022-23 school year. Free programs are available for all 3- and 4-year-old children.

Research shows that children who start school early build a strong foundation for future success.

For more information, visit: earlylearning.fresnounified.org or call (559) 457-3416. Parents can now enroll their child using an online process.

Options include [dual immersion language programs](#) at select schools. Through dual immersion, students learn to speak, read and write in two languages. Programs are available in Spanish and Hmong.

Enrollment began March 1 and is ongoing for transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten. TK is for children who turn 5 between Sept. 2 and Feb. 2, and kindergarten is for children who are 5 on or before Sept. 1. Parents can contact their neighborhood school for more information.

Connection to [District Goals](#): “We value learning.”

Inscriba ahora para Preescolar de Alta Calidad

La inscripción preescolar se abre el 4 de abril para los programas de aprendizaje temprano de alta calidad del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno para el año escolar 2022-23. Los programas gratuitos están disponibles para todos los niños de 3 y 4 años.

Las investigaciones muestran que los niños que comienzan la escuela temprano construyen una base sólida para el éxito futuro.

Para obtener más información, visite: earlylearning.fresnounified.org o llame al (559) 457-3416. Los padres ahora pueden inscribir a sus hijos mediante un proceso en línea.

Las opciones incluyen programas de idiomas de doble inmersión [dual immersion language programs](#) en escuelas selectas. A través de la doble inmersión, los estudiantes aprenden a hablar, leer y escribir en dos idiomas. Los programas están disponibles en español y hmong.

La inscripción comenzó el 1 de marzo y continúa para kínder de transición (TK) y kínder. TK es para niños que cumplen 5 años entre el 2 de septiembre y el 2 de febrero, y kínder es para niños que cumplen 5 años el 1 de septiembre o antes. Los padres pueden comunicarse con la escuela de su vecindario para obtener más información.

Tso Npe Kawm Ntawv rau cov Preschool uas Zoo Heev

Hnub tso npe kawm rau Preschool yuav qhib lub Plaub Hlis Tim rau Fresno Unified cov kev kawm thaum ntxov zoo heev rau xyoo 2022-23. Yuav muaj cov kev kawm pab dawb rau tag nrho cov me nyuam uas muaj 3 thiab 4 xyoos.

Kev tshawb fawb pom tias cov me nyuam uas pib kawm ntawv ntxov npaj tau lub hauv paus ruaj ntse rau yav tom ntej.

Yog hais tias koj xav paub ntau tshaj no, mus rau: earlylearning.fresnounified.org los sis hu rau (559) 457-3416. Muaj ib qho kev ua saum huab cua rau cov niam txiv tau siv los cuv me nyuam npe kawm ntawv.

Nrog rau cov kev xaiv muaj [cov kev kawm ob hom lus](#) nyob rau tej lub tsev kawm ntawv thiab. Hauv cov chav kawm ob hom lus cov tub ntxhais kawm ntawv yuav tau kawm los hais lus, nyeem thiab sau ob hom lus. Cov kev kawm no muaj lus mev thiab lus hmoob.

Hnub cuv npe kawm ntawv pib lub Peb Hlis Tim 1 thiab yuav qib txuas ntxiv rau Transitional Kindergarten (TK) thiab Kindergarten. TK yog rau cov me nyuam uas muaj 5 xyoo yug rau lub Cuaj Hlis Tim 2 mus rau lub Ob Hlis Tim 2, thiab kindergarten yog rau cov me nyuam uas muaj 5 xyoos yug hnub los sis ua ntej lub Cuaj Hlis Tim 1. Niam txiv hu tau rau lub tsev kawm ntawv nyob ib ncig ntawm lawv yog xav paub ntau tshaj no.



Daniel Guzman, a preschool student at Balderas Elementary School, is working on an art project. Preschool registration starts April 4 for the 2022-23 school year.

Fresno Unified School District Important Dates

April 4 Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment Starts

April 11-18 Spring Break

June 10 Last Day of School

August 15 First Day of 2022-23 School Year

The Magic of Storytelling

Students at Kirk Elementary School enjoy a book with guest reader Jason Oliveira from ABC30 at a Magic of Storytelling event on March 25. Speakers included Fresno Unified board members Keshia Thomas and Valerie Davis, Principal Tobaise Brookins and Deputy Superintendent Misty Her. Through a partnership between ABC30, Disney, First Book and the Educational Employees Credit Union, 5,000 books are being donated to Fresno Unified's Addams, Columbia, King, Kirk, Lincoln and Sunset elementary schools. Every student will get to select two books to take home.



Superintendent's Message

It's Great to be Back in School, Learning In Person

It's official – spring has sprung #FUSDFamily! April brings warmer weather, sunnier days, and of course, spring break! Spring break will be observed April 11-April 18 this year, with students returning to the classroom on Tuesday, April 19. April also brings many celebrations! This month we recognize Autism Acceptance Month, National Library Week, National Librarian Day, Earth Day, Administrative Professionals Week and Administrative Professionals Day! Make sure to take time this month to learn more about how you can support those diagnosed with autism and how you can better support a healthy planet. I also encourage you to take time to appreciate your school librarian(s) and administrative professionals this month! They work so hard every day to support our students, staff, and families.

Spring also brings our annual [preschool registration](#), which begins on April 4. One of my top priorities is ensuring high-quality early learning experiences for all of our students. Research shows us that students who have a strong early learning foundation have more positive outcomes throughout their educational journey. Starting April 4, we encourage all parents with 3- and 4-year-old children to begin the registration process. Registering early gives you priority to choose the program that is best for your child's needs. You can learn more and register at [earlylearning.fresnounified.org](#).

In this month's issue you'll see a continued focus on our early learning priority, as well as another top priority of ours – ensuring our students with specialized services experience meaningful inclusion at school. One of my favorite examples of this work in action is our [preschool inclusion classes](#). In just the last couple of years our teams have increased our inclusive early learning classes from just one in the district to now 17 inclusive preschool classes! These classes serve students of all abilities and ensure meaningful inclusion for our students receiving specialized services. You'll find many more great stories in this month's issue so make sure to read on for some great highlights of work from our [Special Education Department](#).

To round out my message this month, I want to recognize a couple of awards! First, I want to congratulate our colleague, [Phil Neufeld, for being named a Top Dog by Fresno State](#) this year! Phil, an executive officer in our IT Department, was selected as a Top Dog by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Way to go Phil!

Last month, our Communications team was recognized with three awards from [CalSPRA](#), or the California School Public Relations Association. The Communications team received a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award of Excellence for our district's multilingual outreach and multilingual materials in the development of our district's new strategic plan. The team also received awards of excellence for [Kimeka Simmons episode of Faces of Fresno Unified](#) and our [Communications student advisory group's mental health PSA](#). Congratulations team!

Don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to see daily highlights of amazing work happening across the district! Enjoy the beautiful weather and I hope you have a safe and restful spring break! Thank you #FUSDFamily!

