

Career Connected

Career Technical Education Program Spotlights

January-March 2026 – Issue No. 16

Senior Reshoots

Fresno High School

Fresno High Photo 2 students did 55 reshoots for seniors who missed their cap and gown photos to be put into the yearbook. Students running the photo shoots took last summer's Photo internship to receive the training needed for the work. It is exciting to see them putting their skills into action to support other students on their campus.

Cattle Roping Demonstration

Phoenix Secondary Academy

School Resource Officer Burger, a retired cowboy, brought authentic Western tradition to life at Phoenix Secondary Academy by giving students hands-on instruction in cattle roping. Drawing from years of real ranch experience, he demonstrated proper rope handling, safety techniques, and the patience required to master the skill. Students had the opportunity to practice their aim and technique while learning about the discipline, responsibility, and work ethic that come with ranch life. His visit blended practical skill-building with mentorship, giving students a memorable experience rooted in both tradition and character development.

Student Joins Industry

Fresno High School

Laila Castro, a Photo 2 senior, was hired as a photographer by Pro Shots photography. She has been part of Warrior Entertainment for two years in the photo program with Mr. Tovar, and has been a key player during many photography projects, including her work in the media day shoots and social media promotional work.

Renegade Productions

DeWolf High School

Renegade Productions visited DeWolf to provide students with an engaging introduction to filmmaking and video editing. Through a structured lesson and hands-on industry experience, students learned the fundamentals of storytelling, camera operation, lighting, and post-production editing. Professionals from Renegade Productions shared real-world insights into working in media production, helping students understand both the creative and technical sides of the industry. The experience gave students practical skills and a clear look at potential career pathways in film, digital media, and content creation.

NOVA Farms

Phoenix Secondary Academy

Rizpah Ballard from NOVA Farms visits Phoenix on a regular basis, bringing hands-on agricultural learning directly to students. Through interactive lessons featuring sheep and goats, she teaches proper animal handling, care routines, nutrition, and the responsibilities involved in livestock management.

Students gain real-world experience by working directly with the animals, building confidence, compassion, and practical agricultural skills. Her ongoing partnership provides meaningful exposure to sustainable farming practices and potential career pathways within the agricultural industry.

Armenian Studies Guest Speaker

Phoenix Secondary Academy

Mr. Barlow Der Mgrdechian, Berberian Coordinator and Armenian Studies Program Director at the Center for Armenian Studies, is a respected scholar and community leader dedicated to preserving and promoting Armenian history, language, and culture. During his visit to Phoenix Secondary Academy, he spoke with students about the rich history of the Armenian people, the importance of cultural identity, and the lasting impact of the Armenian Genocide.

He also shared insights into his own educational and professional journey, explaining how his passion for heritage and scholarship led him to a career in Armenian Studies. His visit provided students with both historical knowledge and inspiration to pursue meaningful career paths rooted in purpose and community engagement.

Stop the Bleed

Design Science Middle College High School

CTE proudly supported Design Science in certifying all freshmen and sophomores in Stop the Bleed training. Through hands-on instruction, students learned how to respond in emergency situations using critical life-saving techniques such as applying pressure, packing wounds, and using a tourniquet. Providing this certification equips students with practical, real-world skills that build confidence, leadership, and readiness to act in a crisis. By investing in emergency preparedness education, CTE helps empower students to be capable, responsible individuals who can make a meaningful difference in their community.

JADE Dance Performance

Bullard Talent K-8 School

Bullard Talent's JADE dance performance group performed at Roosevelt High's Studio D Concert for 2026. The student's were able to showcase a piece of choreography and apply real world skills that correlate with their dance studies. This is a great opportunity for students to utilize skills expounded in CTE.

School News Channel

DeWolf High School

Students in the CTE Digital Media and Marketing course are using their new professional equipment to produce the school news channel, taking full ownership of the creative process from start to finish. With cameras, lighting kits, microphones, and a teleprompter, they script, film, anchor, and edit weekly broadcasts that highlight campus events, student achievements, and community partnerships.

