



BOARD COMMUNICATIONS - MARCH 13, 2026

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Mao Misty Her, Superintendent

Page

1. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mao Misty Her, Superintendent

1.1 [Superintendent Calendar Highlights.docx](#) 

3

2. OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

Ben Amuku Drati, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent

3. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

Ambra O'Connor, Chief of Staff

4. OFFICE OF BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Patrick Jensen, Chief Officer

4.1 [School Services of California Weekly Update Report for March 05, 2026.docx](#) 
[School Services off California Weekly Update Report for March 05, 2026.pdf](#) 

4 - 13

5. OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Adela G. Duncan, Chief Officer

6. OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Wendy McCulley, Chief Officer

7. OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & LABOR RELATIONS

David Chavez, Chief Officer

8. OFFICE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION

Carlos Castillo, Ed.D., Chief Officer

8.1 [Out-of-State Field Trip – Fresno Unified Middle School Sites](#) 14 - 15



[Out of State Field Trip - Fresno Unified Middle School Sites.pdf](#) 

8.2 [2026 California Distinguished Schools Recognition](#)  16

9. OFFICE OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

Paul Idsvoog, Chief Officer

10. OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Tami Lundberg, Chief Officer

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: March 13, 2026
Phone Number: (559) 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Held interviews for Assistant Superintendent Human Resources
- Met with Williams students at the M Street Art Gallery
- Observed Farber 6th grade online class
- Site Visits to Ayer, Fort Miller, and Fresno High schools
- Attended Building Better Leaders training with Executive Cabinet team
- Attended Strategic Planning Work Session 1
- Attended CART Board Meeting
- Visited Blacklight project at Scandinavian
- Held meeting with ACSA Leadership team
- Team taught 1st grade at Mayfair
- Attended Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) Leadership Council Meeting
- Gave Interview with Chris Squires, Power Talk Radio, regarding student walkouts
- Visited buyback meetings at Addicott, Edison, Farber, Fresno High, McLane, Rata, Roosevelt, Sunnyside and Tenaya
- Department visits to Special Education and Safety
- Attending Reyes Scholarship Fund Award Dinner

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: Kim Kelstrom, Chief Executive

Date: March 13, 2026
Phone Number: (559) 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for March 05, 2026

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 March 05, 2026, are attached and include the following articles:

- U.S. Supreme Court Blocks Parental Notification Ban – March 03, 2026
- Survey Reveals Almost 50% of California Teachers May Quit Teaching Soon – March 04, 2026
- AI Images Scandalized a California Elementary School. Now the State is Pushing New Safeguards – February 26, 2026

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: March 5, 2026

TO: Misty Her
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

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

Assembly and Senate Education Committees to Meet March 18

The Assembly and Senate Education Committees, chaired by Assembly-member Dr. Darshana Patel (D-San Diego) and Senator Sasha Renée Pérez (D-Pasadena), respectively, have scheduled their first hearings to consider 2026 legislation. Both hearings will take place on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, with the Senate Education Committee meeting in the morning and the Assembly Education Committee convening in the afternoon.

The current Assembly agenda includes 18 bills, while the Senate agenda lists 3 bills—only one of which relates to TK-12 education. Several of the measures scheduled for consideration would impact local educational agencies (LEAs), including the following:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 1569 (Davies, R-Laguna Niguel) would require schools that allow pupils to park electric bicycles on campus to verify that those students have completed the electric bicycle safety and training program developed by the California Highway Patrol, or a comparable safety course, as a condition for parking on campus.
- AB 1590 (Ransom, D-Stockton) would require the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) formula to be revised, by the 2027-28 fiscal year, to ensure that all funds appropriated by the state for CTEIG are allocated to applicants each year.
- AB 1631 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance) would require children to complete one year of kindergarten before enrolling in first grade in a public school, effectively making kindergarten a prerequisite for first grade enrollment.
- AB 1694 (Carrillo, D-Victorville) would require CTEIG recipients to receive renewal grants for three additional years if specified criteria are met.