Tenemos Mucho Que Celebrar Esta Primavera

Es oficial: ¡ha llegado la primavera Familia de FUSD #FUSDFamily! Abril trae un clima más cálido, días más soleados y, por supuesto, ¡vacaciones de primavera! Las vacaciones de primavera se observarán del 11 al 18 de abril de este año, y los estudiantes regresarán a las aulas el martes 19 de abril. ¡Abril también trae muchas celebraciones! ¡Este mes reconocemos el Mes de Aceptación del Autismo, la Semana Nacional de la Biblioteca, el Día Nacional del Bibliotecario, el Día de la Tierra, la Semana de los Profesionales Administrativos y el Día de los Profesionales Administrativos! Asegúrese de tomarse un tiempo este mes para obtener más información sobre cómo puede apoyar a las personas diagnosticadas con autismo y cómo puede apoyar mejor a un planeta saludable. ¡También los animo a tomarse el tiempo para apreciar a los bibliotecarios escolares y profesionales administrativos este mes! Trabajan muy duro todos los días para apoyar a nuestros estudiantes, personal y familias.

La primavera también trae nuestra inscripción preescolar anual ([preschool registration](#)), que comienza el 4 de abril. Una de mis principales prioridades es garantizar experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de alta calidad para todos nuestros estudiantes. Las investigaciones nos muestran que los estudiantes que tienen una base sólida de aprendizaje temprano tienen resultados más positivos a lo largo de su viaje educativo. A partir del 4 de abril, alentamos a todos los padres con niños de 3 y 4 años a comenzar el proceso de inscripción. Inscribirse temprano le da prioridad para elegir el programa que mejor se adapte a las necesidades de su hijo. Puede obtener más información e inscribirse en [earlylearning.fresnounified.org](#).

En la edición de este mes, verá un enfoque continuo en nuestra prioridad de aprendizaje temprano, así como otra de nuestras principales prioridades: garantizar que nuestros estudiantes con servicios especializados experimenten una inclusión significativa en la escuela. Uno de mis ejemplos favoritos de este trabajo en acción son nuestras clases de inclusión preescolar ([preschool inclusion classes](#)). ¡Solo en los últimos años, nuestros equipos han aumentado nuestras clases de aprendizaje temprano inclusivo de solo una en el distrito a 17 clases preescolares inclusivas! Estas clases sirven a estudiantes de todas las habilidades y aseguran una inclusión significativa para nuestros estudiantes que reciben servicios especializados. Encontrará muchas más historias excelentes en la edición de este mes, así que asegúrese de seguir leyendo para conocer algunos aspectos destacados del trabajo de nuestro Departamento de Educación Especial. ([Special Education Department](#)).

Para completar mi mensaje de este mes, ¡quiero reconocer un par de premios! ¡Primero, quiero felicitar a nuestro colega, Phil Neufeld, por haber sido nombrado Top Dog por Fresno State, ([Phil Neufeld, for being named a Top Dog by Fresno State](#)) este año! Phil, un director ejecutivo de nuestro Departamento de Tecnología de Información (TI), fue seleccionado como Top Dog por la División de Investigación y Estudios de Posgrado. ¡Así se hace Phil!

El mes pasado, nuestro equipo de Comunicaciones fue reconocido con tres premios de [CalSPRA \(por sus siglas en inglés\)](#), o la Asociación de Relaciones Públicas Escolares de California (California School Public Relations Association). El equipo de Comunicaciones recibió un Premio a la Excelencia en Diversidad, Equidad e Inclusión por el alcance multilingüe y los materiales multilingües de nuestro distrito en el desarrollo del nuevo plan estratégico de nuestro distrito. El equipo también recibió premios a la excelencia por el episodio de Kimeka Simmons de Rostros del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno ([Kimeka Simmons episode of Faces of Fresno Unified](#)) y por el PSA de Salud Mental de nuestro grupo del Consejo Estudiantil de Comunicaciones ([Communications student advisory group's mental health PSA](#)). ¡Felicidades equipo!

¡No olvide seguirnos en [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) y [LinkedIn](#) para ver los aspectos destacados diarios del increíble trabajo que se lleva a cabo en todo el distrito! ¡Disfruten del hermoso clima y espero que tengan unas vacaciones de primavera seguras y tranquilas! ¡Gracias Familia de FUSD #FUSDFamily!

Peb muaj ntau yam ua kev zoo siab rau caij nplooj ntoos hlav no

Nws yog lub sij hawm lawm - #FUSDFamily caij nplooj ntoos hlav los txog lawm! Lub Plaub Hlis yuav muaj huab cua sov, yuav muaj tshav ntuj nrig, thiab, so rau lub caij nplooj ntoos hlav! Kev so rau lub caij nplooj ntoos hlav xyoo no yog lub Plaub Hlis tim 11 txog rau Plaub Hlis tim 18, nrog rau cov tub ntshais kawm rov qab tuaj kawm ntawv rau hnuv Tuesday, Plaub Hlis tim 19. Lub Plaub Hlis kuj muaj kev zoo siab ntau thiab yuav muaj ntau yam kev ua koob tsheej! Lub hlis no yog hli Autism Acceptance Month uas peb nco txog kev lees paub cov uas muaj kev kawm tshwj xeeb, National Library Week, National Librarian Day, Earth Day, Administrative Professionals Week thiab Administrative Professionals Day! Nco ntsoov siv sij hawm lub hlis no kom paub ntau ntshais txog yuav ua li cas koj tuaj yeem pab txhawb cov neeg muaj autism thiab seb koj tuaj yeem pab txhawb lub ntiaj teb li cas. Kuv kuj txhawb kom koj siv sijhawm los ua kev zoo siab rau koj lub tsev

kawm ntawv cov tsev qiv ntawv thiab cov kws tshaj lij kev tswj hwm lub hlis no! Lawv ua haujlwm hnyav txhua hnub los txhawb peb cov tub ntxhais kawm, cov neeg ua haujlwm, thiab tsev neeg.

Caj nplooj ntoos hlav kuj yog thaum peb [cuv npe rau preschool](#) txhua xyoo uas pib lub Plaub Hlis tim 4. Ib qho ntawm kuv qhov kuv xav tias tseem ceeb tshaj plaws yog ua kom muaj kev kawm tau zoo thaum ntov rau tag nrho peb cov tub ntxhais kawm. Kev tshawb fawb qhia peb tias cov tub ntxhais kawm uas muaj kev kawm thaum ntov muaj txiaj ntsig zoo dua hauv lawv txoj kev kawm. Pib txij lub Plaub Hlis tim 4, peb txhawb kom txhua tus niam txiv uas muaj menyuum yaus li 3- thiab 4 xyoo pib cuv npe tau. Kev tso npe ntov ua rau koj muaj feem tau xaiv txoj kev pab uas zoo tshaj rau koj tus menyuum cov kev xav tau. Koj tuaj yeem mus kawm kom paub ntiv thiab sau npe ntawm [earlylearning.fresnounified.org](#).