This hands-on experience allows students to apply real-world marketing, branding, and media production skills while building confidence in public speaking and digital storytelling.

Yearbook Production

DeWolf High School

Students at DeWolf are taking full ownership of their yearbook through the CTE Digital Media and Marketing course, managing everything from photography to layout and design. Students photograph their peers, capture campus events, and curate meaningful moments that reflect the school's culture and spirit.

By leading the creative direction and production process, they gain hands-on experience in professional photography, branding, editing, and publication design while building pride and leadership within their school community.

Tournament of Technology

Hamilton K-8 School

Hamilton students competed in the Tournament of Technology this year and performed exceptionally well in the Autonomous Flight competition. Students took home 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in the 2nd Division.

Baird at the Fair

Baird Middle School

Baird students showcased their hard work and horticultural skills at this year's Big Fresno Fair. After months of nurturing their plants, students arrived prepared with beautifully grown entries that reflected patience, consistency, and care. They impressed judges by explaining their growing techniques, plant varieties, and the challenges they overcame throughout the season.

Students also enjoyed exploring the exhibit hall, learning from other schools, and appreciating the creativity displayed by their peers. We are proud of their dedication and the pride they brought to our school through this hands-on agricultural experience.

Baird Farmers Market

Baird Middle School

Baird Middle School students hosted their own Farmers Market, proudly selling fresh produce they grew in the school garden. Throughout the event, students practiced customer service skills by greeting visitors, explaining their products, and answering questions. They also gained real-world experience with cash handling, making change, and managing simple transactions. The market gave students a hands-on opportunity to learn responsibility, teamwork, and the value of sharing their hard work with the community.

Seed Survivor

Baird Middle School

Students explored the Seed Survivor mobile classroom, where they learned about the essential elements plants need to thrive, including NPK—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium—and how each nutrient supports healthy growth. Interactive exhibits taught students how different water systems, such as drip irrigation and sprinklers, help conserve water while keeping plants hydrated. They also discovered how plants produce important by-products like oxygen, food, and fiber that humans rely on every day. Through hands-on activities, including examining seeds and planting their own, students gained a deeper understanding of plant biology and agriculture. The experience inspired curiosity and helped students appreciate the science and resources behind our food systems.

Student Choice Expo

Baird Middle School

Students proudly represented the Agriculture and Technology programs during the district's Student Choice Expo. They spoke with incoming parents and future students about the hands-on learning opportunities offered at Baird, including greenhouse projects, small-scale farming, and introductory tech engineering activities. Students shared their personal experiences, explaining how these programs helped them build confidence, teamwork, and real-world problem-solving skills. They also highlighted pathways leading into high school agriculture and technology academies, encouraging families to explore the many options available. Their enthusiasm and professionalism helped showcase Baird as a supportive, engaging place for students to learn and grow.

Tulare Ag Expo

Baird Middle School

Students explored the Tulare Ag Expo, where they learned how modern agriculture uses advanced machinery and technology to increase efficiency and sustainability. They engaged with exhibits showing GPS-guided tractors, automated irrigation systems, and innovative tools used by today's farmers. Students also discovered how drones, sensors, and data collection help monitor crop health and improve farm management. The visit broadened their understanding of how agriculture and technology work together to feed communities and shape future careers.

Engineering Days

Edison High School

The Edison High Engineering Pathway hosted its 3rd annual Engineering Days. This event was created in order to expose regional 6th grade students to the career sector of Engineering. Each year all Edison region students are bussed in and provided with a rotation of activities based around Engineering. Every Edison Engineering student is involved in this event in one way or the other, and it takes a lot of planning and practice by teachers and students to make this event such a wonderful experience for our 6th graders.

The event take place over two days with three regional schools each day. There is a rotation of four activities, which include:

- Newton Station-paper bridge
- Faraday-electronics circuits
- Magellan-CTE building tour/3D printing
- Galileo-rockets lab

A rotation was added this year to include access to the Engineering labs in the new CTE building. As always, the students and teachers provided an amazing experience.

