



BOARD COMMUNICATIONS - SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

TO: Members of the Board of Education

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Board Communications Approved by:
Mao Misty Her, Superintendent



Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Mao Misty Her, Superintendent

Date: September 26, 2025

Phone Number: (559) 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

The purpose of this communication is to inform the Board of notable calendar items:

- Spoke at the New Employee Orientation
- Spoke at the Principal's Meeting
- Held interviews for Associate Superintendent, Student and Family Services and Assistant Superintendent, Special Education
- Attended the Duncan 4.0 Breakfast Celebration
- Met with Cabinet Teams
- Site visits at Vinland and Viking
- Spoke at the Grand Opening of the Technology Arena at Tehipite Middle School
- Held teacher listening session at Kings Canyon Middle School
- Participated in the United Way Fresno and Madera Counties Board Strategic Planning Meeting
- Attending the Asian American and Asian Studies Celebration Event at Fresno State

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Misty Her at (559) 457-3884.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: Mao Misty Her, Superintendent

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer

Date: September 26, 2025
Phone Number: (559) 457-6226

Regarding: Trustee Briefings on Attendance, Enrollment, and Forecasting

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding upcoming briefings with staff to discuss attendance, enrollment, and forecasting.

Staff would like to offer the opportunity for Trustees to meet in small groups to discuss these matters. For consistency and planning, staff recommend meetings be held during the week of October 13. Board Briefing Dates are as follows:

Monday, October 13, 2025: 10:00 a.m. & 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 14, 2025: 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 15, 2025: 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Trustees will receive an email on Monday October 06, 2025. Please respond to the email with your preferred date and time option. Currently, all meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams.

To ensure compliance with the Brown Act, meetings will be limited to three trustees per session.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Patrick Jensen at (559) 457-6226.

Cabinet Approval: 
Name and Title: Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Kim Kelstrom, Chief Executive

Date: September 26, 2025
Phone Number: (559) 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for September 18, 2025

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board a copy of School Services of California's (SSC) Weekly Updates. Each week SSC provides an update and commentary on different educational fiscal issues. In addition, they include different articles related to education issues. The SSC Weekly Updates for September 18, 2025, are attached and include the following articles:

- Legislature Wraps up the 2025 Legislative Year – September 17, 2025
- After Charlie Kirk's Killing, Newsom Launches Service Challenge for Young Men – September 18, 2025
- Ethnic Studies Was Supposed to Start in California Schools. What Happened? – September 18, 2025

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Kim Kelstrom at (559) 457-3907.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer



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DATE: September 18, 2025

TO: Misty Her
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: ***SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update***

Bill Signing Protocol

The Legislature concluded its work for the first year of the 2025-26 Legislative Session in the early morning hours of Saturday, September 13, 2026, sending hundreds of measures to Governor Gavin Newsom for consideration.

Lawmakers are now on recess and will not return to the Capitol until January 5, 2026, unless called into a special session. Below, we provide a *Fiscal Report* article that details the key bills that were approved by the Legislature during the final days of the 2025 legislative year.

With the Legislature adjourned, attention shifts to Governor Newsom, who has until October 13, 2025, to sign or veto legislation. While he has acted on some measures over the past few weeks, none of the significant education bills highlighted in the article have yet been addressed. Historically, education measures are among the last batches of bills the Governor acts on, meaning many key TK-12 proposals will likely be decided toward the end of the signing period.

The Governor announces his actions through press releases, typically organized by issue area (education, healthcare, public safety, labor, etc.). For some high-profile bills, he may also hold a signing ceremony at the Capitol or at a location connected to the measure.

When a bill is vetoed, the Governor issues a veto message explaining his rationale for not signing the measure. These messages often provide useful insight into his policy priorities and can serve as a roadmap for how a proposal might be revised and reintroduced in the future. Although the Legislature has the constitutional authority to override a veto with a two-thirds vote, California has not exercised this power since 1980. Even with the Democratic supermajority in both houses, lawmakers are unlikely to challenge a veto from a Governor of their own party. Instead, the more effective strategy is to work with the Administration to reshape proposals in line with the guidance outlined in veto messages.

For local educational agencies (LEAs), this means the coming weeks are critical. Decisions on education funding, accountability, instructional programs, and other high-impact measures will emerge as the Governor works through the final set of bills.

We will continue to provide timely updates on the Governor's actions, with particular focus on those measures most relevant to TK-12 education.

Governor Newsom Provides State of the State via Letter

Under the California Constitution, the Governor is required to report annually to the Legislature on the condition of the state, but the law does not prescribe how this must be done. Traditionally, governors have fulfilled this duty by delivering the State of the State in person before a joint convention of the Legislature in the Assembly Chamber. This year, however, Governor Newsom took a different approach. On September 9, 2025—the 175th anniversary of California statehood—he transmitted a written State of the State letter to the Legislature and released a prerecorded, abridged video rather than addressing lawmakers in person.

In his letter, the Governor emphasized the “cradle to career” continuum, highlighting TK-12 schools as hubs for opportunity where students can access free meals, mental health services, academic enrichment, and afterschool programs. He reaffirmed the rollout of universal transitional kindergarten (TK) for all four-year-olds and touted the Universal Meals Program, which is projected to serve nearly one billion meals in schools. Newsom also underscored efforts to expand high school pathways, including dual enrollment, career technical education, and paid internships through the state's Master Plan for Career Education. These efforts are being linked to regional collaboratives that connect schools and colleges with local workforce needs in sectors such as education, health care, and clean energy. Finally, the Governor pointed to new initiatives around artificial intelligence (AI), signaling an interest in preparing students to both leverage and navigate the risks of emerging technologies.

For LEAs, this year's State of the State underscores the Administration's commitment to universal TK, universal meals, expanded mental health and enrichment services, and stronger high school-to-career pipelines. It also signals a growing expectation that TK-12 schools begin preparing students for an AI-driven economy, positioning education as a key driver of California's long-term competitiveness.

You can find the full letter and video remarks [here](#).

Leilani Aguinaldo

Legislature Wraps up the 2025 Legislative Year

By Kyle Hyland
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
September 17, 2025

The Legislature concluded its work for the first year of the 2025-26 Legislative Session into the wee hours of Saturday, September 13, 2025, sending hundreds of measures to Governor Gavin Newsom for his consideration.

In the end, the Legislature approved almost 1,000 bills in 2025. However, many of the measures that failed to make it to Governor Newsom's desk can be revived when the Legislature reconvenes in January 2026 since the state's lawmakers operate on a two-year legislative session.

One of the biggest issues we have been tracking closely at the end of session were three bills related to charter school authorization and nonclassroom-based (NCB) charter schools:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 84 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance) would increase audit requirements and authorizer responsibilities, revise the funding determination process to include additional financial reporting and a review of charter networks, impose restrictions on certain contracting practices, and place new limits on the ability of small school districts to authorize NCB charter schools that serve student populations larger than their own.
- Senate Bill (SB) 414 (Ashby, D-Sacramento) would amend the oversight, auditing, and funding systems for NCB charter schools, which would be rebranded as "flex-based" charter schools. The bill would update and expand audit procedures for all local educational agencies (LEAs) and create a new Office of the Education Inspector General to investigate fraud and financial mismanagement. This bill would also establish statewide contracting requirements to prevent misuse of public funds, increase accountability for charter authorizers through technical assistance and oversight grants, and extend the moratorium on new flex-based charter schools through June 30, 2026. The bill would also extend the use of verified data by charter schools in the renewal process until June 30, 2028.
- SB 494 (Cortese, D-San Jose) would extend the date for a chartering authority to consider verified data to support measures of academic performance in the charter renewal process to June 30, 2026, and would extend the moratorium on new NCB charter schools until January 1, 2027.

In the end, only SB 414 made it to the Governor's desk while AB 84 and SB 494 were sent to the inactive file, which means they are effectively dead for 2025. SB 414 is the vehicle that is supported by charter school advocates, including the California Charters School Association. However, the bill is opposed by TK-12 management and labor organizations. We will be monitoring closely to see if the Governor signs the measure into law or vetoes the bill.

Another bill that was sent to the inactive file was AB 1331 (Elhawary, D-South Los Angeles), which would regulate and limit the use of workplace surveillance tools, by both public and private employers. This bill is opposed by management organizations and supported by labor. The measure can be revived when the Legislature returns in January but will not be considered by the Governor this year.

Some of the other bills that are joining SB 414 on the Governor's desk include the following noteworthy measures:

- AB 49 (Muratsuchi) is an urgency measure that would prohibit LEA employees from allowing an officer or employee of an agency conducting immigration enforcement to enter a school site without providing a valid judicial warrant or court order.
- AB 237 (Patel, D-San Diego) would create a new crime for willfully threatening to commit a crime that would result in great bodily injury or death at a daycare, school, university, workplace, house of worship, or medical facility.
- AB 374 (Nguyen, D-Elk Grove) would, beginning with the 2026-27 school year, require TK-14 public school employers to provide classified school employees with certain information regarding their wages at the time of each payment.
- AB 382 (Berman, D-Menlo Park) would, beginning January 1, 2029, lower the speed limit from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour in a school zone.
- AB 419 (Connolly, D-San Rafael) would require LEAs to provide information to parents and guardians relating to the Immigration-Enforcement Actions at California Schools Guide for Students and Families and developed by the Attorney General.
- AB 495 (Rodriguez, D-San Fernando) would require schools and licensed child daycare facilities to adopt model policies developed by the Attorney General regarding interaction with immigration enforcement authorities and require the Attorney General to develop those model policies.
- AB 560 (Addis, D-Morro Bay) would require LEAs to "take all reasonable steps to distribute the workload associated with initial assessments across all resource specialists employed by the LEA in an equal manner, unless otherwise collectively bargained." The bill also requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) to recommend a maximum adult-to-pupil staffing ratio for special classes no later than July 1, 2027.
- AB 606 (Quirk-Silva, D-Fullerton) would require the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to issue a preliminary credential with a specialization in pupil personnel services to an out-of-state applicant who meets specified requirements.
- AB 640 (Muratsuchi) would require all LEA governing board members to receive training in public education school finance laws.
- AB 699 (Stefani, D-San Francisco) would permit a local jurisdiction submitting a local ballot measure to choose how specific information will appear on the ballot label for specified tax or bond measures.
- AB 715 (Zbur, D-Hollywood) would establish the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) under the administration of the Government Operations Agency and the position of Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator within the OCR. It would also require LEAs that know that instructional or professional development materials were used that violate existing antidiscrimination laws to investigate and remediate the action. The bill would also require instructional materials to be factually accurate and reflect the adopted curriculum and standards in existing law, and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship.