Daim ntawv xov xwm lub hlis no koj yuav pom tias peb tseem tham txog qhov tseem ceeb ntawm kev kawm ntawv thaum ntov, ntiv rau cov uas tseem ceeb tshaj plaws ntawm peb – saib kom meej tias peb cov tub ntxhais kawm ntawv uas tau txais cov kev pabcuam tshwj xeeb tau kawm nrog txhua tus menyuum nyob rau hauv tsev kawm tsis hais txog lawv lub peev xwm. Ib qho piv txwv uas kuv nyiam tshaj plaws ntawm txoj haujlwm no ces yog peb cov [chav kawm preschool inclusion](#). Ob peb xyos dhau los no, peb cov chav kawm ua ke inclusion thaum ntov tau nce ntawm ib chav mus rau tam sim no yog 17 chav kawm preschool nyob rau hauv cov cheeb tsam tsev kawm ntawv! Cov chav kawm no pab cov tub ntxhais kawm ntawv txhua lub peev xwm thiab ua kom muaj txiaj ntsig zoo rau peb cov tub ntxhais kawm tau txais kev pabcuam tshwj xeeb. Koj yuav pom ntau zaj dab neeg zoo nyob rau hauv lub hlis no daim ntawv xov xwm. Yog li nco ntsoov nyeem qee qhov tseem ceeb ntawm kev ua haujlwm ntawm peb lub [Special Education Department](#).

Thaum kuv yuav xaus lus rau lub hlis no, kuv xav piav txog ob peb yam kev zoo siab! Ua ntej, kuv pab zoo siab rau peb ib tug npoj yaig, Phil Neufeld, uas tau hu ua ib tus keej tshaj los ntawm Fresno State, [Phil Neufeld, yog Fresno State tus Top Dog](#) xyoo no! Phil, yog peb ib tug keej tshaj nyob rau hauv IT qhov chaw ua haujlwm, raug xaiv los ua Tus Txawj Tshaj Plaws (Top Dog) los ntawm Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Ua tau zoo kawg Phil!

Lub hli tas los, peb pab neeg cev lus ntawm Communications tau txais peb (3) qhov kev qhuas ua tau zoo los ntawm [CalSPRA](#), lossis California School Public Relations Association. Pab Pawg cev lus ntawm Communication tau txais qhov Diversity, Equity thiab Inclusion Award of Excellence rau peb lub cheeb tsam tsev kawm rau kev txuas lus rau zej zog uas paub ntau hom lus thiab muab cheeb tsam tsev kawm cov hom phiaj tshiab los txhais ua ntau hom lus kom muaj kev sib txuas lus. Pab neeg no kuj tau txais kev qhuas zoo tshaj rau [Kimeka Simmons episode of Faces of Fresno Unified](#) thiab peb cov [Communications student advisory group's mental health PSA](#). Nrog sawv daws zoo siab!

Tsis txhob hnov qab mus saib peb hauv [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) thiab [LinkedIn](#) kom pom cov ntsiab lus tseem ceeb ntawm kev ua haujlwm zoo kawg nkaus tshwm sim thoo plaws hauv peb lub cheeb tsam no! Zoo siab rau huab cua zoo thiab kuv vam tias koj muaj kev nyab xeeb thiab cajj so rau lub cajj nplooj ntoos hlav! Ua tsaug #FUSDFamily!



Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Message from Michelle Smith, Chair of the Community Advisory Committee on Special Education

Belonging... Inclusion... Purpose

Greetings from the wife of George and parent of eight children and six grandchildren. Four of my children received services from Special Education and three live with Down syndrome. Currently, I am the chairman of the FUSD Community

Advisory Committee on Special Education (CAC). We are a mandated committee in the Education Code, which has the role and responsibility of:

- Advising the policy and administrative entity of the district and special education local plan area, regarding the development, amendment, and review of the local plan. The entity shall review and consider comments from the community advisory committee.
- Recommending annual priorities to be addressed by the plan.
- Assisting in parent education and in recruiting parents and other volunteers who may contribute to the implementation of the plan.

This is a process of listening to the voice of parents and their children regarding the challenges and celebrations in the school system in providing a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment with HIGH expectations for success. The new district resolution for inclusion is a welcome change from 80 years ago in Vienna, Austria where a physician by the name of Hans Asperger was part of the medical committee attached to Germany. In the name of science, this group of people decided which child removed from their families had rehabilitation possibilities. If the child appeared to have capacities, they would provide schooling and hope. If not, they were sent to another wing to die a painful unspeakable death. (“Asperger’s Children: The Origins of Autism in Nazi Vienna” by Edith Sheffer)

Fast forward to the third largest school district in California. We now have a mandate to put inclusion in the school system as a rule, not the exception. It is not a nice poster on a wall, but a work in progress. It is going to require a growth mindset, willingness to say “YES,” creativity, training, and the willingness to fail, but to learn in the process.

It means saying all students belong at the table, not their own private table in the back. Children belong in the front of the class not in the back corner with staff in their way. They should be on trips to Disneyland with their peers and in leadership roles. Staff should take time to understand their learning strengths and interests. What engages them to want more learning? Anyone for Legos? What device gives them freedom to communicate in their community? Who has the skill to support students appropriately at the school site? Who helps them dream big dreams for their future: college, work, and self-advocacy?

When individuals are included with a sense of belonging, they can begin to see their purpose. I spent time with self-advocates every day seeking their capacities, skills, and strengths. It is amazing to hear of the positive character traits they demonstrate among their circle of support. Being loved by an honest person is life giving.

I am so grateful to be on this side of history. There is much transformation required in this school district. I hope we are up for it with energy, mindset change and finances.

Please join us in the monthly FUSD CAC meeting. All meetings are posted on the FUSD website under Special Education (<https://sped.fresnounified.org/community-advisory-committee/>). We will be electing new officers in May of this year and hope to have a robust agenda for next year.

Connection to [District Goals](#): “We value people and our community.”



Michelle Smith
Chairman of the Community Advisory Committee

Focus on Special Education

Preschool Inclusion Classes Expanding, Available at Five School Sites

A \$10 million grant has helped the district expand the number of preschool classrooms that include students receiving special education services in the general education setting.

This aligns with the district's belief that each child is a general education student first. Each student who receives special education services should be served in the least restrictive environment with access to the best instruction in the California Preschool Learning Foundations.

Preschool inclusion classrooms provide children with a disability an equitable start to their educational journey.

The district has increased the number of inclusion preschool classrooms from one prior to the 2019-20 school year to 17 currently. The expansion was possible through a grant from the California Department of Education through the [Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program](#).

The grant was used for facilities, adaptive materials and equipment and professional development for teachers. Funding supports the expansion of inclusive settings for children 0-5 years and has increased collaboration between the Early Learning and Special Education departments.