[Watch a highlight video of the Engineering Days event.](#)

Basic Life Support Training

Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART)

In December of 2025, the CART Biomedicine students all became certified in Basic Life Support (BLS) through the American Heart Association. This is an industry-recognized certification that is valid for 2 years and goes beyond what is covered in standard CPR courses. To become certified, students had to prove understanding of the material through both a written exam and by demonstrating effective technique during a hands-on skills test. The skills students mastered included adult and pediatric CPR, bag mask ventilation, 2-rescuer team CPR, proper use of an AED, and relief of choking. The testing process was conducted in the classroom by the three Biomedicine teachers, all of whom went through the instructor certification process through the AHA in the spring of 2025.

The BLS content was purposefully aligned with students completing a large-scale collaborative project about an emergency medicine patient for the CART Showcase. During this project, every group was given a unique emergency medicine patient that they had to diagnose through vital signs, head-to-toe assessment findings, blood work, and imaging results. Students then had to research and determine a treatment plan for their patient. Many of the patients had cardiovascular or respiratory complications, so students were able to apply their BLS knowledge to real-life situations. Additionally, during this time American Ambulance came as guest speakers for the CART Biomedicine class, so students were able to learn how EMS workers respond to cases of cardiac arrest and blocked airways in the field.

These official certifications give CART Biomedicine students a competitive edge when it comes to applying for jobs that require CPR certification, as well as providing them with the skills necessary to save a life in our community! Thanks to the generosity of both Fresno Unified and Clovis Unified school districts, these certifications were offered at no cost to students.

Green Tech Expo

Edison High School

Tenth and eleventh grade students from Edison's Green Energy Academy presented projects at the Green Tech Expo. Each year students create innovative projects using alternative energy methods. This event gives Academy students an opportunity to show off the amazing skills that they have learned and to promote their program to others.

[Watch a highlight video of the Green Tech Expo.](#)

Biomed Visits Fire Station

Edison High School

Students from the Biomed Pathway senior course were invited to visit Fresno Fire Station 5 as part of their Career Project. Each year students are tasked with reaching out to an industry partner to interview about their career. This year one of the groups reached out to Fresno Fire Fighter Bailey O'Dell for an interview.

Instead of a virtual or phone interview, she invited the students to come to her station for a tour and conduct the interview there. Students were able to get a first hand observation of where fire fighters live during their shift and the equipment they use, including the vehicles.

Highlights from Pathways of Medicine

Roosevelt High School

In February and March 2026, the Roosevelt Pathways of Medicine program offered a number of valuable work-based learning experiences to students, including:

- Visiting the Body Tech Museum - Juniors traveled to San Jose to observe human bodies preserved through a process called plastination. Students were able to replicate and learn about the process in a hands-on lab hosted by the Tech teachers.
- Athletic Training Symposium - Students visited the Sacramento Kings Arena for a symposium hosted by the University of the Pacific Masters program for athletic training. The facilitators provided techniques and strategies for athlete preparation and recovery.
- Open Heart Surgery Viewing - Students observed a live open heart surgery, taking notes and asking questions fielded by the plethora of medical professionals required to perform a surgery of that magnitude.

Fresno Pacific Visit

Edison High School

Students in the Edison High School Teacher Academy pathway recently visited Fresno Pacific University for an engaging and informative campus experience. During the visit, students participated in hands-on activities in the Maker's Studio that promoted creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration. They also toured the campus and gained insight into college life and the overall university environment. Additionally, students spoke with university leaders to learn more about academic pathways, campus resources, and what it means to pursue a degree in their field.

Biomed Food Drive

Edison High School

Each year, the Edison Biomed pathway and Kindness Club partner to provide the Thanksgiving Food Drive. They reach out to companies to help with the turkeys and other perishable items, but the non-perishable items come from donations from their own campus. Students from Biomed and Kindness Club collect and sort the items then show up on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to help distribute the goods. A lot of time and dedication goes into making this happen every year for the Edison community.