- AB 727 (González, M., D-Los Angeles) would require public higher education institutions and public schools serving students in grades 7-12 that issue student identification cards to include the telephone and text number for the Trevor Project's suicide hotline that is available 24 hours per day and 7 days a week.
- AB 772 (Lowenthal, D-Long Beach) would require the California Department of Education, on or before June 1, 2026, to adopt a model policy on how to address reported acts of cyberbullying that occur outside of school hours and require LEAs to adopt the resulting policy or a similar policy developed with local input.
- AB 1009 (Rubio, D-Baldwin Park) would authorize occupational therapists and physical therapists to be eligible for a preliminary administrative services credential.
- AB 1067 (Quirk-Silva) would require public employers to continue investigations of public employees for misconduct after the investigated employee retires, and to refer the matter to law enforcement before closing the investigation. The bill would also require the employee to forfeit any accrued pension rights and benefits if a felony conviction arises out of any specified conduct.
- AB 1098 (Fong, D-Alhambra) would establish the California Education Interagency Council to align education and workforce systems, support adult skill development, and address the changing nature of work and the economy.
- AB 1224 (Valencia, D-Anaheim) would allow LEAs to assign a permitted or credentialed substitute teacher to the same classroom for up to 60 cumulative days, rather than the current 30-day limit, under specific conditions; establish requirements for governing board notice and reporting when substitutes serve beyond 30 days (or 20 days for special education assignments); and sunset on January 1, 2029.
- AB 1230 (Bonta, D-Oakland) would require school districts to conduct a periodic review and assessment for readmission of students who have been expelled at least 45 days before the end of the expulsion term.
- AB 1264 (Gabriel, D-Encino) would establish a process for the California Department of Public Health to determine which ultraprocessed foods (UPFs) are of concern by June 1, 2028, requiring these UPFs of concern to be phased out of schools until they are prohibited from being offered by vendors as of July 1, 2032, and prohibited from being served or sold in schools by July 1, 2035.
- AB 1348 (Bains, D-Bakersfield) would add "immigration enforcement activity" to the list of emergencies that may justify a waiver of average daily attendance losses for LEAs funding purposes through June 30, 2029.
- AB 1454 (Rivas, D-Salinas) would require the CTC to revise standards for literacy specialist and administrator preparation programs to ensure alignment with evidence-based literacy practices and the state's English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework.
- SB 19 (Rubio) would create a new crime of threatening to commit a crime that will result in death or great bodily injury at a daycare, school, university, workplace, house of worship, or medical facility, punishable as an alternate felony-misdemeanor.

- SB 98 (Pérez, D-Pasadena) is an urgency measure would require LEAs to include procedures for notifying parents and school staff when immigration enforcement is confirmed on the school site within the school safety plan through January 1, 2031.
- SB 373 (Grove, R-Bakersfield) would expand state oversight of nonpublic, nonsectarian schools located outside of California that serve students with disabilities by strengthening certification standards, requiring LEAs to conduct in-person interviews with placed students each year to assess their health and safety.
- SB 472 (Stern, D-Los Angeles) would require the SSPI to establish the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program to provide direct allocations to LEAs for the purposes of providing Holocaust and genocide education and professional training.
- SB 638 (Padilla, D-San Diego) would amend the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant program and establish the California Education and Workforce Development Coordinating Entity to serve as the statewide planning and coordinating body for career technical education, career pathways, and workforce development.
- SB 640 (Cabaldon, D-Yolo) would establish the California State University (CSU) direct admission program between participating CSU campuses and LEAs.
- SB 848 (Pérez) would establish new requirements to improve pupil safety by addressing school employee misconduct, clarifying professional boundaries, enhancing comprehensive school safety plans, expanding child abuse prevention training requirements, requiring instructional programming on abuse prevention, and creating a statewide system for tracking classified employee misconduct investigations.

Barring a special session being called, the Legislature will not reconvene until January 5, 2026. With the Legislature on recess, the focus now shifts to Governor Newsom, who has until October 13, 2025, to sign or veto the bills on his desk. If Governor Newsom does not act on a bill by this deadline, then it would become law without his signature; however, we fully expect Governor Newsom to act on every bill on his desk.

We will provide periodic updates and analysis on the legislative actions taken by Governor Newsom in subsequent *Fiscal Report* articles over the next month. Stay tuned.

Note: Governor Newsom announced a statewide initiative this week calling on 10,000 young men to serve as mentors, coaches, and tutors through a new campaign called the California Men's Service Challenge.

After Charlie Kirk's Killing, Newsom Launches Service Challenge for Young Men

By Vani Sangneria
EdSource
September 18, 2025

Gov. Gavin Newsom is calling on 10,000 young men to serve as mentors, coaches and tutors through a new campaign called the California Men's Service Challenge.

The statewide initiative, announced on Tuesday, is the latest in an executive order directing agencies to address mental health in boys and young men.

“We have an epidemic of loneliness, and so much of that is manifesting and metastasizing online in very profound and consequential ways, and last week only underscored that further,” said Newsom on Tuesday, referencing the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk at a Utah university campus.

In California, boys and men age 15 to 44 die by suicide at three to four times the rate of women, often by firearms. Almost half of female homicide victims are also killed by a current or former intimate male partner.

Over the course of a year, the state will partner with youth organizations, including Improve Your Tomorrow, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Mentor California, and the American Institute for Boys and Men, to recruit and train them as mentors for young boys.

“The goal is to create consistent, positive relationships where men model integrity, empathy and community engagement while helping young men develop confidence and purpose,” Josh Fryday, the state’s chief service officer, told EdSource.

Fryday said the initiative will include ongoing one-on-one and group mentoring, tutoring or reading programs, service projects, coaching youth sports and guiding young men through college and career exploration. It will be supported by California Volunteers, the state’s \$275 million program for community service and civic engagement.

For youth organizations like Mentor California, which have long wait lists of young boys seeking mentors, the campaign is a crucial opportunity to model healthy relationships early in a boy’s life, said Marcus Strother, executive director of Mentor California.

“We want mentors who are vulnerable and are ready to share their story,” said Strother. “And part of that comes from us in leadership roles, we have to train them and help them understand what it means to step into a young person’s life and really build a relationship with them.”

Strother said he noticed that the young men he worked with seemed to have taken a turn for the worse after the Covid-19 pandemic. Boys lost crucial years of social development, particularly those in middle and high school, and then struggled to socialize in person, understand how to build good relationships, or even to find the words to describe how they were feeling, he said.

According to research by child and adolescent psychologists, boys’ mental health has also been slower to recover from lockdowns compared to girls’.

“We haven’t done a good job of teaching our young men how to understand their emotions and talk through them,” Strother said, “and that it’s OK to be by yourself, but it’s not OK to get lost in that loneliness.”

During the announcement, Newsom referenced a recent poll showing that 1 in 4 young men between the ages of 15 and 35 said they felt lonely “a lot of the previous day.” Adolescent boys are also about 50% less likely than girls to seek mental health services for depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts, in part due to social stigma against seeking help.

In August, Newsom ordered the California Health and Human Services agency, alongside programs like the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, to find ways to “support the mental health and help-seeking

behavior” of boys and young men, although he did not include any new funding or programming as part of the initial executive order.

Jason Laker, a professor of higher education and researcher in men and masculinity studies at San Jose State University, said the service campaign is an important first step toward meeting the needs of young men.

“Boys are struggling for attention, and they desperately need people in their life who are there to support them and uplift them,” said Laker. “And you need to make sure that these mentorships are giving them productive learning — not that they’re rooted in stereotypes.”

Laker, who was a dean at Saint John’s University, a men’s college in Minnesota, said he often counseled young men to break out of their own cycles of violence or anger. He said the approach worked not simply because he was a male role model, but also because he applied research-based techniques to build trust with young men. He’d ask the right questions, use accessible language, and learned to identify adverse childhood experiences — such as excessive school discipline — that tend to affect young men.

Laker said the initiative should similarly challenge harmful norms of masculinity by training mentors in practices of care and compassion that boys are most receptive to.

“Someone who wants to mentor a Black boy, for example, needs to understand why it may feel dangerous for him to express strong emotion,” Laker said. “You need to learn how to give him a safe place to do that.”

Fryday said the state will partner with behavioral health experts through state agencies like the Department of Public Health, as well as the American Institute for Boys and Men, to help guide the mental health goals for the initiative. Strother said that Mentor California, as well as other listed partners, will also train mentors to be culturally responsive to the diverse experiences of California’s boys.

“Once we start showing that there is a different way for us to move as men,” Strother said, “then our young men will begin to show up.”