Beginning in 2026-27, 90% of funds appropriated for CTEIG would be designated for renewal grants, while 10% would be reserved for new applicants.

- AB 1809 (Fong, D-Alhambra) would make permanent the authority for school districts and community college districts to use job order contracting for public works projects by removing a 2027 sunset date and establishing a maximum five-year term for job order or task-order procurement contracts.
- AB 1851 (Gipson, D-Carson) would require the California Department of Education (CDE) to establish a statewide Tier 1 program focused on social-emotional learning, behavioral health, and restorative justice for K-12 students and would require LEAs to implement the program using state guidance and funding from the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative.
- AB 1861 (Lackey, R-Palmdale) would require the CDE to create and maintain a public online database of special education complaints, with personally identifiable student information removed, by January 1, 2028.
- AB 1943 (Gipson) would require schools to provide parents with a “Secure Firearm Storage Notification” outlining the risks associated with children accessing unsecured firearms and summarizing California’s safe-storage laws. The bill would also require the notice to be posted on school websites and encourage its distribution when schools communicate about threats or safety incidents involving students.
- Senate Bill 1017 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino) would allow foster youth aged 14 or older to access their own school records related to their educational interests, similar to rights already granted to homeless and unaccompanied youth.

The March 18 hearings mark the start of the Legislature’s policy committee review of education bills for the 2026 session. Additional measures affecting LEAs are expected to be heard in the coming weeks as committees work toward upcoming first house policy committee deadlines of April 24 (for fiscal bills) and May 1 (for nonfiscal bills).

Leilani Aguinaldo

U.S. Supreme Court Blocks Parental Notification Ban

By Kyle Hyland
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
March 3, 2026

On March 2, 2026, the United States Supreme Court (Court) granted an emergency order in *Mirabelli v. Bonta*, staying enforcement of key provisions of Assembly Bill (AB) 1955 (Ward, Statutes of 2024) while litigation continues in the lower courts.

AB 1955, the Support Academic Futures and Educators for Today's Youth (SAFETY) Act, was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom in July 2024, and went into effect on January 1, 2025 (see the article "[Governor Newsom Signs SAFETY Act Legislation](#)" in the July 2024 *Fiscal Report*). The bill prohibits local educational agencies (LEAs) from requiring an employee or contractor to disclose any information related to a pupil's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression to any other person without the pupil's consent unless otherwise required by state or federal law. The statute also bars governing boards from adopting or enforcing policies mandating such disclosure and includes anti-retaliation protections for employees.

In the unsigned opinion, the Court, by a 6-3 ruling, granted the plaintiffs' application for a stay and reinstated the district court's injunction blocking enforcement of the challenged provisions. Specifically, it stayed enforcement of any California statute, regulation, or policy that prohibits schools from notifying parents regarding a student's gender identity. In granting the stay, the Court concluded that the applicants satisfied the standard for interim relief, including showing they are "likely to succeed on the merits." The order does not resolve the constitutionality of AB 1955 but reflects the Court's preliminary assessment that enforcement should be paused pending further proceedings.

In the dissent written by Justice Kagan (and joined by Justice Jackson), Justice Kagan did not so much criticize the merits of the case as criticize the quickness with the Court's action, as the case has only had a single decision at the district level. Rather, she felt that a fuller discussion of the merits of the case should be resolved through the ordinary appellate process.

As of now, AB 1955 remains law; however, its prohibition on policies requiring mandatory parental notification is currently unenforceable. For LEAs, the immediate effect is that the state may not enforce AB 1955's restriction on parental notification policies while the stay remains in place. LEAs must still comply with applicable federal and state privacy, nondiscrimination, and child welfare reporting laws. Given the ongoing litigation, LEAs should consult legal counsel before revising policies adopted in response to AB 1955.

The case will now continue through the federal courts toward a final merits determination, which could ultimately return to the Supreme Court for full review. We will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as additional guidance becomes available.