PIVOT Program

Edison Region Elementary Schools

Over the past five weeks, five dedicated Fresno Police Department School Resource Officers partnered with Fresno Unified classrooms in the Edison region to deliver the PIVOT (Providing Individuals Valuable Opportunities Today) program to over 375 fifth-grade students. Through a series of structured, high-impact lessons, students engaged in meaningful conversations and activities centered around growth mindset, bullying prevention, responsible social media use, situational awareness, and positive decision-making. Designed as a push-in model, the program allowed officers to lead instruction while teachers supported student engagement, creating a powerful, collaborative learning environment.

PIVOT is rooted in the belief that sometimes the strongest move a student can make is a change in direction. This proactive program supports social-emotional development, strengthens school climate, and equips students with the tools to navigate real-life challenges with confidence and integrity. Through tailored lessons and authentic relationship-building with officers, students were not only engaged—they were empowered. This partnership between Fresno Unified and the Fresno Police Department continues to demonstrate the impact of community collaboration in shaping resilient, future-ready students.

ACE Mentoring Program

Edison High School

Edison Engineering students were being given an opportunity to be part of the ACE (Architecture, Construction, Engineering) Mentoring program. The ACE Mentor program introduces high school students to the architecture, engineering, and construction industries, inspiring the next generation through hands-on learning, mentorship, and financial support for educational advancement. This program is starting with a cohort of about 16 students, mostly 11th grades. It is a 10-week program that meets once a week for 2 hours.

Women in Trades

DeWolf High School

DeWolf High School proudly celebrates CTE Construction students Amy Ochoa-Felix and Emily Vargas Aguayo, who were recently honored by San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC) for their leadership and achievements in Women in the Trades. Their recognition highlights the important role young women are playing in shaping the future of the skilled trades. Having Amy and Emily in the DeWolf construction program is truly special — their dedication, skill, and determination inspire their peers and reflect the strong career pathways and opportunities being built through DeWolf's CTE Construction program.

NorCal Apprenticeship Tour

Hoover High School

Hoover High construction students recently toured the Nor Cal Apprenticeship Facility in Fresno, getting a firsthand look at professional trade training.

The group observed pre-apprentices in construction math and explored a 900 sq. ft. residential mockup, seeing exactly how classroom skills translate to the job site. From the welding shop to the apprenticeship program, students learned about the high-tech side of the trades and the career-long benefits offered by the NorCal Carpenters Union.

It was an eye-opening experience that showed students exactly how to build a successful future in construction.

Thank you Robert Matthew, NorCal's training facility coordinator, for hosting Hoover students. It was a great experience!

LAPSEN Program of Excellence

Hoover High School

Hoover has been awarded the Industry-Certified Program of Excellence designation from the Law and Public Safety Education Network (LAPSEN) in recognition of their outstanding Fire Science (CTE) Career Technical Education pathway program.

This national certification recognizes Hoover's commitment to preparing students for careers in fire, emergency services, and public safety through rigorous coursework, hands-on training, and strong partnerships with industry professionals. Programs that earn this distinction demonstrate excellence in curriculum alignment, industry engagement, student skill development, career readiness, and overall program quality.

The Law and Public Safety Education Network is a national organization dedicated to advancing law and public safety education across the country. Through initiatives like the Industry-Certified Program of Excellence, LAPSEN recognizes programs that demonstrate leadership, innovation, and a strong commitment to preparing the next generation of public safety professionals.

This recognition reflects the hard work of our students, teachers, administrators, and community partners who continue to support career pathways that connect learning to meaningful careers. Please join us in congratulating Mr. Shelton for his hard work, dedication, and determination in leading Hoover High School's Fire Science Program to national recognition.

Ambassadors at Career Fairs

Hoover High School

Hoover's CTE Ambassadors recently made a strong impact at the Tioga and Wawona Middle School Career Fairs, proudly representing Hoover's diverse and dynamic CTE programs. Serving as student leaders and role models, the ambassadors engaged with middle school students by sharing their personal experiences, demonstrating hands-on learning opportunities, and highlighting the wide range of pathways available at Hoover.

Through interactive conversations and enthusiastic presentations, the ambassadors helped younger students begin to envision their future, emphasizing that high school is a place to explore passions, build skills, and prepare for meaningful careers. From fire science and construction to marketing, digital media, and beyond, Hoover's programs were showcased as real-world pathways that connect education to opportunity.