Inclusion preschools are available at Kratt, Lincoln, Del Mar, Holland and Greenberg elementary schools using two models of co-teaching. Co-teach preschool classrooms are designed to embed and deliver special education supports and services organically within the least restrictive environment.

"All staff work collaboratively in support of all students," said Angela Dryden, a program manager in the Special Education Department.

Teachers utilize the Universal Design for Learning framework to meet the needs of learner variability. Fresno Unified's co-teach models are based on research-proven strategies.

Connection to [District Goals](#): "We nurture and cultivate the interests, intellect, and leadership of our students by providing an excellent, equitable education in a culturally proficient environment."



Preschool students of all abilities play together at Holland Elementary School, which is one of five elementary schools with preschools using inclusion models.



Holland Elementary School teacher Alex Arenas, left, and Angela Cruz, far right, co-teach preschool students using the inclusion model.

School Psychologists help with Mental Health on Campuses

The district's school psychologists are an integral part of support services for students.

The district has 82 school psychologists in the Special Education Department, most deployed at school sites.

School psychologists are mental health professionals with specialized training in psychology and education. They team with educators, families and other mental health professionals to help students overcome barriers and learn in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. Among school psychologists' roles:

Consultation: Provide teachers, families and administrators effective alternatives to learning and behavior problems.

Assessment: Evaluate academic skills, learning aptitudes, emotional development, social skills, learning environments and school climates, and eligibility for special education.

Education: Support staff with teaching and learning strategies, classroom management, working with students with disabilities, and bullying prevention programs.

Prevention: Identify potential learning difficulties, support teachers and families with skills to cope with disruptive behavior and provide crisis prevention and intervention services.

Intervention: Develop positive behavior support plans, provide psychological counseling to students, provide social skills and behavioral management support, and help families and schools deal with crises, such as separation, loss and tragedies.

Research and planning: Evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs and behavior management systems and help carry out schoolwide reform and restructuring.

Mental health and general health: Collaborate with school and community-based personnel to provide comprehensive school-linked services, and provide services to children and families focused on psychological wellness, counseling and mental health.

Adult Transition Program helps Older Students take Next Steps

Fresno Unified's [Adult Transition Program \(ATP\)](#) provides training, support and an educational program to individuals with developmental disabilities ages 18 to 22 years. The goal is to help the students become as independent as possible.

About 160 students are in Fresno Unified's ATP program, with campuses on Fairmont Avenue, Rata High School and Fresno Adult School.

Along with an educational program, ATP students learn vocational skills, including exploring career interests, filling out job applications, work experience in the community, appropriate work behaviors and flexibility in routines.

ATP also teaches independent living skills, including health and hygiene habits, cooking, laundry, shopping, cleaning, self-advocacy and awareness, money math and reading directions.

ATP staff collaborate with community agencies, such as Central Valley Regional Center, Resources for Independence and

the Department of Rehabilitation, to support students' transition from ATP to their post-educational life.

Special upcoming events for ATP students include:

- April 1 – Special Olympics basketball at Tioga Middle School, hosted by staff and leadership students
- April 8 – Annual Inspiration Park Day, with adaptive recreation equipment, a taco vendor and water games
- April 28 – Spring formal
- May 13 – Talent show hosted by Tioga staff and leadership students
- June 7 – Transition ceremony



Reyna Vasquez receives her certificate of completion from Adult Transition Program manager Derrick Flake last spring.

From Awareness to Acceptance: Changing the Perspective

This year, Fresno Unified's autism awareness activities in April will reflect the movement toward a new name – Autism Acceptance Month.

The Autism Society of America, in cooperation with other disability organizations, decided in April 2021 to re-brand the annual recognition month, replacing “awareness” with “acceptance.”

The change is in response to the long-held belief that autism was an illness that needed to be cured or corrected. The neurodiversity movement supports the shift in mindset from “fixing” to “helping” individuals with autism lead fulfilling lives.

The district is also joining others in shifting away from the use of puzzle pieces to symbolize autism awareness. The autism community is now embracing the rainbow-colored infinity sign as a symbol of neurodiversity acceptance.

The Fresno Unified community continues to strive to be inclusive in all opportunities. It promotes not just the education about the differences of people with autism, but truly understanding and respecting those differences. Join Fresno Unified in accepting and celebrating those differences in April, and every month.

Recognitions for Autism Acceptance Month in the district include:

- Paraprofessional Cristina Lucatero in Jaiden Warner's first-and second-grade Special Day Class at Ayer Elementary School painted one of the classroom windows with “Autism Acceptance,” incorporating the handprints of the students.
- Figarden Elementary School has an autism acceptance spirit week planned for April 4-8, including What's your Passion Wednesday and Sensory Friendly Friday.
- Starr Elementary School has designated April 1 as Wear Blue Day.

Resources

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/resource-guide>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/signs-autism>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/screen-your-child>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/first-concern-action>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/newly-diagnosed>



Cristina Lucatero, a paraprofessional in Jaiden Warner's first/second grade special day class at Ayer Elementary School, painted one of the classroom windows in recognition of Autism Acceptance Month in April, incorporating the students' hand prints.

Music Therapy Hits the Right Note at Addicott Elementary School

Music therapy is a highlight each week for students and staff at Addicott Elementary School, which serves some of the district's most medically fragile children.

Music therapy – not the same as music lessons – uses musical tones and rhythm to stimulate students' hearts, minds and bodies. For the past three years, staff has been using music therapy to nurture physical, cognitive, emotional, and developmental growth in students.

“Sessions are interactive, and no musical skill or training is needed to learn, succeed, and grow. And it's a lot of fun,” said Robyn Scroggins, principal at Addicott.

Addicott students receive 30 minutes a week of music therapy in their classrooms designed to align, in a fun way, with each student's goals.

“It's one of our favorite parts of the week,” Scroggins said.

Addicott is also the first school in the district to have a music garden “planted” with six oversized instruments, such as xylophones. The instruments are at the right height for students in wheelchairs to access.



Addicott Elementary School student Angel Cortez enjoys music therapy.



Ka'Niyah Venson has fun in music therapy with paraprofessional Lupita Arias.



Zeke Sanderson enjoys the school's music garden.

Group Provides Students a Voice

A Voices United student group established in 2020 helps relay student concerns, questions and ideas to the Special Education Department.

Voices United is among several student voice groups established by Fresno Unified as part of the goals of the district's [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) work.

The Voices United group has presented at a Fresno Unified board meeting and the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education. The group has met virtually about 10 times and is seeking more student members. Those interested can contact ebony.hailey@fresnounified.org or Jeanne.butler@fresnounified.org.

The goal for the student group is for members to be able to educate their peers and community partners about visible and invisible disabilities and share recommendations and thoughts, said Ebony Hailey, a manager in the Special Education Department.