Note: A new survey of California teachers found that nearly half are considering leaving the profession in the coming years due to issues such as student behavior, large class sizes, and working conditions, raising concerns about ongoing teacher shortages in the state.

Survey Reveals Almost 50% of California Teachers May Quit Teaching Soon

By Diana Lambert
EdSource
March 4, 2026

California teachers have slightly better morale on average than their peers in other states, but more are planning to leave the profession in the next decade, according to Education Week's annual The State of Teaching report.

Teacher morale dipped slightly across the country this year, after some improvement last year, according to the survey of 5,802 U.S. teachers.

"There's a lot of evidence that indicates that teacher morale has been declining nationwide and is at, by some measures, the lowest point in recent memory," said Holly Kurtz, director of the EdWeek Research Center.

California teachers scored 16 on the Teacher Morale Index, which is based on three questions from the Education Week survey. The morale score for U.S. teachers overall was 13. The scale measures teacher morale from -100 to +100.

Nearly half of California teachers who were surveyed plan to retire or quit in the next 10 years. Nationwide, an estimated 35% of teachers plan to leave the profession in the next decade, Kurtz said.

The findings are similar to a survey released in January by the California Teachers Association. It found that while a majority of teachers are satisfied with their job, 40% are considering leaving education within the next few years — nearly half for financial reasons.

Teacher morale is increasingly important as states continue to struggle with teacher shortages, especially in hard-to-fill jobs like special education, science, technology, math, engineering and bilingual education.

Low teacher morale directly affects students, said Alex Robins, a social science teacher at Terra Linda High School in San Rafael. Teachers with high morale create a positive environment that helps students to enjoy learning, he said.

Educator morale began to decline during the pandemic when teachers struggled with distance teaching, Kurtz said. The additional difficulties they faced when they returned to the classroom also contributed to the loss of morale.

Teachers who took part in the 30-question survey said that the ability to take mental health days, smaller class sizes, more planning time, four-day work weeks and improved student behavior would make them feel better about their jobs.

More planning time tops wish list

Additional planning time would most improve teacher morale, according to the survey results. This was particularly important for younger teachers.

“Getting more planning time and being paid for it, and being supported in it — that’s only going to help teachers feel more prepared, and I imagine feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom,” Robins said.

Teachers listed improved student behavior as the second most important factor for improving teacher morale. Three-quarters of elementary school teachers, 61% of middle school teachers and 54% of high school teachers surveyed said student behavior is getting worse.

Discipline problems were the result of a perfect storm of factors that worsened when students lost socialization during the pandemic and when schools shifted to restorative justice models of discipline that weren’t always communicated well to teachers or implemented with the necessary resources, Kurtz said.

More than half of the teachers who took the survey said improving student behavior would boost their morale. They called for restrictions on students’ use of cellphones and other personal devices, tougher consequences for students who misbehave, limits on parents’ ability to undermine those consequences and instruction for parents on teaching their children to behave in school.

“Perhaps because they report larger class sizes, California teachers are somewhat more likely than colleagues in other states to say that smaller class sizes would have a major positive impact on their students’ behavior and ability to manage their classroom,” Kurtz said.

California class sizes are some of the largest in the nation, averaging about 29 students, while the national average is 25, according to the survey. Overall, the teachers surveyed agreed that 19 is the ideal number of students in a classroom. California teachers said class sizes should be between 20 and 24 students.

Schedule more important than pay

Work schedules seemed to be even more important to teacher morale than pay, with a 36-point gap in the morale score between teachers who felt they had a better work schedule than their family and friends, and those who did not.

Teacher pay has been a central issue in contract negotiations in California this year, where teachers have the highest average pay in the nation, according to the National Education Association. In 2025, the average starting salary for a California teacher was \$58,409, and the average salary was \$101,084, according to the NEA.

More than a third of California teachers surveyed by Education Week said their salaries were better or about the same as those of their family members and friends.