Most importantly, the ambassadors delivered a powerful and consistent message: with hard work you can be anything you want to be. Their encouragement and authenticity left a lasting impression, helping middle school students feel excited, confident, and motivated about their future high school journey. Hoover is proud of its CTE Ambassadors for their leadership, professionalism, and commitment to inspiring the next generation.

THINK

From January through March, students across Fresno Unified have been actively engaging in THINK engineering and career exploration experiences, building curiosity, creativity, and real-world connections across our district.

In January, 848 students from 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade participated. In February, participation grew to 1,876 students, and in March, 1,770 students participated. Altogether, over these three months, THINK reached a total of 4,494 students.

These experiences give elementary students meaningful opportunities to explore engineering, problem-solving, innovation, and future career pathways at an early age. It is exciting to see so many students across multiple grade levels engaging in hands-on learning that helps them imagine what is possible for their future.

Design Build Challenge

Duncan Polytechnical High School

Duncan Construction Technology seniors competed in the Design Build Challenge hosted by FCOE where they had three days to build a fully finished shed ready for a customer using provided raw materials and architectural plans. The students were asked to select a foreman, safety manager, and marketing manager within their team before the build started.

The marketing manager was in charge of the cost estimate and sale of the shed and prepared a sales pitch presentation for a panel of industry partners. The safety manager was in charge of completing a job hazard analysis, for ensuring the team maintained safety compliance while working, and for communicating with the contest safety oversight team. The foreman was in charge of managing the overall crew build, reviewing the design plans, and requesting the building inspections, which took place at four different sections of the build.

Each team had an industry partner mentor who could support when needed, and other partners acted as safety inspectors and building inspectors who had to sign off that the work was complete and accurate before students could move onto the next portion of the build. Duncan's Construction Technology instructor, Ash Jones, said, "Overall, this is the most realistic building scenario for students that I have participated in. The safety oversight and building inspections really bring that real life feel to the contest, which is awesome for the students!"

Toxicity Lab

Hoover High School

At Hoover, students in the Public Service Pathway are gaining real-world, hands-on experience through engaging forensic science labs led by instructor Mr. Jones. Recently students participated in the Toxicity Lab, where they step into the role of forensic toxicologists to investigate simulated crime scene evidence. During this lab, students analyze unknown substances using a variety of scientific techniques, including chemical reactions, pH testing, and chromatography. By examining these samples, they work to identify potential toxins or harmful substances, just as professionals would in real forensic investigations. This interactive experience allows students to apply classroom knowledge in a meaningful and practical way.

Mr. Jones brings industry-relevant expertise and a passion for public service careers, helping students understand the critical role forensic science plays in law enforcement and public safety. Through activities like the Toxicity Lab, students build essential skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and evidence analysis.

Entrepreneur Day

Terronez Middle School

Entrepreneur Day at Terronez Middle School took place in the school's cafeteria on Monday, March 9. The hard work and dedication of the young entrepreneurs at Terronez was highlighted as they showcased their ideas, products, and services. Special guest speaker Ty Jackson, an award-winning children's book author, youth motivational speaker, and literacy advocate, joined them to help host the event. Families, staff, and community members were invited to support the next generation of business leaders and enjoyed a night of creativity, connection, and fun!

[Watch a highlight video of Entrepreneur Day.](#)

Flourish & Nourish

Roosevelt High School

Roosevelt Health Youth Corp students have taken their project for the year and turned it into a functioning Food Pantry called Flourish & Nourish. They have attended events, to get the word out, including Open House, the Career Fair, and lunch time activities, and are attending the Health Youth Corps Showcase taking place in April at Fresno City College. They have [a website](#) and logo, and work tirelessly to inform the community.

Yosemite National Park

Sunnyside High School

Sunnyside High School Video Production Academy and Digital Photography students took a trip to Yosemite National Park. Students were tasked to make a nature documentary or capture stunning photos of one of Nature's Wonders right in our backyard.