Note: The ethnic studies mandate did not go into effect for the current 2025-26 school year since it was “contingent upon an appropriation” and the state did not allot any dollars.

Ethnic Studies Was Supposed to Start in California Schools. What Happened?

By Carolyn Jones
CalMatters
September 18, 2025

This fall, every high school in California was supposed to offer ethnic studies — a one-semester class focused on the struggles and triumphs of marginalized communities.

But the class appears stalled, at least for now, after the state budget omitted funding for it and the increasingly polarized political climate dampened some districts’ appetite for anything that hints at controversy.

“Right now, it’s a mixed bag. Some school districts have already implemented the course, and some school districts are using the current circumstances as a rationale not to move forward,” said Albert Camarillo, a Stanford history professor and founder of the university’s Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity. “But I’m hopeful. This fight has been going on for a long time.”

California passed the ethnic studies mandate in 2021, following years of debate and fine-tuning of curriculum. The class was meant to focus on the cultures and histories of African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and Latinos, all of whom have faced oppression in California. The state’s curriculum also encourages schools to add additional lessons based on their student populations, such as Hmong or Armenian.

The course would have been required for high school graduation, beginning with the Class of 2030.

But the state never allotted money for the course, which meant the mandate hasn’t gone into effect. The Senate Appropriations Committee estimated that the cost to hire and train teachers and purchase textbooks and other materials would be \$276 million. Some school districts have used their own money to train teachers and have started offering the class anyway.

Accusations of antisemitism

Meanwhile, fights have erupted across the state over who and who isn’t included in the curriculum. Some ethnic studies teachers incorporated lessons on the Gaza conflict and made other changes put forth by a group of educators and activists called the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium. That’s led to accusations of antisemitism in dozens of school districts.

Antisemitism has been on the rise generally in California, not just in schools. Statewide, anti-Jewish hate crime rose 7.3% last year, according to the California Department of Justice. In Los Angeles County, hate crimes — including slurs— against Jewish people rose 91% last year, to the highest number ever recorded, according to the county’s Commission on Human Relations.

Those numbers in part prompted a pair of legislators to propose a bill addressing antisemitism in California public schools. Assembly Bill 715, which is now headed to Gov. Gavin Newsom, would beef up the discrimination complaint process in schools and create a statewide antisemitism coordinator to ensure schools comply. Another bill, which died, would have directly addressed antisemitism in ethnic studies classes by placing restrictions on curriculum.

‘On life support’

But the delays and public controversies have taken a toll. No one has tracked how many schools offer ethnic studies, or how many require it, but some say the momentum is lost.

“It’s already on life support and this could be one more arrow,” said Tab Berg, a political consultant based in the Sacramento area.

Berg has been a critic of ethnic studies, saying it’s divisive. A better way to encourage cultural understanding is to eliminate segregation in schools and ensure the existing social studies curriculum is comprehensive and accurate, he said. “We should absolutely find ways to help students appreciate and understand other cultures. But not in a way that leads to further polarization of the school community.”

Carol Kocivar, former head of the state PTA and a San Francisco-based education writer, also thinks the class may be stalled indefinitely.

“I think the people who supported ethnic studies didn’t realize they were opening a can of worms,” Kocivar said. “Until there’s an agreement on the ideological guardrails, I just don’t see it moving forward on a broad scale.”

Kocivar supports the ethnic studies curriculum generally, but thinks it should be woven into existing classes like English, history and foreign language. That would leave room in students’ schedules for electives while still ensuring they learn the histories of marginalized communities.

Schools moving ahead

In Orange County, nearly all high schools are offering ethnic studies as a stand-alone elective course or paired with a required class like English or history. Teachers use curriculum written by their districts with public input, drawn from the state’s recommended curriculum. They also have the option of adding lessons on Vietnamese, Hmong or Cambodian culture, reflecting the county’s ethnic makeup.

“The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive,” said Marika Manos, manager of history and social science for the Orange County Department of Education. “Students see themselves in the curriculum and in the broader story of America. ... It’s a wonderful opportunity for them to get some joy in their day.”

A handful of districts are waiting to see if the state authorizes funding, but the rest have found their own money to hire and train teachers and purchase materials. There was some pushback against Santa Ana Unified when two Jewish civil rights groups sued, claiming the district’s ethnic studies courses contained antisemitic material. The district settled earlier this year and changed the course curriculum.

Polarized political climate

Camarillo, the Stanford professor, said the national political climate “no question” has had a significant effect on the ethnic studies rollout. Parents might have genuine concerns about what’s being taught, “but we’re also seeing the impact of extremist groups that are fomenting distrust in our schools.”

He pointed to book bans, attacks on “woke” curriculum and other so-called culture war issues playing out in schools nationwide.

But the fight over ethnic studies has been going on for decades, since the first student activists pushed for the course at San Francisco State in the 1960s, and he’s hopeful that the current obstacles, especially the fights over antisemitism, will eventually resolve.

“I hate to see what’s happening but I think there’s hope for a resolution,” he said. “Ethnic studies can help us understand and appreciate each other, communicate, make connections. I’ve seen it play out in the classroom and it’s a beautiful thing.”

‘A really special class’

In Oakland, Summer Johnson has been teaching ethnic studies for three years at Arise High School, a charter school in the Fruitvale district. She uses a combination of liberated ethnic studies and other curricula and her own lesson plans.

She covers topics like identity, stereotypes and bias; oppression and resistance; and cultural assets, or “the beautiful things in your community,” she said. They also learn the origins of the class itself, starting with the fight for ethnic studies at San Francisco State.

Students read articles and write papers, conduct research, do art projects and give oral presentations, discuss issues and take field trips. She pushes the students to “ask questions, be curious, have the tough conversations. This is the place for that.”

She’s had no complaints from parents, but sometimes at the beginning of the semester, students question the value of the class.

“When that happens, we have a discussion,” Johnson said. “By the end of the class, students learn about themselves and their classmates and learn to express their opinions. Overall students respond really well.”

Johnson, who has a social studies teaching credential, sought out training to teach ethnic studies and feels that’s critical for the course to be successful. Teachers need to know the material, but they also need to know how to facilitate sensitive conversations and encourage students to open up to their peers.

“It’s a really special class. I’d love to see it expand to all schools,” Johnson said. “The purpose is for students to have empathy for each other and knowledge of themselves and their communities. And that’s important.”

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Wendy McCulley

Date: September 26, 2025

Phone Number: (559) 457-3749

Regarding: 2024/25 Year-End Summary

The purpose of this Board communication is to provide an update on the progress of the Office of Engagement and External Partnerships (OEEP) at the close of the 2024/25 fiscal year.

The 2024/25 fiscal year marked a transformative period for the Foundation for Fresno Unified Students. With record-breaking donations, expanded outreach, and new strategic partnerships, the Foundation significantly advanced its mission to provide equitable resources and opportunities for Fresno Unified School District students. Key milestones included the launch of impactful fundraising campaigns, new cornerstone initiatives, and meaningful community engagement events, all aligned with district goals of positive student outcomes and operational excellence.

Below is a highlight of the revenue sources acquired through the work of The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students:

Key Revenue & Donations

- Noir Event (October 2024): \$230,000 raised — largest single fundraising event to date, attended by over 1,500 students, parents, and community members.
- Giving Day: Peak Potential (August 2024): \$18,921 raised — a 44% increase over previous efforts; funds fulfilled Adopt-A-School projects across 35 sites.
- Suit Drive (February 2025): Over 7,000 pieces of professional attire collected, surpassing last year's 5,000-piece total.
- In-Kind Donations: Over \$1 million in in-kind donations, including hand sanitizers, snacks, AI tools, and classroom supplies.
- Major Donors:
 - PG&E: \$25,000 for Coats for Kids and \$5,500 for Edison Green Energy stipends
 - Groundswell: \$10,000 for cultural exchange
 - Community Health System: \$25,000 grant

Scholarships

- Awarded Total: \$441,200 to 333 students — highest in Fresno Unified School District history.
- District Scholarships: \$1.2 million over three years administered through The Foundation.
- Application Growth: 991 applicants in 2025 — a 16% increase from the prior year.

Programs & Initiatives

- Tech Convening (January 2025): In collaboration with DARO, a convening at Farber High presented the Foundation's tech education landscape analysis.
- Student Mental Health Town Hall (February 2025): Landscape analysis and further involving community partnership.
- Champion Cornerstone Launch: An additional cornerstone that is a thread through all of our work advocating for students' voices and opportunities, aligning with equity and innovation efforts.

- Foundation Ambassadors: Piloted at 21 sites to amplify awareness and site-based engagement.
- Suited for Success (April 2025): Over 350 students received 3,000+ clothing items; remaining attire distributed to high schools.
- Spill the Tea Event (March 2025): Nearly 200 attendees celebrated women in leadership; supported by sponsors such as PNC Bank and Curriculum Associates.
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: Partnered to expand early literacy access for ZIP Codes most in need.
- School-Site Crowdfunding: Raised \$4,065 to support Latinx Graduation and student-led programs in soccer, robotics, journalism, and more.
- New Website Launch: Foundation4FUSD.org was redesigned for greater transparency, donor engagement, and resource access.

Strategic Reports

- Community Impact Report (August 2024): First-ever report released to outline financials, priorities, and alignment with district goals.
- Landscape Analyses (May 2025): Published findings on Technology Education and Student Mental Health, now available online.

Looking Ahead

With a strengthened foundation and clear alignment to Fresno Unified's goals, the Foundation for Fresno Unified Students is positioned for an even more impactful 2025/26 year. We remain committed to championing every student's path to success by building partnerships, stewarding resources, and investing in equity-driven solutions.