Researchers did not find a correlation between salary and morale, Kurtz said.

“One thing we did find a correlation with is whether or not you think your salary is better or worse than the salary of the people you’re close to,” Kurtz said. “People who felt like their salary was better or the same as their family or friends tended to have higher morale.”

Note: California education officials have issued new guidance urging school districts to carefully vet artificial intelligence (AI) tools, ensure strong teacher oversight, protect student privacy, and adopt clear policies to prevent harmful or inappropriate AI-generated content in classrooms.

AI Images Scandalized a California Elementary School. Now the State is Pushing New Safeguards

By Khari Johnson
CalMatters
February 26, 2026

In December, fourth graders in a class at Delevan Drive Elementary School in Los Angeles were given a homework assignment: Write a book report about Pippi Longstocking, then draw or use artificial intelligence to make a book cover.

When Jody Hughes’ daughter asked Adobe Express for Education, graphic design software provided by her teacher, to generate an image of “long stockings a red headed girl with braids sticking straight out,” it produced nothing resembling the Swedish children’s book character she had accurately described. Instead, using recently-added artificial intelligence, it generated sexualized imagery of women in lingerie and bikinis. Hughes quickly contacted other parents, who said they were able to reproduce similar results on their own school-issued Chromebook computers. Days later, the parent group Schools Beyond Screens told the LA school board they were opposed to further use of the Adobe software.

The incident raised questions not only about the LA school district’s use of a particular AI product but also about guidelines state administrators provide to schools throughout California on how to safely adopt the technology. A few weeks after the incident, the state Department of Education published a new edition of the guidelines, which it had been working on for several months with help from a group of 50 teachers, administrators, and experts. The revision came in response to instructions from the Legislature, which passed two laws in 2024 telling the department, essentially, to get a handle on AI’s rapid spread among students, teachers and administrators.

Critics wonder if the guidelines would have helped avoid what parents referred to as Pippigate; the controversy, they say, provides evidence that districts, schools, and parents, who often lack the time or resources to ensure that software tools don’t produce harmful output, need more support from the state. The guidelines, they add, are also too vague in places and don’t do enough to define guardrails for how teachers use AI in the classroom.

The issues with the guidelines call into question whether the department can effectively respond to instructions from elected officials on how to safeguard a technology that, according to the guidelines themselves, can leave children isolated and with narrowed perspectives.

With AI rapidly becoming more prevalent in society, effectively managing the technology has become an urgent issue. Though OpenAI's ChatGPT popularized generative AI just three years ago, polls show that a majority of teachers and students nationwide now use the technology in some capacity.

While AI can help save teachers time, personalize learning, and support students who do not speak English or who have disabilities, it can also inaccurately grade their papers and generate images that perpetuate or intensify stereotypes or sexualized imagery of women, particularly women of color. The majority of California K-12 students are people of color. Since the rapid expansion of generative AI adoption started, teachers who spoke with CalMatters have felt both a need to prepare their students for a future where AI is ubiquitous and a fear that AI tools can enable cheating on tests and lead to deficiencies in reasoning, logic, and critical thinking.

"Educators have a narrow window to set norms before they harden," said LaShawn Chatmon, CEO of the National Equity Project, an Oakland group that helps teachers produce more equitable outcomes. "Local education agencies that take advantage of this opportunity to co-design learning and policy with students and families can help shift who gets to decide AI's role in our learning and lives."

A district spokesperson told CalMatters that images generated by the AI model don't align with district standards and "we are collaborating with Adobe to address the issue." Adobe VP of Education Charlie Miller said the company rolled out changes to address the issue within 24 hours of hearing about the incident. Miller did not respond to questions about how the tool was vetted before deployment.

As a result of what his child experienced, Hughes thinks students shouldn't be told to use text-to-image generators for homework assignments. But he sees no attempt to place such limits on use of the technology in the Department of Education guidance.

