

# May 13, 2020 Special Board Meeting Public Comment

Items appear in order received by area.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

### 1. PRESENT and DISCUSS the 2020/21 Strategic Budget Development

#### 1. Efrain Botello

Hello FUSD Board of Education,

My name is Efrain Botello and I have the pleasure of working directly with FUSD high school students at the youth serving organization Fresno Barrios Unidos. My comment is in regard to the 2020-21 budget development.

My concern lies in how money has been spent for "improving student safety" at FUSD schools. Historically, we have depended on heavy policing and criminalizing our students as a means of "improving student safety" That approach has failed and has only led to suspension, expulsion, and arrest of the youth in most need of help.

We need to redefine what school safety looks like and invest our money in restorative approaches such as counselors, psychologists and other extracurricular activities for youth. I invite you to engage with organizations such as Fresno Barrios Unidos who are experts at restorative approaches that promote student safety.

Our students deserve holistic investments that meet their socioemotional needs.

Efrain Botello  
Youth Advocacy and Leadership Program Assistant  
Pronouns: He/Him/His

#### 2. Marisa Moraza

On behalf of Fresno Barrios Unidos, a community based organization with a long history of supporting youth and their families in Fresno, we call on the board to establish a budget that prioritizes equitable investments to our students and families.

We acknowledge the tremendous work the district has accomplished during this crisis to feed our families, equip students with resources and technology, and adapt to new learning environments. Additionally, this crisis has highlighted the inequities we knew to be true. Our students and families that are most marginalized continue to be put at-risk. Living and adapting to the conditions of a pandemic have made clear the importance of centering the humanity and well-being of our most vulnerable populations.

Fresno Youth have emphatically vocalized a need for age appropriate and culturally responsive behavioral health supports; evidence based and harm reduction centered

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substance use prevention/treatment and mental health services (both clinical and non-clinical services). We want to ensure that our students have access to programs that value their humanity, healing, and growth.

We ask the district to challenge status quo "safety investments" that do not center the mission of education and instead prioritize punitive and harmful discipline measures our Black, Latino, Special Education and systems impacted students. We must move towards investments that truly cultivate safety and support for students.

Marisa Moraza  
Youth Advocacy and Leadership Manager  
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

### 3. Selenaa Rojas

Good evening Board Trustees,

My name is Selena Rojas and I am a freshman at McLane High School. I am involved in Womxn Empowered at Fresno Barrios Unidos and I am also a part of the Fresno Children and Youth Fund- Youth Council. I want to talk about why I strongly disagree with funding Shotspotter and to pay SROs to stay on school campuses. I was told that the officer at my school was there to "promote safety and mentor us" right? Then tell me why I've talked to other students and we all agreed on the fact that SROs make us feel AND look like criminals. Something that would help is if the money could go into more counseling, mental health support, and job skills programs. Funding should go to actually addressing root causes of fights, discipline issues and even drug use. I say this because I remember once I had to wait a whole week to share something with a counselor that was very important to me. During that time, I felt very upset because there were many emotions getting built up. I wish everyone here knew all the issues youth face in Fresno. Can you imagine how different our community would be if adults would actually listen to youth before making all the decisions that impact us? Youth would thrive, feel safe and loved. It's time to invest in us and our overall well being. Thank you.

Sincerely Selena Rojas

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### UNSCHEDULED ORAL COMMUNICATION

#### 1. Efrain Botello

Submitting on behalf of a student:

My name is Raymond Zavala I am an 18 year old senior and I attend Cambridge HS. I was kicked out of Roosevelt during my 11th grade year for a fight I wasn't involved in. I just got blamed and kicked out. I have been attending Cambridge HS ever since. I have finished my probation thanks to Fresno Barrios Unidos and Men With Heart and I am scheduled to graduate this summer. I have not heard from anyone in my school about college. One of my biggest worries is the only support I got is from Fresno Barrios Unidos and I need to work to help my family out and there are no job opportunities for me. Last thing I wanna say my friends who are still in school got more complaints and problems not knowing what they grades will mean when they go back to school next year. They not learning cause my friends also don't have computers or internet. We hood kids.

Efrain Botello

Youth Advocacy and Leadership Program Assistant

Pronouns: He/Him/His