Please see the attached backup for more information regarding the Foundation's progress.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Wendy McCulley at (559) 457-3749.

Cabinet Approval: 

Name and Title: Wendy McCulley, Chief



THE FOUNDATION
FOR FRESNO UNIFIED STUDENTS



2024-2025

Community Impact Report





THE FOUNDATION
FOR FRESNO UNIFIED STUDENTS



Each year, The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students grows—not just in programs or numbers, but in purpose.

This year, that purpose came into sharp focus. Our new cornerstone, “Champion,” reflects what our team, our partners, and our students are doing every day: speaking up, showing up, and standing firm in the belief that every student deserves opportunity.

You’ll see that theme throughout this year’s report. It’s in the record-breaking 991 scholarship applications submitted—a 68% increase in just two years. It’s in the blazers and dresses donated during our third annual Suit Drive, and in the 351 students who walked away from the Suited for Success event with not just professional attire, but confidence. It’s in the \$1.2 million in scholarships awarded in the past three years of being facilitated by The Foundation. It’s in the hard questions asked at our Student Mental Health Town Hall, and in the bold answers our students are helping to shape.

You’ll also see how The Foundation has matured as an organization—investing in strategic planning, expanding our Board of Directors, and launching our first-ever Foundation-led grant to bring Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library to underserved ZIP codes in Fresno. With insight from landscape analyses on technology education and student mental health, we are increasingly shaping not just how we respond, but how we lead.

And none of this would be possible without you.

This past year, your generosity helped us raise over \$440,000 for scholarships, fulfill over 90 Adopt-A-School requests, and grow our donor base fivefold. You packed out event halls, rallied colleagues to give, and answered calls to mentor and volunteer. You helped us grow—thoughtfully, intentionally, and with the future always in mind. As you read this report, I hope you see the ripple effect of your support. Because what’s happening here isn’t small. It’s not temporary. It’s momentum. And it’s moving us toward a stronger, more equitable future for every student in Fresno Unified. With gratitude and resolve,



Wendy McCulley

Wendy McCulley
President & CEO
The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students

Student Impact, Voice & Innovation



300+

Stakeholders engaged through surveys, focus groups, and interviews



2

Districtwide landscape analyses completed

Mental Health + Tech Education



2

Convenings hosted

40+ Attendees
Technology
Education
Convening

70+ Attendees
Student
Mental Health
Town Hall



\$440,000+

Scholarships awarded

\$1.2M+ awarded since 2021



991

Scholarship applications received

Up 16% from last year, 68% from two years ago

351

Students served through

Suited for Success

117% increase from 2024

7,000+

Items of professional clothing donated



98

Adopt-A-School wishes fulfilled

Across 58 schools, totaling \$81,805+ in direct impact



22

Foundation Ambassadors activated across school sites



Events & Engagement



\$230,000

Raised at The Noir Event

Over 1,500 attendees—students
and families invited for free



\$18,921

**Raised during Peak
Potential Giving Day**

127% of goal



3,000+

**eNews readers
(up from 600 in 2023)**

5x growth in Donor Digest readership



48+

**Corporate sponsors
engaged this year**



Organizational Growth



First strategic alignment to District's Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) model

1

**New cornerstone
launched:
Champion**

3

**New board
members
appointed**



1

**Board-approved
grant awarded
(Imagination Library)**

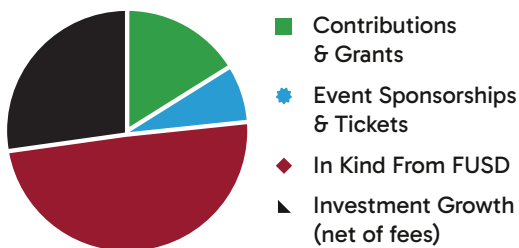
Statement of Activities



Revenue

2024

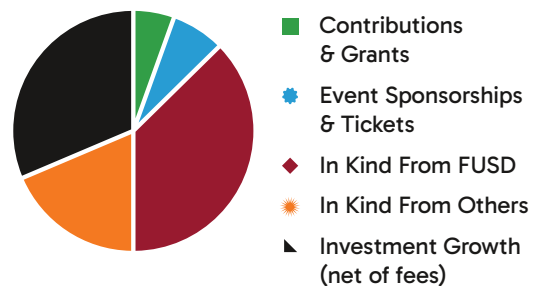
\$3,911,991



Revenue less expenses **\$931,162**
Total assets **\$22,209,528**

2025

\$4,741,192

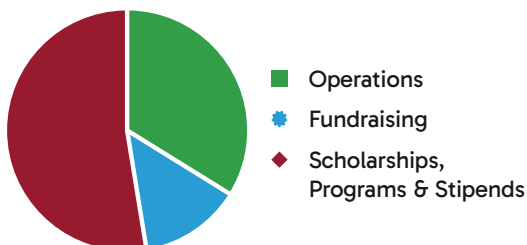


Revenue less expenses **\$750,512**
Total assets **\$22,907,908**

Expenses

2024

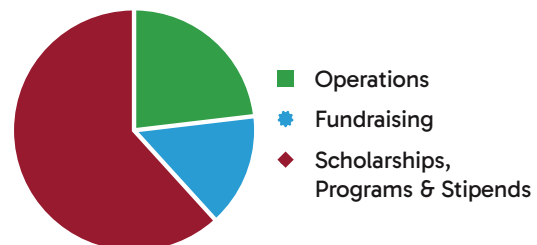
\$2,980,829



Total liabilities **\$506,000**
Net assets/fund balance **\$21,703,528**

2025

\$3,990,680



Total liabilities **\$454,026**
Net assets/fund balance **\$22,453,882**

Metrics



\$1 : \$3.11



ROPI (Return on Philanthropic Investment)

(Total revenue divided by operations and fundraising expenses)

\$447,200

In scholarships awards



58%



Fundraising Growth Rate

(24/25 contributions, grants & events revenue divided by 23/24)

\$1 : \$2.45

Events ROPI

(Total event revenue divided by revenue expenses)



Investment Growth

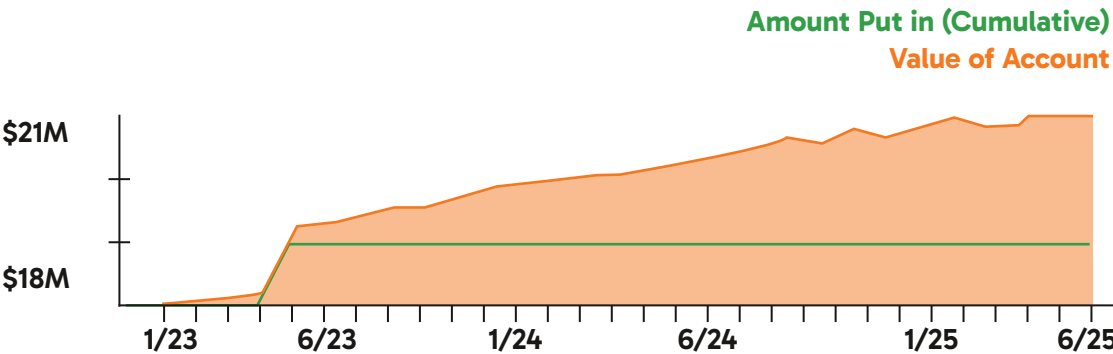




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Cornerstone: Learn

Elevating Learning Environments. Supporting Student Success.

“I received my books from Petunia’s Place! Thank you greatly for this tremendous gift for my students. They’ve been enjoying reading all the new books!”

— Kim Merchen, Teacher, FUSD

Our Vision for ‘Learn’

This year, The Foundation amplified learning by filling critical gaps in classrooms, campuses, and homes. From early literacy to graduation celebrations, we supported programs that complemented the district’s academic mission while ensuring no school—and no student—was left behind.

Literacy & Early Learning

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

In a milestone moment, The Foundation awarded its first-ever internal grant to help launch a Fresno-based affiliate of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. As a Literacy Advocate Partner, we’re delivering free books directly to families in underserved ZIP codes—including Burroughs, Manchester GATE, King, Bakman, and Figarden.



Thousands of books, delivered monthly at no cost to families.

Meeting Immediate Needs

From art supplies to classroom furniture, Fresno Unified educators submitted 66 school “wish lists” totaling over 139 unique requests. With your support:

Example projects funded:

- Garden beds for STEM integration
- ⚙️ Hygiene kits for school counseling centers
- ◆ Dramatic play stations for early education classrooms



98

wishes were fully funded

Every division—elementary, middle, high, and specialty—benefited



\$81,805

(and counting) has been distributed in direct school support



“We have so many people who are willing to give, but just don’t know how. I hope I can help in whatever way I can.”

— Elia Padron, Foundation Ambassador, Edison



ADOPT A SCHOOL

A Program of the Foundation for Fresno Unified Students

Learning Milestones Worth Celebrating



In 2025, we proudly supported:

- The Latinx Graduation Ceremony, with crowdfunding tools and in-kind support
- ⚙️ The African American and Native American graduation celebrations
- ◆ Senior celebrations through Adopt-A-Project campaigns—supporting Robotics, Journalism, Soccer, and more
- ☀️ School spirit and basic needs, including:



\$25,000



PG&E grant to provide
new sweatshirts to 1,750
students at 25 schools

Campus
beautification
and inclusive
learning materials
at multiple
secondary sites



“Thank you so much for
helping us to recognize our
students’ hard work.”

— Margaret Riedinger,
Office Manager, Wawona





Cornerstone: Innovate

Student-Centered Systems. Future-Facing Solutions.

“I’m a big believer in youth-led, peer-led approaches and centering kids’ voices. Getting adults in space with kids in a circle—it equalizes everyone’s voice.”

— FUSD Restorative
Practices Professional

Our Vision for ‘Innovate’

At The Foundation, innovation isn’t just about new technology—it’s about new thinking. It’s about building systems that center student voices, remove barriers, and create opportunities for all. In 2024–25, we invested in the future by launching two major research initiatives, growing student-led solutions, and helping educators and partners reimagine what’s possible in K–12 education.

Student Mental Health Ecosystem Analysis

In partnership with DoSomething Strategic and the Student Advisory Committee, we led a districtwide examination of what students are really experiencing when it comes to wellness, counseling access, and support systems.



- 70+ attendees at our inaugural Student Mental Health Town Hall
- Student-led focus groups and direct testimony shaped the findings
- ◆ Result: A bold, actionable Opportunity Brief now used by district leaders and funders alike

“[We need to be] making sure that our students currently furthest from success stand at the forefront of efforts to achieve digital skill development.”

— Anonymous Tech
Convening Participant

Technology Education Landscape Analysis

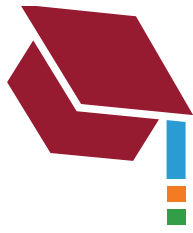
In a rapidly digitizing world, tech access alone isn't equity. With research led by DARO and supported by more than 300 stakeholders (students, teachers, employers), we mapped the current digital skills ecosystem across Fresno Unified.

- 40+ leaders attended our January Technology Convening.
- ⚙️ Findings are now guiding policy, program design, and investment strategy.
- ◆ Result: an “Innovate Tech” roadmap to ensure every student—not just those in elite programs—can thrive in the digital workforce.



“Oh...we loved this! This was a true meeting with and of purpose. Happy to be technology and education partners and knowing that Fresno is doing and wants the best for Fresno students and the community partners, like us, who support the same mission.”

— Quiq Labs (Community Partner)



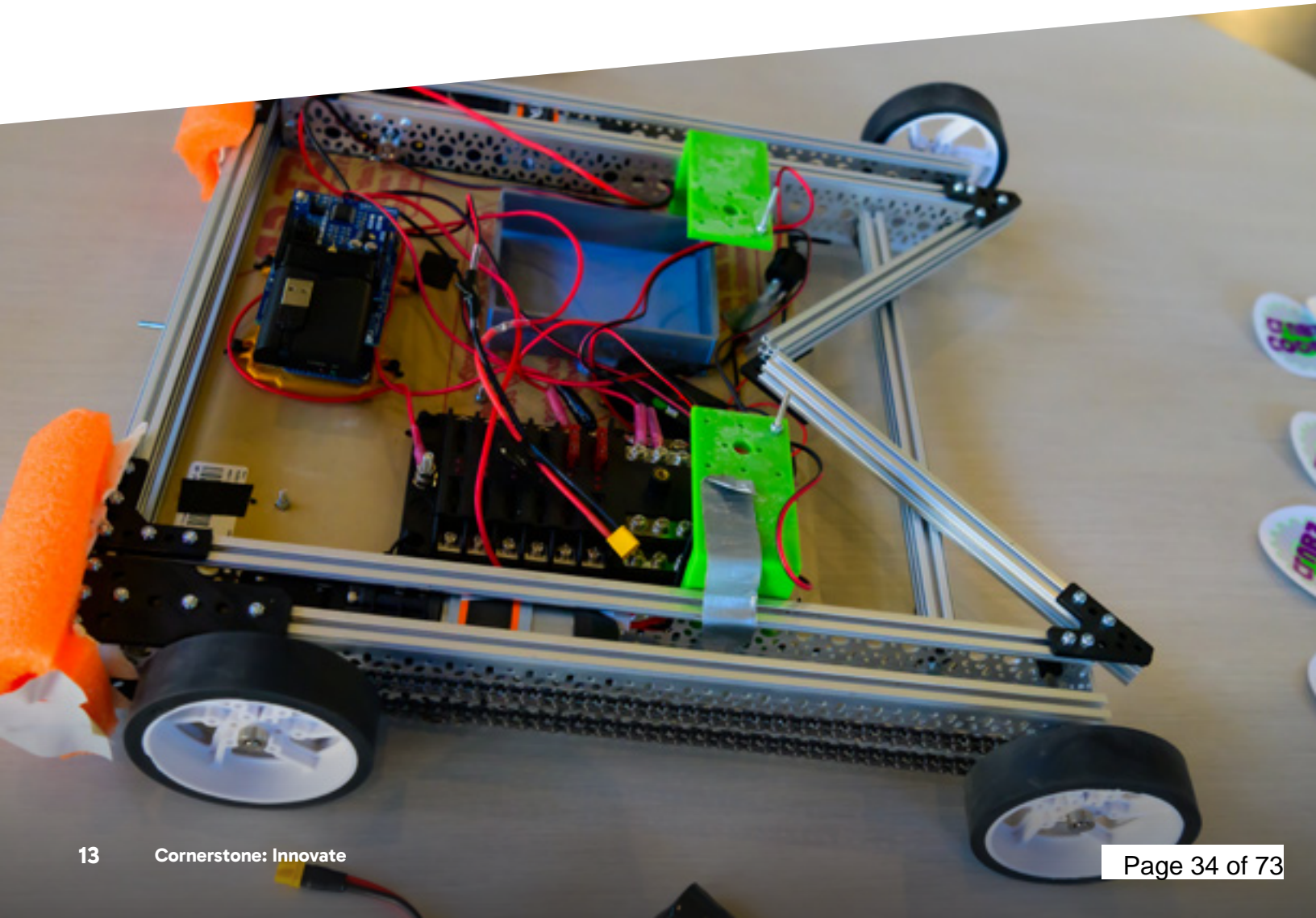
ADOPT A PROJECT

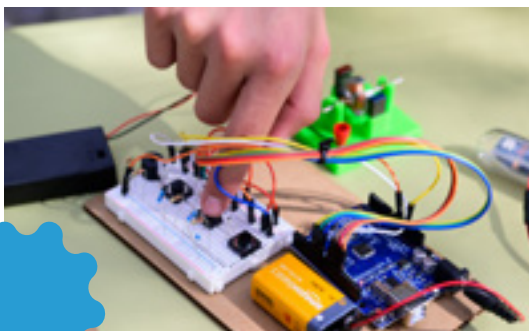
A Program of the Foundation
for Fresno Unified Students



Student Innovation in Action

- Adopt-A-Project campaigns now enable students to directly fundraise for campus needs—like Grad Night, Cheer, and Robotics—without platform fees.
- ⚙️ Students helped refine scholarship applications, review program ideas, and lead public convenings.
- ◆ With tools like Parsec's REAL survey platform and focus groups, we gather authentic student voice through ongoing feedback loops.





Cornerstone: Amplify

Celebrating Excellence. Elevating Voice. Fueling Potential.

“Thank you again for believing in me and investing in my future. I am committed to working hard and making the most of this opportunity.”

— Suriyah Lynn Jones, FUSD
Scholarship Recipient

Our Vision for ‘Amplify’

In 2024–25, we leaned into celebration—not just as a feel-good moment, but as a strategy for equity and engagement. We recognized the potential in students, honored the impact of educators, and expanded programs that open doors for the next generation.

Through scholarships, communications, and campus-based campaigns, we elevated voices that too often go unheard—and helped them carry further.

Record-Breaking Scholarship Season

- 991 students applied for FUSD scholarships (Up 16% from 2024 and 68% from 2023)
- \$440,000+ awarded across general, named, and community scholarships



- ◆ Introduced a three-phase blind review process for increased fairness and equity
- ✦ More outreach, clearer materials, and simpler processes led to historic reach

Data-Driven Scholarship Impact

Our partnership with Hanover Research began this year with a single goal: define and measure the return on investment of scholarships from a student perspective. Phase one of our mixed-methods study is underway, setting a national precedent for evidence-based philanthropic giving.

“The scholarship process is meant to let every student tell their story, and with almost 1,000 applications, students trust us to help tell their story and help them achieve their goals.”

Dr. Andrew Scherrer, Executive
Officer, The Foundation for
Fresno Unified Students



The Grateful Teacher Program

Mentors Matter gives alumni, families, and students a chance to honor FUSD staff with personalized recognition and direct school support.

- Pins awarded to honorees for gifts \$100+
- ⚙️ Certificates sent for all gifts \$30+
- ◆ Donors remain anonymous; the spotlight stays on the educator
- ☀️ All funds raised went directly back to schools.





The Professional Thrift Market

- 351 students shopped for free professional wear (117% increase over last year)
- ⚙ Over 7,000 donated items sorted, steamed, and styled by volunteers
- ◆ Featured music, stylists, Dutch Bros, and taco trucks at Hoover HS
- ☀ Sponsored by PNC Bank and powered by student voices



Amplifying Voices, On & Off the Stage

- Spill the Tea 2025 sold out with 200+ attendees. (Featured high school student panelists and leaders from education and industry)
- ⚙ Donor Digest eNews grew its audience by five times, from 600 to 3,000.
- ◆ 334 scholarship recipients submitted video messages to thank the teachers who shaped their journey.
- ☀ Staff and Ambassadors promoted scholarship applications across campuses, newsletters, and social feeds.





“Suited for Success was such a great event! It had something for everyone, and the students really felt seen and supported. It was awesome working with The Foundation to make it happen. The kids especially loved having a say in the process and took real pride in helping shape the experience. The whole day had such a positive energy. Suited for Success was fun, well-organized, and truly memorable.”

— Cal LaFlam, Campus Culture Director
and Teacher, Hoover High School

Cornerstone: Champion

Advocating for Equity. Protecting Potential.