"These tech companies are making things marketed to kids that are not fully tested," he said. "I don't know where to draw the line but elementary school is too young because it can get real nasty real fast as we've seen with the Grok stuff," he added, referring to recent abuse of the Grok AI system to nonconsensually remove clothing in images of women and children.

Issues with AI guidance

The guidance supplies a list of unacceptable uses of AI by students, such as plagiarism, and urges educators to integrate real-world scenarios and case studies into discussions to help students apply ethical principles to practical situations. It also says students should be taught to "think critically and creatively" about AI tools' "benefits and challenges."

Julie Flapan, director of the Computer Science Equity Project at UCLA's Center X, said that the Pippi Longstocking incident called to mind a 2024 study that found young Black and Latino people are more likely to use generative AI than young white people. That data, in tandem with the historical disparity in access to computer science education, means, she said, that some parents and students will need help to think critically about AI.

"We often think about technological advances as ways to level the playing field," she said. "But the reality is we know that they exacerbate inequalities."

Flapan said it makes sense that the guidelines urge critical thinking and vetting of AI tools before use and encourage education leaders to engage communities in decisionmaking. But, she added, the guidance doesn't detail how to do that.

Charles Logan, a former teacher now at a responsible tech laboratory at Northwestern University, said that the guidelines fall short by not offering teachers and parents clear guidance on how they can opt out of using the technology. A Brookings Institution study released in January, based on interviews with students, teachers and administrators in 50 countries, concluded that the risks of AI in classrooms currently outweigh the benefits and can "undermine children's foundational development."

Mark Johnson, head of government affairs at Code.org, praised the guidelines, but said the state should offer more AI education support to educators and make proficiency in AI and computer science requirements for graduation. A recent report by Johnson found four states adopted such graduation requirements after releasing AI guidance.

Katherine Goyette, who served as computer science coordinator for the Department of Education until January, when asked about the Longstocking incident, pointed to parts of the guidance emphasizing the importance of engaging families, communities and school board members when evaluating AI tools. She also said critical thinking is important in preventing such outcomes, pointing to guidance that pushes administrators to consider potential harms before use.

Additional direction is on the way for how to put the recently released guidance into practice: the department's AI working group will introduce specific policy recommendations based on the guidance by July.

The pressure of the AI inevitability narrative

The latest version of California Department of Education AI guidelines come as local educational agencies move away from blanket AI bans considered after the 2022 release of OpenAI's ChatGPT. Instead, districts are moving toward deciding when and how students and teachers can use the technology. Those local decisions will be critical to how the technology is actually used in schools, since the state cannot require school districts adopt its guidance.

Even the largest school districts in California can encounter serious issues when deploying AI. In June 2024, Los Angeles Unified's superintendent promised the best AI tutor in the world but had to pull it from use weeks later. A week later, news emerged that a majority of members on the San Diego Unified School District board, the second-largest district in the state, signed a contract for curriculum that they didn't know included an AI grading tool.

The move toward state and district AI guidance, rather than bans, reflects a broader sense of inevitability in the state around adoption of the technology. In his October veto of a bill that would have prevented use of some chatbots by minors, Gov. Gavin Newsom said AI is already shaping the world and that "We cannot prepare our youth for a future where AI is ubiquitous by preventing their use of these tools altogether."

Logan, who recently advised San Diego parents about how to resist and refuse AI use in classrooms, pushes back against this idea. He says the California Department of Education guidance should address situations in which parents might want to avoid having their children use AI at all.

“It’s surprising that the guidance wants to make proficient AI users of kindergartners and there wasn’t space to say no or opt out,” he said in a phone call.

The statewide AI guidance joins a series of efforts to protect kids from AI, including bills now before the Legislature that seeks to place a moratorium on toys with companion chatbots and protect student privacy in the age of AI. Common Sense Media and OpenAI are working on getting a kids online safety initiative on the ballot for the election in November.

