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March 27, 2023

 Fresno Unified School District

COMMUNITYzone
A Publication of the Fresno Unified School District

ACHIEVING OUR GREATEST POTENTIAL

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Photo of the Week



Fresno Unified Choir Festival March 15

Dates to Know

April 12 (see website for time)
[Board of Education](#)

Video of the Week



[Vinland Elementary School Highlight Video](#)

Greetings!

Welcome to Community Zone, an e-newsletter from the Fresno Unified School District featuring news of the district and schools. [Sign up](#) to receive this newsletter every two weeks. Questions? Contact Communications@fresnounified.org.

Community News

District has Two County Finalists

Fresno Unified's Tumani Heights, manager of Project ACCESS, and Emmelin Herrera, a teacher at Herrera Elementary School, have been selected as finalists for Fresno County Educator of the Year awards. Tumani is one of three finalists from throughout the county for the Administrator of the Year award and Emmelin is one of three finalists countywide for the Teacher of the Year award. They will be part of interviews in April, with the winners announced in November. Congrats, Tumani and Emmelin!

Foundation will Host Suit up for Success Suit Drive

The Foundation for Fresno Unified Schools will hold a suit drive March 27-31 to benefit Fresno Unified high school students in need of business attire for summer internships, job interviews and collegiate and other professional opportunities. The public is invited to donate their clean, gently used business attire (including suits, shirts, skirts, dresses, ties, and other professional wear). Drop-off locations include the Fresno Unified Education Center foyer (2309 Tulare St.) 8 a.m.-5 p.m. March 27-31 or see the website for other drop-off locations and more information. <https://foundation4fUSD.org/event/suit-drive/> (559) 457-3885.

District Launches Regional Family Engagement Events

The district will hold a series of regional family engagement events with various themes throughout the spring, beginning with a community wellness festival at McLane High School March 27 from 5-7 p.m. The events support the district's board-adopted Family Goal to "Increase inclusive opportunities for families to engage in their students' education."

At the McLane event:

- Information for families on making healthy food choices
- Students participate in fun physical activities to teach life skills and healthy habits
- District and community resources available to support student achievement
- Partners in event are Parent University, Fresno Unified board President Veva Islas and

McLane High

Regional family engagement events will also be held this spring at Hoover High School, Fort Miller Middle School (Fresno High School region), Edison High School, Roosevelt High School, Sunnyside High School and Bullard High School.

New Video Urges Traffic Safety

The district has produced a new traffic safety public service announcement video narrated by Superintendent Bob Nelson and including other city leaders. "Let's be Street Smart" ask drivers to be especially careful around schools and notes that 14 FUSD students have been hit by vehicles on their way to or from school, with one death.

[Traffic Safety PSA](#)

Preschool Registration Starts April 1

Preschool registration opens on April 1 for Fresno Unified's high-quality early learning programs for the 2023-24 school year. Free programs are available for all 3- and 4-year-old children. An online process is available. Visit: earlylearning.fresnounified.org

Research shows that children who start school early build a strong foundation for future success. For more information, parents can go to earlylearning.fresnounified.org, or call (559) 457-3416. 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.

TK and Kindergarten Registration

Registration is already underway for [transitional kindergarten](#) (TK) for students turning 5 between September 2 and April 2. Students who are 5 on or before September 1 qualify for kindergarten. Dual immersion language programs are available at select schools.

[Online Registration](#)

[Kinder and TK Enrollment Video](#)

[Preschool and Kindergarten Flyer](#)

Help Families Connect with New Ways for Funding College

California's new children's savings account program, [CalkIDS](#), offers newborns up to \$100 and low-income public students between \$500-\$1,500 as scholarships for their future higher education expenses. It also aims to help families start saving with tools like [ScholarShare 529](#), California's official college savings plan.

For more information on www.calkids.org please see recent press releases from Governor Newsom's office (click [here](#)) as well as the California Department of Education (click [here](#)).

Superintendent Board Remarks from March 22, 2023

- Superintendent Nelson started his remarks with his top priorities – literacy and safety.
- Superintendent Nelson shared his priority and focus on ensuring every one of our students are reading and writing at grade level by the end of first grade. He shared the work between the

instructional team and Executive Cabinet to dive deeply into literacy in PreK, TK, K, and first grade specifically. Classroom visits were made to Storey Elementary in all four grades to see best practices in action and contextualize the learning for all leaders. Superintendent shared how abundantly clear those early foundations of pre-reading skills taught in PreK and TK are making a difference in K and first grade success. He recognized the amazing talent of our teachers, instructional team, and leaders to create environments that will help us to reach our goals of strong readers and writers by the end of first grade.