Voices United student group, which makes recommendations to the Special Education Department, shows off new T-shirts during the last school year. In the back are Special Education Department managers Ebony Hailey, left, and Jeanne Butler, and in the front, from left, are Voices United members Angelique Moran (who graduated), Samantha Lehew-Diaz and Marysol Gonzalez.

Roosevelt High Festival Raises Awareness of Down Syndrome

Roosevelt High School hosted its first Down Syndrome Day Festival on March 25 at lunchtime, providing an opportunity for fun interactions among students of all abilities, and to bring more awareness of Down syndrome.

The festival was organized by the Alternative Learning Pathways (ALPs) program at Roosevelt. [World Down Syndrome Day](#), known as 321, was March 21.

The festival was designed to promote full inclusion in society for people with Down syndrome and encourage the power of community, said Corey Brown, an ALPs teacher at Roosevelt.

The festival highlighted some of the special skills and talents of the ALPs and autism inclusion students. Stations included a basketball challenge, painting, fishing, Giant Connect Four, cornhole, Diego's Character Art Booth, cheerleaders' presentation, and B-Boys Dance with ALPs students.

Roosevelt High students signed a poster and took a pledge to eliminate the R-word from their vocabulary.

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



The B-Boys dance group performs at Roosevelt High School's Down Syndrome Day Festival March 25. Dancers are, from left, Xang Xiong, Shaw Thao, Johuliyana Garcia, Tshamong Thaojerr, Isabel Barajas and Diego Guzman.



Roosevelt High School cousins Alondra Castro, left, and Juan Murillo celebrate their school's first Down Syndrome Day Festival on March 25.

Kratt Student Wins Spelling Bee

The word was “popularity,” and when fifth-grader Bailey Hill heard that, she knew she was going to win the Fresno Unified Elementary Spelling Bee.

Bailey, who attends Kratt Elementary School, prefers math and social studies over reading, but she still came out on top in a highly competitive nearly three-hour virtual spelling bee held on Feb. 24. The contest featured 30 spellers in grades 5 and 6.

Christian Marquez Gomez from Columbia Elementary School placed second and Caidhum Lor from Robinson Elementary School was third. Bailey and Christian represented Fresno Unified in the Fresno County Spell-Off on March 15.

Bailey, a straight-A student, is a natural – she did not study extra to prepare for the spelling bee.

“I just wanted to do it for the fun of it,” she said.

Bailey’s favorite activity outside school is mixed martial arts. She’s been training in MMA for nearly two years, and takes three classes a week.

Bailey’s teacher, Noah Byers, described Bailey as “a very bright and focused student.”

“While watching the spelling bee, I was impressed with how she stayed calm, focused and determined. The spelling bee lasted much longer than expected, but she persevered,” Byers said.

“When she won, I was ecstatic. I felt like I was watching my favorite football team win the Super Bowl. I was just so glad to see all of her hard work pay off.



Kratt Elementary School fifth-grader Bailey Hill won the district spelling bee with the word “popularity.”

Robinson Elementary Students Try to Trap Leprechauns

Rencel Baguilat, a transitional kindergartner at Robinson Elementary School, shows off his leprechaun trap in preparation for St. Patrick's Day. Students made traps at home and then brought to school to share how they worked.



“The Family Farm” Theme Inspires Student Art and Writing

Students from throughout the district have been working on a variety of projects – from art to writing to building a produce stand – around a common theme, “The Family Farm.”

About 70 classrooms, with students of all ages, are engaged in the initiative. The project will culminate in IdeaFest, a showcase of student projects on display in booths on May 7 from 1-8 p.m. at Chukchansi Park alongside a 7 p.m. Fresno Grizzlies game.

The Fresno Grizzlies have designated the evening as “Fresno Growers Night” and “My Job Depends on Ag Night” to attract the community to participate in IdeaFest.

The logo for IdeaFest was designed by Selah Bearden, a seventh grader at Gaston Middle School, selected from among 100 entries.

“The Family Farm” projects include:

- Art and writing from various high school regions exhibited at ArtHop, held each month on the first Thursday at gallery space the district rents at the M Street Arts Complex. In April, the Sunnyside High School region will present photos, ceramics, paintings and line drawings.
- ArtHop exhibits in March from the Roosevelt High School region included photos from students’ visit to a farm, paintings of produce using the pointillism technique and art created from wood, wire and other materials based on reflections on films about the farm labor crisis and their own farm labor experiences or those of family members.
- Sunnyside High School’s ag career pathway students have built a produce stand for Kirk Elementary School. The students will sell produce at IdeaFest.
- Engineering projects by Gaston Middle School and the Center for Advanced Research and Technology.
- Barn owl and pest control studies by Center for Advanced Research and Technology.

During IdeaFest, students will have the opportunity to interact with the public and present their projects, which reflect a wide range of class learning, including science, math, medicine, English language arts, history and visual and performing arts.

Connection to [District Goals](#): “Increase student engagement in their school and community.” ncrease student engagement in their school and community.”



Sunnyside High School senior Mandi Vang's photo will be part of IdeaFest.

Fresno Unified School District Board Policies

The following board policies have been updated and recently approved by the Fresno Unified Board of Education:

1. BP 1312.3 Uniform Complaint Procedures
2. BP 5111 Admission
3. BP 5125 Student Records
4. BP 5141.52 Suicide Prevention
5. BP/AR 5145.3 Nondiscrimination-Harassment
6. BP 5145.9 Hate-Motivated Behavior
7. BP 5146 Married Pregnant Parenting Students
8. BP 6145 Extracurricular & Cocurricular Activities
9. BP 6145.2 Athletic Competition

In addition, the following administrative regulations have also been updated:

10. AR 1250 Visitors Outsiders
11. AR 1312.3 Uniform Complaint Procedures
12. AR 5111 Admission
13. AR 5111.1 District Residency
14. AR 5125 Student Records
15. AR 5131.2 Anti-Bullying
16. AR 5145.13 Response to Immigration Enforcement
17. AR 5145.3 Nondiscrimination-Harassment
18. AR 6116 Classroom Interruptions

All revisions can be found online at: <https://bp.fresnounified.org/>.

Questions: Contact Constituent Services Office at (559) 457-3736.

Student Spotlight

Fresno High Construction Student Building a Future for Herself

Fresno High School's Destiny Edwards helped redo her bedroom at age 13, including cutting the baseboards.

Two years later, as a sophomore, the construction career pathway at Fresno High is the perfect fit for her.

Destiny inherited her interest in construction from her father, who works in roofing and painting. She said her family was not surprised at her affinity for construction – she has been working with her hands since she was young.

And while she had already tackled small construction projects at home, this year in her Construction Technology I class she is learning to use more sophisticated tools, like a miter saw and a jig saw, and to measure properly. Her favorite

project this year was building a bookshelf, which fulfilled the Personal Project requirement in Fresno High's [International Baccalaureate](#) program.

Destiny plans to attend college and pursue a career in residential construction and real estate.