“We are finally set up and the kids have really enjoyed our ‘Take What You Need’ corner. With the very generous donation, I have been able to provide toothbrushes and floss, as well as facial wipes and shampoo so that my inclusion kiddos who are learning to take pride in their looks/smells are able to use as needed.”

— Samantha Flores, FHS Autism Inclusion Teacher and Foundation Ambassador

Our Vision for ‘Champion’



In 2024–25, The Foundation didn’t just support what existed—we challenged what was missing. As needs around mental health, digital access, and student opportunity deepened, we took bold steps to elevate critical issues and lead systemic change.

Whether addressing the invisible barriers in scholarship access or advocating for more inclusive campus cultures, we worked with a simple belief: students shouldn’t have to succeed in spite of the system—they should be able to succeed because of it.

Centering Student Voice in Policy & Practice



- SOFG Alignment: Staying at the forefront, Foundation strategies were mapped directly to the district’s Student Outcomes Focused Governance goals and guardrails.
- ⚙️ Student Mental Health Town Hall: Students co-led panel discussions with 70+ attendees, including senior district leadership.
- ◆ Focus groups, interviews, and surveys guided programming decisions in real time.

Systems-Level Advocacy in Action

- Scholarship Equity Improvements:
 - Redesigned application process
 - Improved clarity, access, and review
 - Goal: eliminate disparities by ZIP code, school site, or resources
- ◆ Technology Equity Briefs shared with business leaders, legislators, and workforce partners
- ☀ First-ever Foundation grant awarded to launch Imagination Library: a direct investment in literacy equity

Governance & Leadership

- Board Retreat launched “Champion” as the fourth cornerstone
- ⚙ New board members appointed:
 - Pastor DJ Criner
 - Babatunde Ilori
 - Laura Schlundt
- ◆ In a historic milestone for Fresno Unified and the country, Misty Her—Vice Chair of The Foundation’s Board—was appointed as the first woman to serve as Superintendent of Fresno Unified, and the first Hmong superintendent in the United States.
- ☀ Her appointment marks a new era of District leadership rooted in representation, community voice, and student-first governance.
- ▴ The Zeck digital governance system was piloted to improve transparency, strategy, and board engagement.



Events & Campaign Spotlights

From One-Time Moments to Long-Term Momentum

“We are happy to be able to sponsor this event and show our support!”

— High Performance Academy (Sponsor)

The Noir Event 2024

October 16, 2024 · Warnors Theatre

Our signature benefit event raised a record-breaking \$230,000, thanks to 48+ corporate sponsors and hundreds of individual supporters.

- **Headliner:** Black Violin, joined by the Bullard High School Choir
- ⚙️ **Attendance:** ~1,500 guests, including students and families invited at no cost
- ◆ **Premier Symphony Sponsor:** Scholastic
- ☀️ **New this year:** Strategic donor cultivation, expanded sponsor tiers, and pre/post-event donor stewardship campaign



Peak Potential Giving Day

August 29, 2024

Our first standalone Giving Day exceeded all expectations—raising \$18,921 to fund campus-specific “wish list” projects across 35 schools.

- Exceeded goal by 127%
- ⚙️ Directly supported requests like guitars, robotics kits, art supplies, and garden tools
- ◆ 21 new requests added immediately after the campaign
- 🌟 Campaign promoted through ambassadors, newsletters, and social media



“We are truly grateful for your commitment to helping our students stay comfortable and focused during the school day.”

— Vanessa Criner, Community Schools Coordinator, Calwa Elementary



Suit Drive & Suited for Success 2025

Drive: Feb 10–21

Event: April 9 at Hoover High School

Our third annual Suit Drive collected over 7,000 items of professional attire, and the Suited for Success event welcomed 351 students—more than double the prior year.

- Campus-wide busing, personal stylists, music, and food vendors
- ⚙️ Donations included brand-new items and heartfelt personal notes
- ◆ Sponsored by PNC Bank, with support from Neighborhood Industries and Dutch Bros





Spill the Tea 2025

March 6, 2025 • The Palomino Event Center

Back by popular demand, our high tea celebration of women's leadership, student voice, and advocacy sold out again—welcoming over 200 guests.

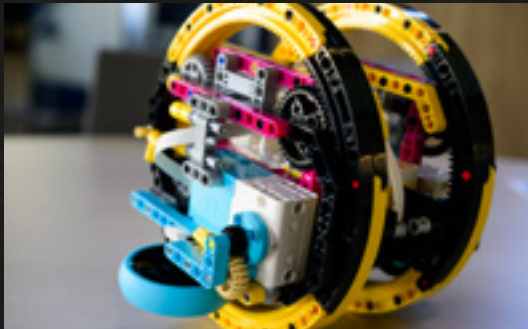
- Theme: “Boiling Point: Leading When the Heat is On”
- ⚙️ Featured a student moderator and panel of high-powered women across sectors
- ◆ Full media kit and recap video extended reach
- ☀️ Guests received custom tea tins and letterpress materials as keepsakes



Additional Highlights



- Estate Planning Seminar was hosted with Fennemore Law.
- ⚙️ Tech Convening & Mental Health Town Hall both served first-of-their-kind policy forums.
- ◆ Staff Retreat introduced Champion cornerstone and began Zeck pilot.



Partnerships in Action

Collaboration That Amplifies Opportunity

“This meant so much to the young men on that team, and I hope that you and your agency are aware of the impact that you had on them by supporting their participation in the Memorial Day tournament.”

— Donald Sherman, Farber Basketball Coach

In 2024–25, The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students was strengthened by a network of dedicated partners who brought resources, expertise, creativity, and care to the table. These collaborators helped us expand programs, reimagine logistics, and deliver student-centered innovation across every corner of our district.

Strategic Collaborators

These organizations provided expertise, innovation, and leadership that shaped our most high-impact initiatives:

- Archer & Hound—Branding, campaign strategy, visual design, and storytelling support
- ⚙️ Parsec Education—Implementation of the REAL platform to measure student impact through voice and data
- ◆ Neighborhood Industries—Coordinated donation logistics and hosted the Suit Drive kickoff
- ☀️ Scholastic—Book donations, author visits, and strategic support for our literacy initiatives, including the upcoming literacy festival



ARCHER & HOUND



parsec
education

neighborhood
INDUSTRIES

Educate. Employ. Empower.

SCHOLASTIC

Corporate & Community Champions



Our campaigns and convenings were powered by cross-sector partnership:

- PNC Bank—Presenting sponsor for Suited for Success
- ⚙️ PG&E—\$25,000 grant for sweatshirt distribution across 25 school sites
- ◆ Groundswell—\$10,000 to launch a Hmong Dual Language Immersion student exchange
- ☀️ Fairfield Inn & Suites—In-kind donation of supplies for school staff wish lists
- ▲ Dutch Bros & La Imperial Taqueria—Event sponsors for Suited for Success



Innovation & Research Partners



These collaborators helped us stretch beyond programs and into system-level change:

- DoSomething Strategic—Mental health research, student-led town halls, and report co-authorship
- ⚙️ Hanover Research—Scholarship impact study launched to understand and improve long-term student outcomes
- ◆ DARO—Led the technology education landscape analysis and regional convening



Media, Venue & Event Partners



- ABC30, KSEE 24, GV Wire, and FOX26 — Coverage of major campaigns and student stories
- ⚙ Warnors Theatre—Venue host for The Noir Event
- ◆ The Palomino—Venue partner for Spill the Tea
- ☀ Junior Achievement—Co-facilitator of workforce-readiness learning space



Shifting In-Kind Support

In-kind contributions from Fresno Unified and partners remain a key part of our operating model—totaling more than \$2.16 million this year. However, the Foundation is transitioning toward greater internal capacity and reduced reliance on in-kind support beginning in 2025–26.

Strategic Investment Highlights

- New board-designated funds will expand technology equity and student mental health initiatives across campuses.
- ⚙️ Foundation-endowed funds continued to generate strong earnings, with over \$770,000 in interest and dividends earned year to date.
- ◆ Monthly donors and returning sponsors created a more predictable, diversified revenue base.



Looking Ahead

Grounded in Purpose. Growing by Design.

As we move into 2025–26, The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students is more aligned, more strategic, and more ambitious than ever. We're not only expanding programs—we're investing in lasting solutions that reflect the needs and voices of our students.

This year, The Foundation's Board took a bold step by allocating new funds to expand our mental health and technology initiatives. These budgeted investments reflect what we heard through focus groups, surveys, and advisory panels: students need systems that support their wellness and prepare them for the future.

We're moving from insight to infrastructure—and we're doing it together.

What's Next



- Scholarship ROI Study (Hanover Research)—Results published Spring 2026
- ⚙️ Student Tech & Mental Health Pilots—Launching with board-backed funding
- ◆ Literacy festival—Spring 2026, in partnership with Scholastic
- ☀️ Spill the Tea 2026—March 14, 2026, celebrating voice, leadership and equity

How You Can Help



- Sponsor an event or campaign
- ⚙️ Adopt-A-School wish list or project
- ◆ Become a monthly donor to sustain student-centered momentum
- ☀️ Join our Student Mental Health and Technology Education initiatives

Visit foundation4fUSD.org or contact us at foundation@fresnounified.org to get involved.





THE FOUNDATION
FOR FRESNO UNIFIED STUDENTS



foundation4fUSD.org

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Marie Williams, Ed. D.