Alumni Spotlight: A Student's Journey to UCLA and Medicine

Edison High School

Looking back, Jesus Reyes recognizes key experiences while a student in Fresno Unified that set him on a path to attend UCLA and study molecular cell and developmental biology. Reyes, 18, is on the home stretch of his first year in college, thriving and excited about his studies, experiences and the friends he's made. Reyes' leap to UCLA almost didn't happen. He credits teachers, peers at Edison, and a Fresno Unified Scholarship for helping him overcome his apprehension and pursue UCLA and a career in medicine.

Jesus' first years of school were at his neighborhood campus, Columbia Elementary School, but he began attending Manchester GATE Elementary School in third grade when assessments showed he was gifted and qualified for the higher-level programs Manchester offers. Manchester GATE students often feed into Computech Middle School and then Edison High School, the path that Jesus took. At Edison, during ninth grade, struggling to transition back to normalcy after the pandemic, Reyes met a teacher that would reshape how he looked at both education and life. "Mr. [Luke] McFadden has been a source of inspiration in my life and a person that I deeply respect for not only the knowledge he has instilled in me but also the morals he has. As my first year Biomed Pathway teacher, he taught me the basics of criminology, cellular biology and pathology, which would further my resolve to be a doctor," Jesus said. "Mr. McFadden was a huge, needed role model in my life, especially after the pandemic where I had lost my grandmother and also witnessed the divorce of my parents. Mr. McFadden instilled responsibility and kindness in me, morals which I believe he knew would be vital to future health care workers."

Despite top grades and successfully completing 11 Advanced Placement classes, Reyes said he struggled with "imposter's syndrome" and decided to attend Fresno City College and pursue a career in nursing. His peers at Edison had other ideas. They said, "You've worked too hard to go to City College. You need to aim higher." Reyes applied to a multitude of colleges and was accepted by numerous UC and other campuses. He also was awarded a \$2,500 Fresno Unified Scholarship, which bolstered his confidence. "My district and my community were investing in my academic journey. They wanted me to succeed," Jesus said.

At UCLA, the transition has been easier than expected, especially because he attended a summer program on the campus. He's found a community of students who inspire him. "People, they're so motivated. They want to solve the world's problems. I like being around those people because it helps me feel like a part of something bigger, like helping humanity in a way," Reyes said.

He wants to be an emergency room doctor or an oncologist and plans to return to Fresno to practice medicine. "I want to give back to the community that gave me an opportunity and helped me become the person I am," Jesus said.

Edited for space. [Original article](#) written by: Anne Ellis for Faces of Fresno Unified

Videography Trip

Sunnyside High School

Students in the videography course at Sunnyside traveled to Fresno City College for High School Journalism Day and then took a tour of ABC30.

Vineyards Photography

Farber Educational Campus

Students in Jeffrey Cook's class have been recording video and taking photos for The Vineyards California Armenian Home.

TeddyTV Camping Trip

Roosevelt High School

The TeddyTV crew supported Roosevelt's Outdoor Club/Bass Fishing Club on a weekend camping trip to the San Luis Reservoir. The video and photos students shot for the club's website will be helpful and informative for stakeholders who support the clubs.

Art Venture Photography Project

McLane High School

In May, Art Venture will be teaming up with the English and Art department to put on their Culminating Event. This is a project-based learning, year-long project. It started with students from the English department, who wrote essays based on neighborhood, family, heroes, and dreams.

From there students from the art and AME departments created photos, videos, and fine art pieces interpreting the written essays in visual form. Students have also worked hard to get certifications in YouScience for Photography I and from IMAGO for Networking.

Finally, students will have website portfolios to archive and showcase their photography -- edited in Photoshop and Lightroom -- which will also hold their certifications and resume. Students also have taken part in Aviation Day and various events around campus.

Chicago

Edison High School

Technical Theater students spent 9 weeks constructing the set for the show Chicago.

USS Hornet Trip

Roosevelt High School

The students participated in an overnight leadership and career exploration trip aboard the USS Hornet Museum. They were introduced to careers in the military and public service through hands-on training scenarios, teamwork exercises, and guided tours.