"I want to build my own house someday," she said.

Destiny was part of a six-student team that competed on March 12 in the Girl Build competition at Fresno High against another Fresno High team and a team from Duncan Polytechnical High School.

The event, sponsored by National Association of Women in Construction Fresno Chapter 108, aimed to encourage female students to pursue careers in construction, traditionally a male-dominated field.

At Fresno High, construction classes are part of the school's Construction, Design and Architecture Technology Pathway, which also includes heating/air conditioning and computer-assisted design courses.

Destiny said construction is "an awesome opportunity" for women.

"I feel like women are underestimated in this industry," Destiny said. "I think that women are more attentive to detail, and the precision of building in general."

Along with construction, Destiny enjoys her history class, is on the basketball team and is a former competitive gymnast. She has a twin brother, Daryen.

Her construction teacher, Joel Osuna, described Destiny as "respectful, courageous, bright, and empathetic."

"Destiny is always willing to take risks and has the initiative to learn. She is always willing to help her peers when a project gets tough. I believe Destiny will continue to lead and advocate for our program in a meaningful way," Osuna said.



Sophomore Destiny Edwards is a leader among construction students at Fresno High School.

Sunnyside High School Leads the Nation in Dell Scholars

Four seniors from Sunnyside High School have earned [Dell Scholarships](#), adding to the campus's record-setting number of students awarded the prestigious scholarship.

With this year's winners, Sunnyside has a total of 66 Dell Scholars since the inception of the scholarship program in 2005, the most among any high school in the nation.

Dell Scholars each receive a \$20,000 scholarship towards the college of their choice as well as a laptop and personal support for college. The 2022 Dell Scholars from Sunnyside are Gao (Angie) Yang, Luisa Torralba, Sheng Xiong and Joanna Sayaseng.

Luisa, Sheng and Joanna are enrolled in the Doctors Academy and Angie is part of the Criminology and Behavioral Sciences Pathway. All of the students are part of the [Advancement via Individual Determination \(AVID\)](#) program at Sunnyside.

- Joanna plans to attend California State University, Fullerton and major in psychology "I am so thankful for my AVID

teacher Ms. [Sara] Price, who wrote my letter of recommendation, and my sisters, who always support me.”

- Luisa will pursue a career as a physician. “When I got the email saying I had been selected as a Dell Scholar, I felt like all the work I had put in had finally paid off.”
- Sheng plans to attend University of Pacific and major in pre-pharmacy 2+3. “I am very thankful for this opportunity to be chosen as a Dell Scholar.”
- Angie will major in biochemistry and plans to pursue a pharmacy career. “I hope to make a difference in the lives of others and give back to the community.”

“We continue to be so proud of our Dell Scholar recipients here at Sunnyside High. The accomplishments of these students represent not only academic excellence but tremendous effort in reaching the goal of becoming a Dell Scholar,” said Tony Fiori, coordinator of the AVID program.

The Dell Scholar program targets low-income, highly motivated students who are better than their numbers indicate and demonstrate the drive to succeed despite personal obstacles, according to the Dell Scholars website. The ideal candidate will demonstrate a unique “GPA” of grit, potential, and ambition in their quest for a college education.

Connection to [District Goals](#): “Improve academic performance at challenging levels.”



From left, Dell Scholars from Sunnyside High School are Sheng Xiong, Joanna Sayaseng, Luisa Torralba and Gao (Angie) Yang.

Linked Learning Spotlight

Competition Helps Build interest in Construction Careers

Female construction students went hammer to hammer in a competition March 12 to build a three-tiered plant stand during a Girl Build at Fresno High School.

The competition, part of Women in Construction Week, is one of the many ways Fresno Unified is promoting careers in construction for female students. Females are represented in all the district’s high school construction programs – DeWolf, Duncan Polytechnical, Fresno, Hoover and Sunnyside – with numbers increasing each year.

Duncan Polytechnical High School’s team won in the Risk-Taker and Creativity categories; Fresno High’s Team Mariah won for Craftmanship; and Fresno High’s Team Destiny won for Safety and Teamwork.

The competition was sponsored by Fresno High’s construction program and the National Association of Women in Construction Fresno Chapter 108. The event was held at Fresno High’s construction shop at the new career technical education building.

“We’re trying to bring awareness to the construction field for our females in Fresno Unified,” said Keisha Shabazz, career education coordinator at Fresno High. “They’re proving they can pick up a hammer, drill, saw just as good as any male construction worker.”

Connection to [District Goals](#): “Expand student-centered and real-world learning experiences.”

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



Mariah Laney, left, and Aileen Zamudio from Fresno High School's construction program compete in the Girl Build on March 12 at Fresno High.

Edison and Bullard Students participate in Computer Science Expo

Computer science students at Edison and Bullard high schools had the opportunity to learn more about careers in tech from experts from Bitwise Industries, Amazon and Fresno City College during a Computer Science Expo.

The virtual event Feb. 14-18 featured seven different representatives from the two companies as well as a teacher and counselor from Fresno City College.

It was the first time the two schools had collaborated on a virtual expo, with plans for one next year as well.

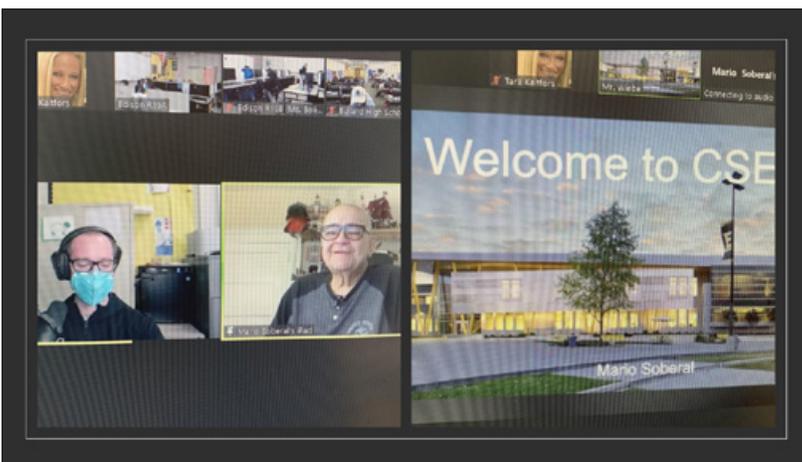
As part of the expo, students also created video demos of favorite projects from their computer science courses to share with middle and elementary students to get them excited about what they will have the opportunity to create in high school.

Students in grades 9 through 12 taking computer science at the two campuses participated.

Edison sophomore Areli Arellano said the speakers inspired the students, "making everyone feel they belong in this world of advanced technology."

Another student, Edison sophomore Michael Brashears, said he liked that one of the speakers urged the students to go after opportunities, even ones they may not think they are ready for.

"It really stuck with me, and I will keep it in mind during my future endeavors," Michael said.



A five-day virtual Computer Science Expo in February connected computer science students at Edison and Bullard high schools with local tech experts.