Date: September 26, 2025

Phone Number: (559) 457-3750

Regarding: 2024/25 Preliminary Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Results


The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with a summary of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) performance for the 2024/25 school year. Based on the preliminary data we have received from California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), 37% of students who tested met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts (ELA). This is a growth of two percentage points from 35% in 2023/24. In mathematics, the district saw a two-percentage point increase from 25% in 2023/24 to 27% in 2024/25. In addition to measuring proficiency, SBAC also measures growth. Growth is determined by calculating Distance from Standard (DFS). DFS is found by adding all student scores together and dividing by the number of students who took the test. Fresno Unified School District grew eight points in ELA DFS, improving from -49 in 2023/24 to -41 in 2024/25. In mathematics, the district grew six points in DFS, moving from -78 in 2023/24 to -72 in 2024/25.

Accompanying this communication, you will find a slide deck that shows student performance in both ELA and mathematics; reports that show performance by grade level, student group, and region (school sites), and three-year growth trends (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25) highlighting both the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards and the average DFS. Please be advised that results for the most recent year are still preliminary, as we are awaiting additional scores.

It is important to note that these scores are designed to tell us how well our students know their grade level standards. For example, if a student does not meet the standard, it means they have not yet shown mastery of the grade-level skills on the assessment. If a student exceeds standard, it means they are demonstrating strong mastery of grade-level expectations. As the test is adaptive, the questions are adjusted based on how a student answers. If a student answers correctly, they may get a more challenging question; if they answer incorrectly, the test provides a less difficult question. This approach helps identify where students are in their learning journey.

Additionally, these assessment results are presented for sites, instructors, and families to address student needs and provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of instructional programs. Note that this differs from the CAASPP results shown on the California School Dashboard, which is part of the state accountability system and includes participation penalties if a site does not meet the 95% threshold of students tested. There are also inclusion and exclusion criteria used to calculate the average distance from the standard that are not reflected in these preliminary summaries.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Zerina Hargrove-Brown, Ed.D., at (559) 457-3895.

Cabinet Approval: 
Carlos Castillo(Sep 25, 2025 11:59:54 PDT)

Name and Title: Carlos Castillo, Ed.D., Chief of Staff



Our Current Districtwide Overall Student Performance Levels and DFS (SBAC 2025)

ELA

37.0%

of students met or
exceeded standards in ELA

+2.4% from SBAC 2024



-41

Average
Distance from
Standard in ELA

+ 8 from SBAC 2024 DFS

MATH

27.0%

of students met or
exceeded standards in Math

+2.0% from SBAC 2024



-72

Average
Distance from
Standard in Math

+ 6 from SBAC 2024 DFS

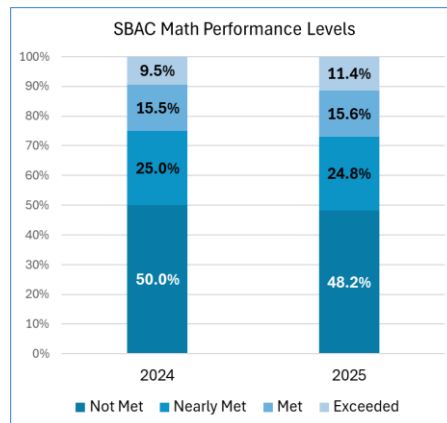
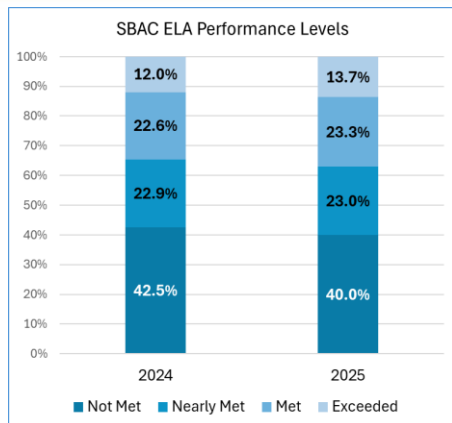
2



Fresno Unified School District

Achieving our Greatest Potential!

SBAC Districtwide Student Performance Level Change - 2024 vs 2025



3

Data compares SBAC 2024 test takers to SBAC 2025 test takers.
Source: FUSD Internal data (SIS).

Overall Met/Exceeded and DFS by Region

Region	SBAC 2025			
	ELA Proficiency	ELA DFS	Math Proficiency	Math DFS
All Students	37.0%	-41pts.	27.0%	-72pts.
Alternative Ed	22.2%	-93pts.	18.5%	-134pts.
Bullard	45.4%	-19pts.	33.9%	-52pts.
Edison	46.6%	-19pts.	38.0%	-46pts.
Fresno High	29.3%	-61pts.	19.1%	-94pts.
Hoover	34.0%	-49pts.	23.6%	-78pts.
McLane	35.1%	-45pts.	24.2%	-79pts.
Roosevelt	34.1%	-49pts.	26.3%	-75pts.
Sunnyside	34.6%	-46pts.	25.1%	-76pts.
Specialty Region	62.6%	37pts.	29.8%	-46pts.

4

Met or Exceeded Δ Color Key

 >2%
 -2% to 2%
 <-2%

DFS Δ Color Key

 >5
 -5 to 5
 <-5

Overall Met/Exceeded and DFS by Grade Level

Grade Level	SBAC							
	ELA Proficiency		ELA DFS		Math Proficiency		Math DFS	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
All Students	34.6%	37.0%	-49pts.	-41pts.	25.0%	27.0%	-78pts.	-72pts.
Grade 3	32.4%	34.3%	-50pts.	-43pts.	37.0%	37.1%	-33pts.	-34pts.
Grade 4	30.7%	34.4%	-57pts.	-47pts.	30.4%	33.2%	-49pts.	-43pts.
Grade 5	32.9%	36.1%	-52pts.	-41pts.	22.8%	25.8%	-76pts.	-67pts.
Grade 6	37.4%	38.2%	-39pts.	-36pts.	27.8%	28.7%	-73pts.	-71pts.
Grade 7	35.0%	36.1%	-54pts.	-49pts.	22.1%	24.9%	-92pts.	-84pts.
Grade 8	31.4%	33.0%	-60pts.	-56pts.	17.9%	20.8%	-106pts.	-101pts.
Grade 11	44.8%	48.8%	-27pts.	-14pts.	14.8	17.0%	-128pts.	-114pts.

5

Met or Exceeded Δ Color Key

 >2%
 -2% to 2%
 <-2%

DFS Δ Color Key

 >5
 -5 to 5
 <-5

Overall Met/Exceeded and DFS by Student Group

Student Group	SBAC							
	ELA Proficiency		ELA DFS		Math Proficiency		Math DFS	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
All Students	34.6%	37.0%	-49pts.	-41pts.	25.0%	27.0%	-78pts.	-72pts.
English Learner	10.2%	7.9%	-115pts.	-117pts.	10.1%	9.5%	-125pts.	-128pts.
Long-Term EL	6.4%	6.1%	-125pts.	-122pts.	3.4%	4.7%	-168pts.	-163pts.
Reclassified	54.5%	57.9%	1pts.	10pts.	34.3%	37.5%	-49pts.	-38pts.
Dual Language Immersion	40.3%	41.6%	-35pts.	-25pts.	37.4%	37.8%	-34pts.	-31pts.
English Only (Never EL)	35.9%	38.7%	-45pts.	-36pts.	26.7%	28.8%	-72pts.	-67pts.
Foster Youth	24.3%	19.6%	-78pts.	-97pts.	15.0%	13.7%	-114pts.	-126pts.
Homeless	13.5%	13.9%	-106pts.	-111pts.	10.8%	11.3%	-133pts.	-129pts.
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	31.8%	33.2%	-56pts.	-51pts.	22.7%	24.1%	-84pts.	-81pts.
Students with Disabilities	9.1%	9.9%	-137pts.	-128pts.	8.3%	8.5%	-155pts.	-151pts.

6

Met or Exceeded Δ Color Key

Green	>2%
Yellow	-2% to 2%
Red	<-2%

DFS Δ Color Key

Green	>5
Yellow	-5 to 5
Red	<-5

Overall Met/Exceeded and DFS by Ethnicity/Race

Ethnicity/Race	SBAC							
	ELA Proficiency		ELA DFS		Math Proficiency		Math DFS	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
All Students	34.6%	37.0%	-49pts.	-41pts.	25.0%	27.0%	-78pts.	-72pts.
African American	21.1%	23.4%	-86pts.	-79pts.	13.0%	15.1%	-120pts.	-116pts.
American Indian	31.0%	31.7%	-54pts.	-51pts.	24.3%	24.9%	-85pts.	-81pts.
Asian	42.4%	44.2%	-25pts.	-19pts.	31.5%	33.9%	-53pts.	-46pts.
Filipino	80.5%	74.4%	64pts.	49pts.	63.2%	53.2%	25pts.	9pts.
Hispanic	33.0%	35.4%	-54pts.	-46pts.	23.4%	25.3%	-83pts.	-77pts.
Pacific Islander	29.3%	35.9%	-65pts.	-40pts.	20.3%	31.6%	-90pts.	-58pts.
Two or More Races	41.0%	45.5%	-30pts.	-18pts.	33.7%	37.1%	-53pts.	-43pts.
White	49.3%	51.3%	-8pts.	-3pts.	39.4%	40.5%	-38pts.	-32pts.