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education

Date: March 13, 2026

Prepared by: Marie Williams, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent

Phone Number: (559) 457-3554

Regarding: Out-of-State Field Trip – Fresno Unified Middle School Sites

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board with information regarding an out-of-state field trip for five Fresno Unified middle school sites, which will have the opportunity to experience the nation's capital through the lens of cultural significance.

The Ethnic Studies Cross-Regional Project for the middle school Ethnic Studies field trip to Washington, D.C., offers students a profound experience to delve into the experiences and contributions of diverse communities throughout American history. Students will visit museums and memorials and participate in small-group discussions, reflecting on shared experiences to deepen their understanding of complex social dynamics. The goal is to foster greater appreciation for the nation's diversity. These experiences not only enhance students' historical knowledge but also promote critical thinking, empathy, and a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted story of the United States.

The Ethnic Studies Cross-Regional Project includes school sites: Baird, Computech, Gaston, Terronez, and Wawona. These five school sites will experience cultural education in Washington, D.C. from May 27, 2026, through May 31, 2026. This year, a total of 49 students and six chaperones will be attending the trip. African American Principals United, site budgets, and private funds are being used to fund the trip.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Tonisha Hargrove-Williams at (559) 457-6111.

Cabinet Approval: 
Carlos Castillo (Mar 9, 2026 13:17:21 PDT)

Name and Title: Carlos Castillo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer

Out of State, Over-Night Field Trip Information Matrix

Trip Date	School	Destination	Purpose: Educational Outcome and standards being addressed	Students and Chaperones	Instructional Time off Site	Cost/Funding
5/27/26-5/31/26	Baird, Computech, Gaston, Terronez and Wawona	Washington D.C.	Event Group: ESCR Student Study Trip, Ethnic Studies Class The ESCR for the middle school Ethnic Studies study trip to Washington D.C., offers students an experience to delve into the varied and extensive contributions of diverse communities throughout American history. Students visit museums, memorials, participate in small-group discussions, while reflecting on shared experiences that will deepen their understanding of complex social dynamics. The goals are to foster a greater appreciation for the nation's diversity, enhance their historical knowledge, promote critical thinking, empathy, and a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted story of the United States.	49 Students 6 Chaperone	24 hours	\$154,048.00

Event Itinerary: (attach a separate sheet if necessary)

- Times and locations of meetings, classes or tours, lunch and/or dinner.
- Please list all stops in route, locations and times (inbound and outbound)
- Nighttime supervision plan
- Provide a list of all chaperones and titles i.e, parent, teacher etc. and chaperone/student ratio.

** Please note that the itinerary is from the trip last year and will be very similar if not the same for this year.

*** Chaperones are only FUSD employee teachers.

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent

Date: March 13, 2026

To the Members of the Board of Education

Prepared by: Marie Williams, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent

Phone Number: (559) 457-3554

Regarding: 2026 California Distinguished Schools Recognition

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information regarding the recipients of the 2026 California Distinguished Schools recognition. This recognition honors exemplary middle and high schools statewide for exceptional instructional programs and demonstrated student success. Fresno Unified School District is proud to recognize the following school sites for earning this distinction.

Below is the list of Fresno Unified schools:

- Baird Middle School – Achievement Gap Closers
- Design Science Middle College High School – Beacons of Opportunity
- Edison Computech Middle School – Achievement Gap Closers & Beacons of Opportunity
- Edison High School – Exemplary High Achievers
- Erma Duncan Polytechnical High School – Achievement Gap Closers
- Phillip J. Patiño School of Entrepreneurship – Beacons of Opportunity

These recognitions reflect Fresno Unified's ongoing commitment to equity, rigorous instruction, and ensuring that all students, especially historically underserved groups, are supported in reaching high levels of academic achievement.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Marie Williams, Ed.D., at (559) 457-3554.

Cabinet Approval:  Carlos Castillo (Mar 12, 2026 10:52:43 PDT)

Name and Title: Carlos Castillo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer