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April 17, 2023

Fresno Unified School District

COMMUNITYzone
A Publication of the Fresno Unified School District

ACHIEVING OUR GREATEST POTENTIAL



Photo of the Week



Special Olympics Basketball at Gaston Middle School

Dates to Know

April 22
IdeaFest

April 26 (see website for time)
[Board of Education](#)

Video of the Week



[Fresno High Park Art Competition 2023 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

Congressman Costa Tours Fresno Unified Nutrition Center

Fresno Unified hosted Congressman Jim Costa for a tour of the Nutrition Center April 12 to learn more about the district's plans to improve student meals. The visit included meeting chef Dan Giusti, chief executive officer and founder of Brigaid. The district has contracted with Brigaid to provide tailored solutions for more appealing meals and less waste.

April is Autism Acceptance Month

In recognition of Autism Acceptance Month, Bullard High School student Evan Rubalcaba interviewed special education manager Michael Fletcher for a Bullard Knight Watch episode. [Evan's Video for Autism Acceptance Month](#)

McLane High School hosts Central Valley World Languages Fair

McLane High School's Dual Language Immersion Program and World Languages Department hosted the 24th World Languages Fair on April 15. The fair brought together middle and high school students studying languages and in English learner programs for a variety of language rich activities, competitions and sporting events. The fair featured cultural performances, including folklorico, mariachi, flamenco, K-pop and Hmong and Polynesian dance; salsa lessons; a grito mexicano competition; and a poetry slam between Fresno City College and Roosevelt High School. The Central Valley World Language Association sponsored the fair. Local leaders, including Deputy Superintendent Misty Her, welcomed participants and the community at the opening ceremony.

Making Beautiful Music across the District

The district held band, choral and orchestra festivals over eight days in March featuring 2,056 performers. The middle and high school students from across the district participated in festivals and clinics judged by local music professionals.

- Orchestra festival March 7-9 at Fresno High School, 644 students
- Choral festival March 14 and 15 at Roosevelt High School, 435 students

- Band festival March 21-23 at Roosevelt, 977 students

Parent University Executive Director is Woman of the Year for District 5

Maiyer Vang, executive director of Parent University, was recognized March 29 by the Fresno City Council as the District 5 Woman of the Year. She was among eight women honored during a special event held by the City of Fresno in honor of Women's History Month.

Bus Drivers Lasso Wins at Rodeo

Fresno Unified's bus drivers were big winners at a bus rodeo competition in Orange County March 25, earning the highest scores in four of the seven driving events. The team also placed second in the novice category and one driver placed second overall.

Preschool and Kindergarten Registration Underway

Preschool registration is underway 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.

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

[Online Registration](#)

[Kinder and TK Enrollment Video](#)

[Preschool and Kindergarten Flyer](#)

Superintendent Board Remarks from April 12, 2023

- Superintendent Nelson started his remarks expressing his gratitude to our bargaining team and SEIU for reaching a tentative agreement for our next contract period. Superintendent shared his gratitude for the collaborative work and shared the incredible importance of the work our SEIU employees perform to support our students every day.
- Superintendent Nelson then encouraged families again to enroll their eligible 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in preschool, transitional kindergarten and kindergarten for the upcoming 2023-24 school year. Interested families can learn more and enroll online at www.fresnounified.org or visit their neighborhood elementary school.
- Superintendent invited all to please join us at the 15th annual Middle School Tournament of Technology this Saturday at Sunnyside High School. Over 400 Fresno Unified middle school students will square off in five categories: Robotics, Drones, Coding, Video Production, and

Design. Competition kicks off at 8:30 at Sunnyside High School. The awards ceremony begins at 1 p.m. in the theater.

- Superintendent Nelson also invited all to join us the following Saturday, April 22, for our IdeaFest at Fresno City College. Students will be presenting projects they have been working on all school year, focused around the theme of "Reflection, Recovery, and Reimagination" following the COVID-19 pandemic. The event will be held at the Old Administration Building from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Superintendent Nelson then acknowledged April as Autism Awareness (or Acceptance) Month and as National School Library Month. Superintendent Nelson and the board shared their support for Autism Acceptance Month by wearing their royal blue. Superintendent Nelson also acknowledged and thanked Thomas Nixon for his 27 years of service to our district as he prepares to retire. Tom has been a tireless advocate for libraries, reading and literacy and has been a strong champion for our Sora Digital Library and building home libraries for our students.

- Last, Superintendent Nelson shared his gratitude to our partners at Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, Central Unified, Clovis Unified, Sanger Unified, Fresno Police Department, and the City of Fresno for coming together to participate in a joint traffic safety campaign. These seven public service announcements have started running on all local news channels, with a new PSA airing every few weeks through the end of the school year. Superintendent Nelson shared a few of the PSAs ([Fresno Unified](#), [Fresno PD](#), and [Clovis Unified](#)) and encouraged all to share the videos widely.

[View Full Board Meeting Recap](#)

School Buzz

Ewing Elementary Classroom Installs Book Stand

Nicole Convers' second-grade dual immersion class at Ewing Elementary School led an effort to convert a newspaper stand into a community library at their campus. Students were inspired to help their school community after reading the book, "Biblioburro -- A True Story from Colombia" by Jeanette Winter. Students can leave and take books in the stand. Details:

- Students wrote letters to school administrators about the benefits of book stand
- Refurbished the stand and painted it
- Voted on best location on campus
- Voted on name -- Biblio Ewing won

Sequoia Middle School Hosts Police Chief

Chief Paco Balderrama of the Fresno Police Department visited Sequoia Middle School April 13. He did a wonderful presentation, relaying his story about growing up not knowing his father, living in government subsidized housing and learning English as a second language. He shared with students his journey of focusing on his assets and supports while pushing himself to do big things in his life. He also took student questions and shared why he chose police work.

Bullard TALENT Students go to New York

More than 70 middle school students traveled to New York City to participate in the WorldStrides OnStage music festival on April 13. Bullard TALENT did amazing! Awards: Concert Choir -- Gold Rating
Concert Choir -- Festival of Gold Invitation Showcase: Gold Rating, First Place Ranking
Showcase -- Adjudicator Award Joycelyn Murray; Ovation Award for entire festival (600 students)

Big Scholarship for Design Science Student

Design Science Middle College High School's Annabelle Raley was been awarded a four-year scholarship from the [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation](#) worth \$55,000 a year. Well done, Annabelle!

Winchell Elementary Launches Folklorico

Winchell Elementary School formed a folklorico group this year and students presented their first performance on April 2 at the Roosevelt High School auditorium as part of a statewide festival. They were recognized with framed art.

Addams Teacher will Hold Signing for New Book

Addams Elementary School teacher Katrina Gidstedt and her bonus daughter, Emelie Gidstedt, have authored a new book, "My Cat Fred Wears a Skirt." They will hold a book signing at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 6 at Petunia's Place bookstore in Fresno. Katrina and Emelie wrote the book in the hopes of adding more diversity to family and school libraries. It's about a boy named Ted and his cat Fred and how they both learn the importance of happiness.

Cooper Students Donate Books to Williams Students

Cooper Academy's Ryan Rodriguez, Alicia Morales and Xavier Martinez surprised first grade students at Williams Elementary School with books for them to take home, part of a project to foster a love of reading with young students. Cooper students had conducted a book drive, collecting donations from various organizations.

Cooper students got the students excited about the books by sharing book reviews on their favorites. They promised to return again before the end of the school year with new book selections.

Rough Rider Recyclers Expand Impact

The Rough Rider Recyclers Club (RRR) expanded their efforts with the installation of a dozen collection bins near high traffic areas across campus grounds. This was the culminating State Seal of Civic Engagement project for several students to address a meaningful issue in their community.

The RRR built upon their already successful classroom collection with a goal of increasing the visibility and accessibility of recycling with the outside bins. The club collaborates with the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, which provides the bins and sorts, washes and sells the bottles and cans each week.

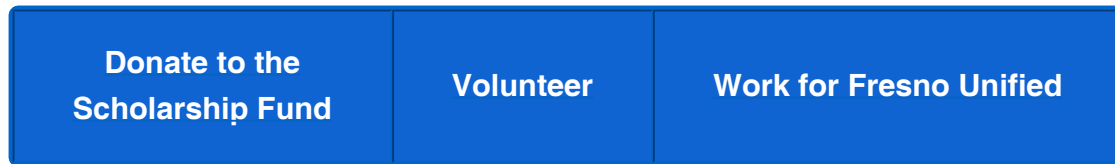
Norseman Hosts Family Paint Night

Norseman Elementary School invited students and their families to participate in a Family Paint

Night on March 24. Families painted a "Field of Poppies," learning new painting techniques. Families enjoyed pizza and Kona ice.

Eaton Elementary holds March Madness Canned Food Drive

Eaton Elementary School hosted a "March Madness" canned food drive to "slam dunk" hunger! Working with the Central California Food Bank, students identified People's Church as the local partner it would donate to. The food bank and People's Church visited Eaton on March 27 to collect the donated food. Classes had competed to bring in the most food, with winners eligible for raffle prizes. Fifth and sixth grade leadership students conducted a Valentine's Day fundraiser to buy prizes, which included a special edition basketball signed by the Fresno State coaches and players and a pizza party.



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