- Superintendent then asked families for their help in these efforts. He implored our families to enroll their children in early learning as soon as they're eligible. He shared that there are some misconceptions that early learning, PreK, TK, and K, are seen by some as "optional" learning as they are not mandated by law. Superintendent pleaded with families to not treat these years as optional learning and clarified that the learning happening in each of those grades is different and built upon year after year.
- Superintendent shared that enrollment for PreK opens on April 1 for the 23/24 school year for all children who turn three or four before December 2 this year. Superintendent also shared that registration is now open for TK and kindergarten for the 23/24 school year. TK is available for all children who turn five between September 2 and April 2 and kindergarten is available for all children who turn five before September 2. Families can enroll online through our website or by visiting their neighborhood school.
- Superintendent then shared more about his priority of safety for our students and staff across the district. He previewed that the board would be hearing from our Fresno High educators and students tonight and that next week the board will participate in a workshop on safety. Next week's board workshop will share a holistic view of student and staff safety including campus safety, safety through prevention and intervention, and safety through classroom management.
- Superintendent Nelson shared that each and every one of our employees and our students play an integral role in safety. There is no one department, one position, one school, or one leadership team that "owns" safety – we all have to play our part to build environments and culture inside and outside of the classroom to support safety at Fresno Unified. Superintendent shared this great collaboration between students and staff who are working together to put a stop to sexual harassment, [check the video out here](#).
- Superintendent Nelson closed his remarks by inviting the board and community to join the Cesar Chavez Day celebration at Fresno Adult School next week and by congratulating board President Islas on being named the 2023 Woman of the Year for the 31st Assembly District by Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula.

[View Full Board Meeting Recap](#)

School Buzz

Eaton Excels at After School Enrichment

Students in Eaton Elementary School's after school program learned how to paint with local muralist Andrea Torres and helped create a mural at their school. This is one of several

partnerships the Extended Learning Department has arranged with community-based organizations to bring fun and enrichment to the after school program.

Bullard Student Leading Fundraising for Cancer Cure

Emily Dye, a junior at Bullard High School, has been nominated as a candidate to lead a team in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Societies (LLS) 2023 Student Visionaries of the Year campaign. Emily and Avery Thompson from San Joaquin Memorial High School are raising money through Team Mia in honor of their friend, Mia, who was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 9 and later lost her battle with cancer. The three were best friends at Malloch Elementary School. Their hope is to raise over \$200,000 by April 21. Team Mia will help fund the LLS mission to find cures for blood cancers and assist patients and their families.

This is a seven-week fundraising competition led by high school students. Donate and read more about Team Mia <https://buff.ly/3JPIqM8>
Watch their video <https://buff.ly/3Tr25VS>

Magic of Storytelling comes to Lincoln Elementary

Lincoln Elementary School hosted a Magic of Storytelling event on March 21, part of an effort to support reading. More than 4,700 books were distributed to six schools for students to take home through the nationwide campaign. Sponsors are the Walt Disney Company, ABC30, First Book and EECU.

Ewing Hosts Reclassification Ceremony

Students and families of 29 English learners from Ewing Elementary School were honored in a breakfast ceremony March 22 for their hard work and reclassification. The 29 students passed the ELPAC assessment and met other criteria to be reclassified as fluent in English.

Grizzlies Give Back

Leadership students at Kings Canyon Middle School have been planning different activities every day in March. One of the activities organized by students was a toy drive for Valley Children's Hospital. Students and staff donated over 150 toys and games for kids at the hospital.

Engineers of the Future at Herrera

Sixth grade students at Herrera Elementary School learned about global climate change and how it affects populations. Students then studied the effects of the California drought on the community, from farmers to residents and the economy. Students met with farmer and community leader Joe Del Bosque, who supports the farm towns where many of his workers live. Mr. Del Bosque talked to students about how science, technology, engineering and math is used in farming and the local problems that farmers face due to water allocation.

Students recognized that there is a need for new technology and innovations to help farmers grow "more crops per drop." They learned how the engineering design process is necessary to design a drip irrigation system that would use the minimum amount of water and still successfully irrigate their seeds.