7

Met or Exceeded Δ Color Key

Green	>2%
Yellow	-2% to 2%
Red	<-2%

DFS Δ Color Key

Green	>5
Yellow	-5 to 5
Red	<-5

Highest Performance on 2025 SBAC in ELA by School Level

School Level	SBAC 2025 ELA	
	Met/Exceeded	DFS
Elementary School	Manchester Gate 76.9% Storey 59.9% Jefferson 57.2%	Manchester Gate +55 Jefferson +12 Storey +11
Middle or K-8 School	Computech 85.8% Baird 71.5% Bullard Talent 58.2%	Computech +78 Baird +44 Bullard Talent +14
High School	Design Science +77.2% Patino +69.6% Edison +66.0%	Design Science +81 Patino +51 Edison +42

Highlights in ELA by School Level

School Level	SBAC 2025 ELA Change from Previous Year				
	Met/Exceeded			DFS	
Elementary School	Wolters	+15.8%	(26.7% to 42.5%)	Wolters	+25 (-57 to -32)
	Balderas	+11.6%	(27.2% to 38.8%)	Balderas	+25 (-62 to -37)
				Herrera	+23 (-57 to -34)
Middle or K-8 School	Baird	+9.1%	(62.4% to 71.5%)	Baird	+21 (23 to 44)
	Computech	+5.9%	(79.8% to 85.8%)	Computech	+17 (61 to 78)
High School	Hoover	+21.7%	(35.4% to 57.1%)	Hoover	+56 (-56 to 0)
				Fulton	+48 (-190 to -142)

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Data in parenthesis compares SBAC 2024 results to SBAC 2025 results.



Highlights in ELA by Region

Region	SBAC 2025 ELA Change from Previous Year			
	Met/Exceed		DFS	
Bullard	Gibson +10.3%	(42.1% to 52.4%)	Baird +21	(23 to 44)
	Baird +9.1%	(62.4% to 71.5%)	Gibson, Powers-Ginsburg, Tenaya +14	
Edison	Kirk +6.7%	(20.2% to 26.9%)	Edison +24	(18 to 42)
	Edison +6.2%	(59.8% to 66.0%)	Addams +20	(-89 to -69)
Fresno	Muir +10.4%	(22.6% to 33.0%)	Muir +16	(-70 to -54)
	Homan +7.9%	(27.8% to 35.7%)	Homan +16	(-59 to -43)
Hoover	Hoover +21.7%	(35.4% to 57.1%)	Hoover +56	(-56 to 0)
	Wolters +15.8%	(26.7% to 42.5%)	Wolters +25	(-57 to -32)
McLane	McLane +15.2%	(40.2% to 55.4%)	McLane +43	(-41 to 2)
	Ewing +6.1%	(31.6% to 37.7%)	Rowell +21	(-71 to -50)
Roosevelt	Balderas +11.6%	(27.2% to 38.8%)	Balderas +25	(-62 to -37)
	Jackson +8.3%	(22.4% to 30.7%)	Calwa +19	(-82 to -63)
Sunnyside	Herrera +7.6%	(29.0% to 36.6%)	Herrera +23	(-57 to -34)
	Kings Canyon +4.8%	(31.0% to 35.8%)	Burroughs +17	(-50 to -33)
Specialty	Duncan +4.2%	(53.8% to 58.0%)	Duncan +23	(2 to 25)

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Data in parenthesis compares SBAC 2024 results to SBAC 2025 results.

Highlights in ELA by School Level Continuous Progress 2023-2025

School Level	SBAC PROFICIENCY 3-YEAR GROWTH % IN ELA				
	School	Year 1 Growth	Year 2 Growth	Year 3 Growth	Total Growth
Elementary School	Mayfair	6.3%	6.6%	5.2%	18.1%
	Jefferson	6.9%	5.3%	5.6%	17.8%
Middle or K-8 School	Farber Online Elementary	6.7%	2.4%	4.8%	13.9%
	Baird	0.6%	2.4%	9.1%	12.1%
High School	McLane	5.0%	10.1%	15.2%	30.3%

DFS Highlights in ELA by School Level Continuous Progress 2023-2025

Closing the Gap: 3-Year Growth in DFS (ELA)					
School Level	School	Year 1 Growth	Year 2 Growth	Year 3 Growth	Total Growth
Elementary School	Jefferson	16pts.	11pts.	16pts.	43pts.
	Mayfair	15pts.	21pts.	6pts.	42pts.
	Kirk	14pts.	8pts.	19pts.	41pts.
Middle or K-8 School	Farber Online Elementary	22pts.	2pts.	12pts.	36pts.
	Baird	4pts.	3pts.	21pts.	28pts.
High School	McLane	25pts.	24pts.	43pts.	92pts.

Highest Performance on 2025 SBAC in Math by School

School Level	SBAC 2025 Math	
	Met/Exceeded	DFS
Elementary School	Manchester Gate 75.3% Starr 57.4% Jefferson 55.7%	Manchester Gate +45 Jefferson +5 Starr +4
Middle or K-8 School	Computech 67.2% Baird 54.5% Bullard Talent 46.3%	Computech +41 Baird +7 Bullard Talent -15
High School	Design Science +61.4% Edison +38.1% Duncan +24.8%	Design Science +42 Edison -37 Duncan -58

Highlights in Math by School Level

School Level	SBAC 2025 Math Change from Previous Year			
	Met/Exceeded		DFS	
Elementary School	Pyle +7.5%	(18.7% to 26.2%)	Herrera +25	(-68 to -43)
	Aynesworth +7.4%	(10.4% to 17.8%)	Lincoln +21	(-66 to -45)
			Jefferson +21	(-16 to 5)
Middle or K-8 School	Farber Online Elementary +13.6%	(23.5% to 37.1%)	Computech +29	(12 to 41)
	Computech +12.0%	(55.2% to 67.2%)	Farber Online Elementary +25	(-83 to -58)
			Baird +25	(-18 to 7)
High School	Sunnyside +6.4%	(8.8% to 15.2%)	Hoover +39	(-146 to -107)
	Hoover +5.2%	(9.9% to 15.1%)	Duncan +38	(-96 to -58)

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Data in parenthesis compares SBAC 2024 results to SBAC 2025 results.

Highlights and DFS in Math by Region

Region	SBAC 2025 Math Change from Previous Year			
	Met/Exceed		DFS	
Bullard	Baird +9.7%	(44.8% to 54.5%)	Baird +25	(-18 to 7)
	Malloch +4.7%	(38.6% to 43.3%)	Tatarian +17	(-18 to -1)
Edison	Computech +12.0%	(55.2% to 67.2%)	Edison +31	(-68 to -37)
	Lincoln +6.8%	(32.9% to 39.7%)	Computech +29	(12 to 41)
Fresno	Homan +6.7%	(27.3% to 34.0%)	Fresno +18	(-149 to -131)
	Wilson +5.4%	(12.1% to 17.5%)	Homan +14	(-66 to -52)
Hoover	Pyle +7.5%	(18.7% to 26.2%)	Hoover +39	(-146 to -107)
	Wolters +6.6%	(24.5% to 31.1%)	Pyle +19	(-103 to -84)
McLane	Birney +6.7%	(28.3% to 35.0%)	Yosemite +14	(-122 to -108)
	Ewing +6.2%	(29.9% to 36.0%)	Hidalgo +13	(-111 to -98)
Roosevelt	Balderas +6.2%	(26.2% to 32.4%)	Jefferson +21	(-16 to 5)
	Jefferson +6.2%	(49.5% to 55.7%)	Yokomi +18	(-38 to -20)
Sunnyside	Aynesworth +7.4%	(10.4% to 17.8%)	Herrera +25	(-68 to -43)
	Sunnyside +6.5%	(8.8% to 15.2%)	Sunnyside +18	(-137 to -119)
Specialty	Duncan +4.3%	(20.5% to 24.8%)	Duncan +38	(-96 to -58)

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Data in parenthesis compares SBAC 2024 results to SBAC 2025 results.

Highlights in MATH by School Level Continuous Progress 2023-2025

School Level	SBAC PROFICIENCY 3-YEAR GROWTH % IN MATH				
	School	Year 1 Growth	Year 2 Growth	Year 3 Growth	Total Growth
Elementary School	Jefferson	15.6%	4.2%	6.1%	25.9%
Middle or K-8 School	Farber Online Elementary	6.0%	6.9%	13.6%	26.5%
High School	Duncan	2.6%	6.8%	4.3%	13.7%

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DFS Highlights in MATH by School Level Continuous Progress 2023-2025

School Level	Closing the Gap: 3-Year Growth in DFS (MATH)				
	School	Year 1 Growth	Year 2 Growth	Year 3 Growth	Total Growth
Elementary School	Burroughs	13pts.	26pts.	2pts.	41pts.
Middle or K-8 School	Farber Online Elementary	22pts.	16pts.	25pts.	63pts.
High School	Sunnyside	9pts.	4pts.	18pts.	31pts.

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Ann Loorz, Executive Director

Date: September 26, 2025

Phone Number: (559) 457-3582

Regarding: Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding the district's receipt of the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for the 2025 school year.

We are proud to share that Fresno Unified has been honored with the prestigious Achievement of Excellence in Procurement (AEP) Award from the National Procurement Institute, Inc. (NPI) for the second consecutive year. This nationally recognized award highlights our district's continued commitment to fiscal responsibility, innovation, and operational excellence. The AEP Award is given to organizations that meet rigorous criteria in areas such as professionalism, productivity, e-procurement, and leadership in public purchasing. Earning this distinction again reflects the high standards upheld by our procurement team and reinforces our dedication to serving students, staff, and the community with integrity and efficiency.

The application aims to inspire procurement professionals to exceed the annual minimum standards established by the AEP program. It highlights and honors innovative programs and solutions that demonstrate exceptional performance. In addition to recognizing practical, well-documented initiatives, the award also celebrates leadership and efforts that contribute to the ongoing advancement of the public procurement field.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Paul Idsvoog at (559) 457-3134.

Cabinet Approval: 

Name and Title: Paul Idsvoog, Chief Operations and Classified Labor Management Officer