The students developed skills in leadership, communication, and problem solving while gaining a better real-world understanding of emergency response and service roles.

AIMS Center Maker Studio

Patino School of Entrepreneurship

Patino students had the exciting opportunity to tour Fresno Pacific University and explore potential academic and career pathways. During the visit, FPU student tour guides shared personal insights into their chosen majors and minors, explaining how their studies are helping them build real-world skills and even launch their own business ventures. Students got the chance to ask a lot of questions about the college student experience and how to prepare for it.

A highlight of the day was a hands-on session at the AIMS Center Maker Studio, where students tapped into their creativity and experimented with designing quick prototypes. They returned to class energized and inspired, bringing back a deeper understanding of the importance of testing and refining ideas to make even better products and projects.

Farewell Kopi!

Fresno High School

Fresno High's Warrior Entertainment team collaborated with KMPH to honor the retirement of longtime KMPH anchor and Fresno High alum Kopi Sotiropulos. The farewell broadcast aired on March 27, with a segment filmed on campus.

[Watch the farewell segment.](#)

Yearbook Photos

Hoover High School

Hoover's Yearbook/Digital Photo II students reached a major milestone this year, capturing professional-quality images of over 2,200 students and staff. Led by student photographers, this large-scale effort provided portraits used across yearbook, ATLAS, and 5 Star platforms, showcasing the talent, organization, and dedication behind the scenes. From setting up lighting and managing schedules to photographing and editing, students took full ownership of the process while gaining real-world experience and documenting the Hoover community.

As the first school in the district to successfully implement a fully student-driven portrait program at this scale, Hoover set a new standard. The program not only elevated the quality and consistency of school publications, but also gave students hands-on opportunities in studio photography, customer service, and production workflow. Each student was tasked daily with a different position (photographer, helper, check-in, etc.), with each position providing different skills gained for our industry. It was more than just photos... it's Hoover students leading, creating, and making FUSD history!

Bloomberg Beta

Patino School of Entrepreneurship

Patino entrepreneurs from 15 student business teams had the opportunity to visit Bloomberg Beta in San Francisco, where they pitched their business ideas to the Bloomberg team and a group of founders. Students delivered their elevator pitches, received thoughtful feedback, and gained valuable insight into what it takes to build a successful startup.

During the visit, students heard from Mary Zhu, founder of Develop for Good, about her journey as a young entrepreneur, including pitch competition experiences, tips on finding your why to keep going, and an honest look at life after high school in the startup world. They also learned about crafting strong LinkedIn profiles for both themselves and their ventures. Finally, students got to see the media room and take a fun photo.

Students returned with actionable feedback to strengthen their business concepts, practical strategies for overcoming burnout and imposter syndrome, and professional guidance to help them pursue their dreams.

Guest Speakers for Culinary Club

Patino School of Entrepreneurship

Patino welcomed General Manager Christopher Moran and Sous Chef Todd Collier from Club 33 and Royal 21 to speak with the Culinary Club students, thanks to the partnership with Fresno State's WET Center. Student entrepreneurs interested in the food industry got the chance to hear about different paths to success in the industry. The chefs spoke about working in fine dining and how creating magical moments for guests is at the heart of their craft. They shared how food can bring people together and create memories that last far beyond the meal. Key takeaways for students were: find a career that you love, success takes hard work and you need to find ways to find joy even on those challenging days, and choose a workplace that values your efforts and helps you grow. Students had the chance to ask questions about training opportunities, designing meaningful customer experiences, and the most memorable dishes the guests had created along their journey.

Alumni Spotlight: From CDAT to a Union Apprenticeship

Fresno High School

A Fresno High Construction Design and Technology Academy (CDAT) student, Bryan Gutierrez Figueroa, has just achieved a remarkable milestone - he completed his apprenticeship training and has officially joined the carpenters' union. For the past five years, Bryan has reached out to keep construction teacher Joel Osuna updated, demonstrating perseverance and commitment every step of the way. Now, he's beginning an exciting new chapter, contributing to the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley, earning a strong starting wage of \$57.93 per hour. His journey is a testament to what dedication and hard work can accomplish. This is a good reminder to students that pathways to success are diverse. Opportunities beyond a four-year degree - like apprenticeships - can lead to fulfilling careers and true financial independence. Bryan's story is living proof that dreams can be realized through different routes, and that each journey has its own rewards.

Jilly Bean the Therapy Dog

Kings Canyon, Sequoia, and Terronez Middle Schools

Jillian, the UCSF Fresno therapy dog, visited the FUSD Junior Doctors Academy sites—Kings Canyon, Sequoia, and Terronez—spreading joy and brightening each campus along the way. Beyond the smiles, therapy dogs like Jillian play an important role in supporting student well-being by helping reduce stress, promoting a sense of calm, and creating a welcoming environment. Her visits provided students and staff with meaningful moments to relax, connect, and recharge during the school day.

A special thank you to UCSF Fresno Public Safety Ambassador Supervisor Tom Johnson (Jillian's handler) and Jillian, aka Jilly Bean, for taking the time to visit our campuses and make such a positive impact!

UCSF Mission Bay Tour

Sunnyside High School

Sunnyside Doctors Academy seniors recently took a trip to UCSF Mission Bay Campus, and it was one of those experiences that really sticks with you. One of the highlights of the day was learning from Dr. Henry Sanchez, a longtime faculty member who made pathology come alive in a way textbooks just can't. Students had the unique opportunity to see and even touch real human organs, gaining a deeper understanding of how disease affects the body. It was equal parts fascinating, eye-opening, and unforgettable.

Later, students connected over lunch with PRIME medical students and Doctors Academy alum Stephanie Vasquez. Hearing their journeys—the challenges, the wins, and everything in between—made the path to medicine feel real and within reach. It was a powerful reminder that they're not just dreaming about these careers, they're already on their way.

Throughout the day, UCSF faculty also shared insights on breast, colon, and lung cancer, helping students build their understanding of important health topics while seeing the many ways healthcare professionals make a difference. By the end of the visit, students walked away inspired, not only with new knowledge, but with a sense of motivation and possibility.

Juniors Showcase Research

Sunnyside High School

This year, Doctors Academy juniors stepped into the world of medical research and academic writing, building a strong foundation in proper research techniques and mastering the essentials of American Psychological Association (APA) format. They explored important topics like health disparities, health politics, and global health, gaining insight into how these issues impact communities locally. Through analyzing peer-reviewed articles, students collected and interpreted data, strengthened their annotation skills, and developed their ability to think critically about complex medical topics.

Students shared their findings with classmates and staff as a practice run ahead of their summer symposium, where they will present to mentoring health professionals, school site staff, and community partners. Overall, this experience challenged students to meet collegiate-level expectations while building the skills and confidence needed for their future in healthcare.

Excellence in Education

Excellence in Education is Fresno Unified's employee recognition program designed to celebrate and honor the many outstanding employees who serve the district's students and their families. Candidates are nominated by their peers and evaluated by a selection committee through an interview process. This year, out of 60 finalists, there were 4 CTE teachers and staff.

- Michelle Mar, Career Technical Education
- Carissa Aflague, Edison High School
- Octor Vang, Sunnyside High School
- Sandra Chaires Sanchez, Phoenix Secondary Academy

[Watch a highlight video of the Excellence in Education event.](#)

Stop the Bleed

Baird, Computech, Fort Miller, Gaston, and Scandinavian Middle Schools

Students at Baird, Computech, Fort Miller, Gaston, and Scandinavian participated in Stop the Bleed training, where they learned how to recognize serious bleeding emergencies and the importance of staying calm in urgent situations. Instructors explained the role of bystanders in helping responders by quickly alerting adults and calling for professional medical help. Students practiced identifying common signs of severe bleeding and discussed safe ways to assist without putting themselves at risk. They also learned why preparedness and awareness are essential skills that can make a difference in real-world situations. The training empowered students with confidence and knowledge while reinforcing a strong culture of safety on campus.

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