Students concluded their learning by planting peppers, squash, kale and tomatoes from Mr. Del Bosque. From teacher Emmelin Herrera: "Students had an unforgettable experience, planting

their crops with the guidance of a knowledgeable and experienced farmer like Mr. Del Bosque. Once the vegetables are ready to be picked, students plan on making a stir fry.”

- [Herrera Engineering Video](#)

Edison Headed to State for History Day, Sequoia receives HM

Edison High School’s History Day team brought home numerous awards from the March 11 Fresno County competition and will send several teams of students and individuals on to the state competition April 15-16 at Sacramento State. This year’s theme is “Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas.” Edison’s team is coached by Gary Mrkaich.

Sequoia Middle School’s team of Luis Contreras Ramos, Ava Martinez and Esmeralda Sanchez received an Honorable Mention award for their podcast on Cesar Chavez’s impact on farm labor laws for Mexican American farmworkers. The team is coached by Selma Kith. [Spotify Link to Sequoia History Day Podcast](#)

Edison History Day Results:

- Historical Paper – Third place, Leandro Machuca for the American Revolution's inspiring the French and Haitian Revolutions
- Individual Website – Runner up, Yaslin Carrasco for Thurgood Marshall
- Group Website – Runner up, Rachel and Abigail Samuelian for the United States Forest Service
- Group Performance – Co-champion, Yosef Aklilu, Leo Price, Matthew Pitcher and Mason Pitcher for Psychiatry's Role in Perpetuating Anti-LGBTQ Beliefs by declaring homosexuality a mental disease
- Individual Documentary – Co-champion, Leah Scott for *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*
- Individual Exhibit – Co-champion, Luke Salazar for Superman
- Individual Podcast -- Co-champion, Willow Bolton for project on thalidomide
- Group Podcast -- Co-champion, Thomas Stewart and Coco Rodriguez for California Water Infrastructure
- Group Podcast -- Co-champion, Lucine La Porta and Cole Cogswell for the Stone Wall Riots
- Group Podcast -- Co-champion, Rowan Crass, Sade Walls and Adam Kirkpatrick for Earth Day/Clean Air Act/Clean Water Act
- Group Website -- Co-champion, John Ramirez, Miguel Noriega, Steven Her and Jaime Romero for the Space Race
- Group Documentary -- Co-champion, Uzueth Ramirez and Estrella Garcia for the Bracero Program

Bakman Kindergarten Families gather for Lego Farming Fun

Bakman Elementary School’s kindergarten students and their families gathered on March 16 to build farm scenes using 100 Lego sets donated by Lego. Students are learning about family farming from this fun event and a series of other activities.

CTE Highlight

FFA is Official at Sunnyside High School

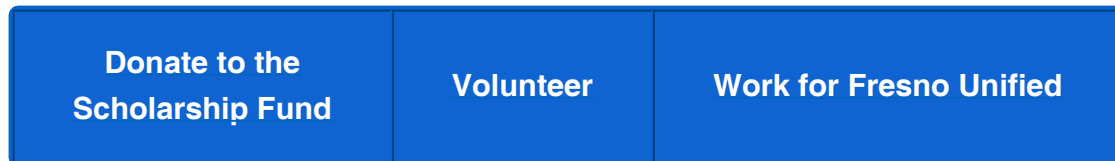
Students in Sunnyside High School’s brand-new [Future Farmers of America \(FFA\)](#) chapter have undertaken a number of projects and are making a big impact on their community. FFA at

Sunnyside, the district's only chapter, launched last summer but achieved official status on March 17 at the FFA State Conference in Ontario.

FFA is a dynamic youth organization that changes lives and prepares members for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. In the past school year, 140 ninth grade students have been engaged in FFA with the plan to expand one grade level per year over the next three years. FFA students are part of the Agriscience and Technology Pathway. Projects include:

- Eighty-nine plant projects entered in The Big Fresno Fair, with 67 taking first place, 16 took second place and two took third place
- Ag Mechanics won Best of Show for produce plant stand project
- Students competing on FFA California Department of Education Teams attended World Ag Expo and created centerpieces for district's Excellence in Education dinner
- Students learning manufacturing skills and created a much-needed dance floor for folklorico program

"They truly are enhancing their community's well-being through their projects and engagement, as well as developing their own personal growth and leadership skills," said Michelle Mar, a Career Education manager.



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