Phoenix Students Present Poems

From left, Phoenix Elementary Academy students Sahniah Wiley, Dayna Kerns, Michael Lopez, Aaron Beasley and Detaevon Williams recite the poem, "I Rise," by Maya Angelou for the school's Peach Blossom Poets Festival on March 25. Organized by Resource Specialist Program teacher Michelle Diebert, all classes at Phoenix Elementary presented a poem from an American female poet in celebration of Women's History Month. Students had researched options, then selected a poem that resonated with them to deliver to their peers.



Easterby Kindergarten Teacher gives Students a Strong Start

Mary Rueda, a kindergarten teacher at Easterby Elementary School for the past eight years, was a recent finalist for an Excellence in Education award from the district. She is known for her rigorous writing program, the social emotional support she gives her students, and as a leader among her peers. She has been with the district for 26 years. Principal Pam Taylor said about Rueda: "She has incredibly high standards for her students, and she supports her students in meeting those high standards."

What made you decide to be a teacher? I always loved learning new things. My family valued education and I had a great experience in school. So I naturally wanted to help children to grow and learn.

What do you enjoy the most about your job? Being with my students and watching them grow. They grow and learn so much during the year.

What is the most difficult part of your job? Children who do not have a support system at home.

You always have a high number of students writing multiple sentences by the end of the first semester of kindergarten. What is your secret? I teach writing very early. I teach my children to speak in complete sentences, and then writing follows.

What do you like best about kindergartners? They are very honest, sincere and they are so excited to learn.

How has your degree in counseling helped you as a teacher? I have a better understanding of my students' needs. I feel I have been able to make strong connections with their parents as well, able to help students work through difficult choices, and help develop positive self-esteem (build character).

If you could choose another career, what would it be? A counselor.

What is your dream vacation? Spending two months in Switzerland.

Name one thing most people don't know about you. I coached four different sports (basketball, softball, track and volleyball).



Attendance Specialist Making a Difference at Olmos Elementary

Samantha Gonzalez-Lopez leads a variety of initiatives at Olmos Elementary School to help students who have attendance or behavioral issues. For her successful efforts, she was named a finalist for the district's Excellence in Education awards. Gonzalez-Lopez has been with the district for seven years, all at Olmos. She has been the school's child welfare and attendance specialist for 2 ½ years. Principal Sherry Tharpe said about Gonzalez-Lopez: "Her success rate with students who are having attendance or behavioral issues is exceptional. She is sought out by staff..."

What path led you to this career? I started as a noon time assistant and wanted to help students in the classroom. I became a paraprofessional and worked with students in preschool and transitional kindergarten, then transitioned to working with students with disabilities and their families in our Learning Lab. I also supported students after school in our Extended Learning Library Program. I'm so happy to help our students and their families overcome obstacles that prevent them from attending school or focusing on their studies.

What do you enjoy the most about your job? Seeing the students' improvement during our social skills groups is the most enjoyable part of my job. The teachers and students rate themselves before, during, and after interventions and reading the student self-reflections gives me the most heartwarming feeling – they recognize they are in control of learning skills, and they can do it! The teachers also see the progress the students have made in just a few weeks, and they now have the skills they need to learn.

What is the most challenging part of your job? The most challenging part of my job is the number of students who need support. I'm lucky to work with a team of supportive administrators, school psychologist, counselors, teachers, staff, and families who work together to support our students.

Your success rate improving attendance is high. What are some of your strategies? I can't improve student's attendance alone. I need to build on the connection our school has with our families. One way to build connections to improve attendance is constant positive attendance phone calls, making sure students have a bedtime and morning routine, and most importantly giving students self-guidance on the importance of coming to school on time every day. I provide parents with morning and evening checklists that the students can do to make sure they are setting themselves up for success.

What is the main reason for student absenteeism? One reason I see students are often absent is difficulty in academics. When students struggle in class they may wonder if it's worth going to school. We try our best to support students by helping them gain the skills they need to learn, making them feel welcomed and cared for, and supporting their academic learning at their level through RTI, iReady lessons, and after school programs. At Olmos we teach with the whole child in mind to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

How has the Meaningful Work program at Olmos helped students? The Meaningful Work program is another way for our students to feel connected by being a successful contributing member to our school. Students who need to practice social skills or have a history of misbehavior can feel ownership of a school job. Olmos offers multiple student jobs such as our Spirit Challenge Committee, library helpers, campus safety assistants, morning cafeteria helpers and more. When students have a job in the Meaningful Work program, they build a wonderful connection with other students and their staff supervisor. Students build self-confidence and self-awareness by successfully applying skills that have real life applications.

What is the Check in Check Out program? Check In and Check Out is an intervention where students, their teacher and a mentor can choose an appropriate Tier II goal for the student every day. Each morning students meet with their mentor to check in, choose a goal, and discuss how they can achieve it. The teacher gives points throughout the day if the student has met their goal. At the end of the day, the student and mentor meet again to reflect on challenges and successes. At the end of

the week, students determine if they have met their weekly goal and have earned what they are working for. They also chart their progress and see how their behavior has changed over time.

Name one thing most people don't know about you. Most people don't know that I am a kid at heart and enjoy roller blading with my nieces and nephews.

What do you like to do when you are not working? When I am not working, I really enjoy playing music and going for a morning jog.

If you could pursue any career, what would it be? If I could pursue any career, it would be a psychologist.

What is your dream vacation? I would love to visit the Maldives.



Fresno Unified District Roundup

Fresno Adult School Hosts Open House

Fresno Adult School (FAS) hosted an open house on March 11 for its “golden” students who attend community education classes for those 55 and older. Students visited FAS’s main campus at the Cesar Chavez Adult Education Center to become familiar with the new location, where they will take classes for the remainder of the academic year. The FAS Community Education Program is moving from the Manchester Center campus because the lease is ending.

Female Students Attend Sports Conference

The district sent 18 student athletes from Bullard, Fresno, Hoover, McLane, Roosevelt and Sunnyside high schools for the inaugural Women in Sports Conference, sponsored by the CIF Central Section. The conference, in Visalia on Feb. 16, included sessions on Title IX and other topics and featured keynote speaker Brenda Lewis, a longtime teacher, coach and administrator in the Kern High School District.

Sequoia DI Takes Second

The [Destination Imagination](#) team from Sequoia Middle School placed second in the San Joaquin Valley Regional competition Feb. 26 at Alta Sierra Intermediate School. The Sequoia team, the only one from Fresno Unified, competed against Clovis Unified teams in the engineering challenge category, “Roll with It.”

Manchester Class Raises Money for Tanzania

Lauren King’s class at Manchester GATE Elementary School is raising money with a “Be the Change” change jar to provide fruits and vegetables to student lunches in Tanzania. The lunch offered at schools in Tanzania is often students’ only meal of the day, and traditionally does not include a fruit or vegetable.

Edison Grad Wins Saxophone from Kenny G

Andrew Vega, Edison High School Class of 2019, won a soprano saxophone at a recent concert featuring his idol, Kenny G. Andrew, who began playing the alto saxophone in fourth grade at Yokomi Elementary School, is now a student at California State University, Long Beach majoring in music, education and performance.

Terronez's 'Working' Mural helps Solve Problems, Build Relationships

Terronez Middle School held a formal dedication ceremony on March 24 for a peace mural – a “working” mural designated as a place where students can go to resolve conflicts and build relationships.

Students designed the mural with local artist [Will Portis](#). It includes guiding questions to help resolve conflicts. It is painted on cement in a central location on campus.

The mural project began in 2018 as part of the school’s work on restorative practices in partnership with the [Civic Education Center \(CEC\)](#). The unveiling has been delayed by pandemic restrictions.

Speakers included members of the Fresno Unified Board of Education, Principal Zerina Hargrove-Brown, Superintendent Bob Nelson, partners from CEC, and students.

“It’s not just a piece of art. This is a working mural,” Nelson said. “What does it mean to have a working mural? It’s a designated space for our kids to be able to do the things they need to do in order to resolve conflict in their life.”

The mural is a visible symbol of students’ desire to change the climate at Terronez. In 2018, a group of students from history and leadership classes began working with the CEC to find ways of reducing fights and social media attacks among students.

Students conducted a schoolwide survey and then formed an action plan that included students, teachers and the administration. Outcomes included establishing a peer mediation elective class and the mural, a safe place for students to work out conflicts. The mural includes the district’s restorative practices questions.

The round mural has four identical paths on each side with squares that lead to the middle. At the edge of the circle, students are invited to “Step up.” Successive squares say: “What happened? How do you feel?”, “What’s hardest for you?”, “Who was hurt? How?”, “Possible solutions/Agreements?” Painted in the center is “Peace” and “Make things right.”



Terronez Middle School formally dedicates its campus peace mural on March 24. The mural, designed by students with artist Will Portis, helps students resolve conflicts.



Students in a social justice peer mentoring class at Terronez Middle School in November go through the conflict-resolving process as guided by steps on a peace mural at their school.

2022 Graduation Dates Set

Graduations will return to traditional venues – most at the Save Mart Center – with a schedule approved in March for the 16 ceremonies.

Graduations will launch on May 20 with Design Science Middle College High School, which aligns with Fresno City College’s schedule. Design Science Class of 2022 will graduate in the Old Administration Building on the college campus.

Ceremonies for the other high schools will follow from June 2 through June 8. Indoor graduations were not held during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19.

[Schedule of Graduation Ceremonies](#)



Hoover High School held its graduation outside in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Graduations are back to the traditional mostly indoor venues this year.

Superintendent Shares Love of Reading with Birney Students

Superintendent Bob Nelson reads to kindergarten students in Melanie Wells’ class on March 4 at Birney Elementary School as part of Read Across America Week. Nelson read “High Five” by Adam Rubin.

For video, go to vimeo.com/fresnounified/readacrossamerica2022



Information about Fresno High Region Election

A special election will be held April 12 for the Area 5 (Fresno High region) Fresno Unified trustee seat.

Key dates from the [county elections office website](#):

- March 3-March 14: County Voter Information Guides in Mail

- March 14-April 5: Mail Ballots in Mail
 - March 14: First Day of early Voting – County Clerk’s Office, 2221 Kern St., Fresno, CA 93721
 - March 28: Close of Registration for This Election
 - March 29-April 12: Conditional Voter Registration – In Person at County Clerk’s Office, 2221 Kern St., Fresno, CA 93721; and Vote Centers Beginning April 2, 2022
 - April 2-April 12: Eleven-Day Vote Centers open through Election Day; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 - April 9-April 12: All Voter Centers open through Election Day; 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.
 - April 12: Election Day; 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
 - April 19: Last Day to Receive Vote-by-Mail Ballot Postmarked no Later Than April 12, 2022
-

Pilot Program Makes Lunch Options more Appealing

Alayna Sanchez, a first grader at Forkner Elementary School, selects lunch items on March 23 that are part of an “offer versus serve” pilot by the district’s Nutrition Services Department. Offer versus serve gives students kindergarten and older the option to choose their favorite school lunch items. Students are welcome to take all items served, or to choose foods from at least three of the five food groups offered every day, with one being a fruit or vegetable. This new meal serve model is more visually appealing for students, as menu items are presented in bulk rather than in packaged trays. Along with giving students the ability to choose, benefits of the model include increased meal consumption and reduced food and packaging waste. Along with Forkner, four other sites are participating in the offer versus serve model, with plans to add two additional sites per week through the end of this school year



Fresno Unified School District

Board

Elizabeth Jonasson Rosas

Area 2

President

Elizabeth.Jonasson.Rosas@fresnounified.org

Liaison: Brandalyn Hastings

brandalyn.hastings@fresnounified.org

Veva Islas

Area 4

Clerk

veva.islas@fresnounified.org

Liaison: Maria Sandoval

maria.sandoval@fresnounified.org

Claudia Cazares

Area 6

Claudia.Cazares@fresnounified.org

Liaison: McKenzie Rivera

mckenzie.rivera@fresnounified.org

Valerie Davis

Area 3

valerie.davis@fresnounified.org

Trustee Area 5 – Vacant

Major Terry Slatc USMC (Retired)

Area 7

terry.slatc@fresnounified.org

Liaison: Michelle Asadoorian

michelle.asadoorian@fresnounified.org

Keshia Thomas

Area 1

keshia.thomas@fresnounified.org

Liaison: Joseline Virrey

Joseline.virrey@fresnounified.org

Administration

Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

Superintendent

Misty Her

Deputy Superintendent

Santino Danisi

Chief Financial Officer

Nikki Henry

Chief Information Officer

David Chavez

Chief Human Resources/Labor Relations Officer

Tami Lundberg

Chief Technology Officer

Wendy McCulley

Chief Engagement and External Officer

Natasha Baker

Chief Academic Officer

Lindsay Sanders

Chief Equity and Access

Paul Idsvoog

Chief Operations Officer

Building Futures

Tony Bernard

Media Technician

Anne Ellis

Community Relations Officer

Bryce Marshall

Media Production Specialist

Keith Rybaczyk

Media Production Specialist

Building Futures is a monthly publication of Fresno Unified School District prepared by the Communications Office. To place an ad, contact (559) 457-3733 or email Communications@FresnoUnified.org.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Fresno Unified School District does not harass, intimidate, or discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, ancestry, age, creed, religion, political affiliation, gender, gender identity or expression or genetic information, mental or physical disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital, pregnancy or parental status, military veteran status, or any other basis protected by law or regulation, in its educational program(s) or employment (BP 0410). For the full policy, a list of compliance officers, and Title IX information, go to www.fresnounified.org.