

# CUSD Today

November 2021

Clovis Unified School District — WHERE CHARACTER COUNTS!

Volume 24, No. 4

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Clovis Unified School District  
1450 Herndon Ave.  
Clovis, CA 93611

## Bell schedule, dress code feedback guides proposals

Proposals regarding changes to two Clovis Unified policies will be available for the community to review after Nov. 19 online at [cusd.com](http://cusd.com).

Revised school start and stop times as well as adjustments to the district's dress code will be the focus of a Governing Board workshop later this month. The board will receive a full report of the parent, student and staff feedback gathered at meetings held at all school sites this fall, as well as comments submitted online.

An internal task force of 50+ members has been processing the information along with the state requirements that prompted the need to change Clovis Unified's bell schedule. State legislators passed a law to have later start times for intermediate and high schools effective fall 2022. A change to

secondary schools' times, however, means changes to elementary schools since the district's operational supports and transportation are connected.

Feedback from the community regarding elementary start time changes overwhelmingly indicated they preferred them moved earlier, before high schools start, rather than later.

Similar feedback and processing has also been occurring for the dress code, which was reviewed this year after students with Clovis Unified's InterSchool Council asked for it to be looked at, especially in terms of leggings and enforcement. In the 117 school site meetings held this fall on the topic, stakeholders asked that some modifications be made to reflect current clothing styles available, in particular with leggings, frayed clothing and shorts.

Following the board's study session workshop, the findings and recommendations will be posted on [cusd.com](http://cusd.com) for review; an online comment form will also be available. The proposals are planned to be on the board's agenda Dec. 10 for information and voted upon at its meeting in January.

## CUSD wins Farm to Fork \$272k grant

### Student-grown food coming to school cafeterias

Clovis Unified student-grown produce, dried fruit and nut snacks may be served in cafeteria meals around the district this year thanks to a grant that allows Campus Catering and Clovis East High's McFarlane-Coffman Ag Center to join forces.

Clovis Unified is a recipient of the 2021 California Farm to School Incubator Grants awarded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Office of Farm to Fork. The \$272,580 award will fund training, equipment and materials needed to pave the way for the partnership.

"We're thrilled for our kids having 'farm to school' foods to eat. You can't get much fresher than this," said Campus Catering Director Robert Schram. "We might get fruit picked in the morning from the ag farm that's served for lunchtime that very same day."

Steve Gambriel, an ag teacher at Clovis East, pursued the grant as a way to continue enhancing his young farmers' education. "The whole purpose of the Ag Center is to

teach everyone where our food comes from. This grant will allow our ag students the opportunity to see the final step in the process, where our food goes," he said. "We're really excited."

To support this partnership, the district is developing a master procurement calendar and yearly farming schedule, investing in reusable crates to transfer fresh produce from the school farm to Campus Catering, and pursuing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification for the Ag Center and safe food handlers' certification for staff and students.

The district is also rebuilding the academic plant science pathway to facilitate student production and packaging of produce; purchase accompanying food production and packaging equipment for the Ag Center; and developing a new course in plant science and food safety.

Additionally, the district is creating an Ag Center marketing plan for direct sales from the school farm to an onsite farmers market and Community Supported Agriculture program, and will educate students

► Please see *Grant*, Page 9

## Great Sports!

**GIVING THEIR ALL:** Hundreds of elementary school athletes competed in the Fall Elementary School Championships for fall sports. Co-champions for football are Riverview, Dry Creek and Cedarwood elementary schools. Taking the volleyball championships was Woods Elementary. In cross country, Dry Creek runners dominated, earning team championships for 5th/6th grade girls, 4th grade boys and 4th grade girls; and Bud Rank Elementary won for 5th/6th grade boys. Congratulations to all participating athletes. We are so proud of your hard work and efforts!

Photo special to CUSD Today by Kellie Feramisco.

## SOCK IT TO DRUGS!

Clovis Unified students and educators joined forces during the Red Ribbon Week anti-drug campaign to educate and celebrate being drug, alcohol and nicotine free. This year's theme was "Drug Free Looks Like Me," and activities around the district included Liberty Elementary's "Be your Creative Self - Crazy Sock Day," pictured, to Clovis North Educational Center students in cowboy gear making a TikTok video "giving drugs the boot!" Also during Red Ribbon Week, all district high schools showed students a documentary about the local street fentanyl crisis that has taken the lives of several youth. See Page 5 for more information and resources on this important topic.



Photo special to CUSD Today

## CUSD kids part of world robotics team

### Can they move 100-ton truck using LEGOs?

By Kellie Feramisco and P.J. Lippert  
CUSD Today

A robotics team that includes several Clovis Unified students from Granite Ridge Intermediate and Clovis North High has been working on a secret project. They are one of four teams from around the world selected by LEGO and Volvo to collectively solve a mind-blowing challenge, and their story has been turned into a short film documentary.

LEGO recently released the film that features local robotics team Chaos Crew working virtually with robotics teams from Sweden, Nigeria and Japan.

The four teams' challenge was to collaborate and design a prototype using only LEGO bricks and LEGO motors that could move a heavy equipment construction hauler - a Volvo A60H nicknamed "The Beast" that weighs 43 tons - a distance of 50 meters. But to make it even more interesting, the bed of the huge truck was to be filled with



rocks, making for a total weight of 100 tons!

Together the teams had 35 students and it took them about four months to successfully achieve the results. They had to get creative not just with their ideas, but also on how to work together considering the members lived in different time zones.

"It was a fun project," said Chaos Crew Coach Amal Alhadi.

Chaos Crew formed at Fugman Elementary when the students were in fourth and fifth grade. The students are now eighth- and ninth-graders at Granite Ridge Intermediate and Clovis North High. Team members are Ali Alhadi, Hamzah Ahmed, Devin Alacron, Kevin Chen, Maya Eldadah, Tyler Hankins, Ishween Kaur, Milla Lucido, Yousef Rahman.

In 2019, Chaos Crew won Runner Up at the FLL Global Innovation Awards, which is where the students caught the attention of LEGO head-

► Please see *Robotics*, Page 9

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

## INSIDE:

### Conferences available for students

Clovis Unified has opportunities for students to participate in student leadership conferences each year. Page 3

### PATRIOTS DAY IN CUSD

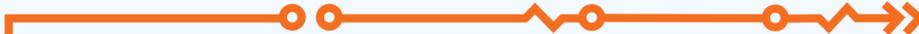
### Clark students make 9/11 connection

Clark Intermediate leadership and drama teacher Jill Mele shared a film about one of the FDNY firefighters who died that day. Page 6

### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

### Beauty, life returning to campuses

The heartbeat of our district lies in our students, and in particular, the experiences that they have inside AND outside of our classrooms. Page 5

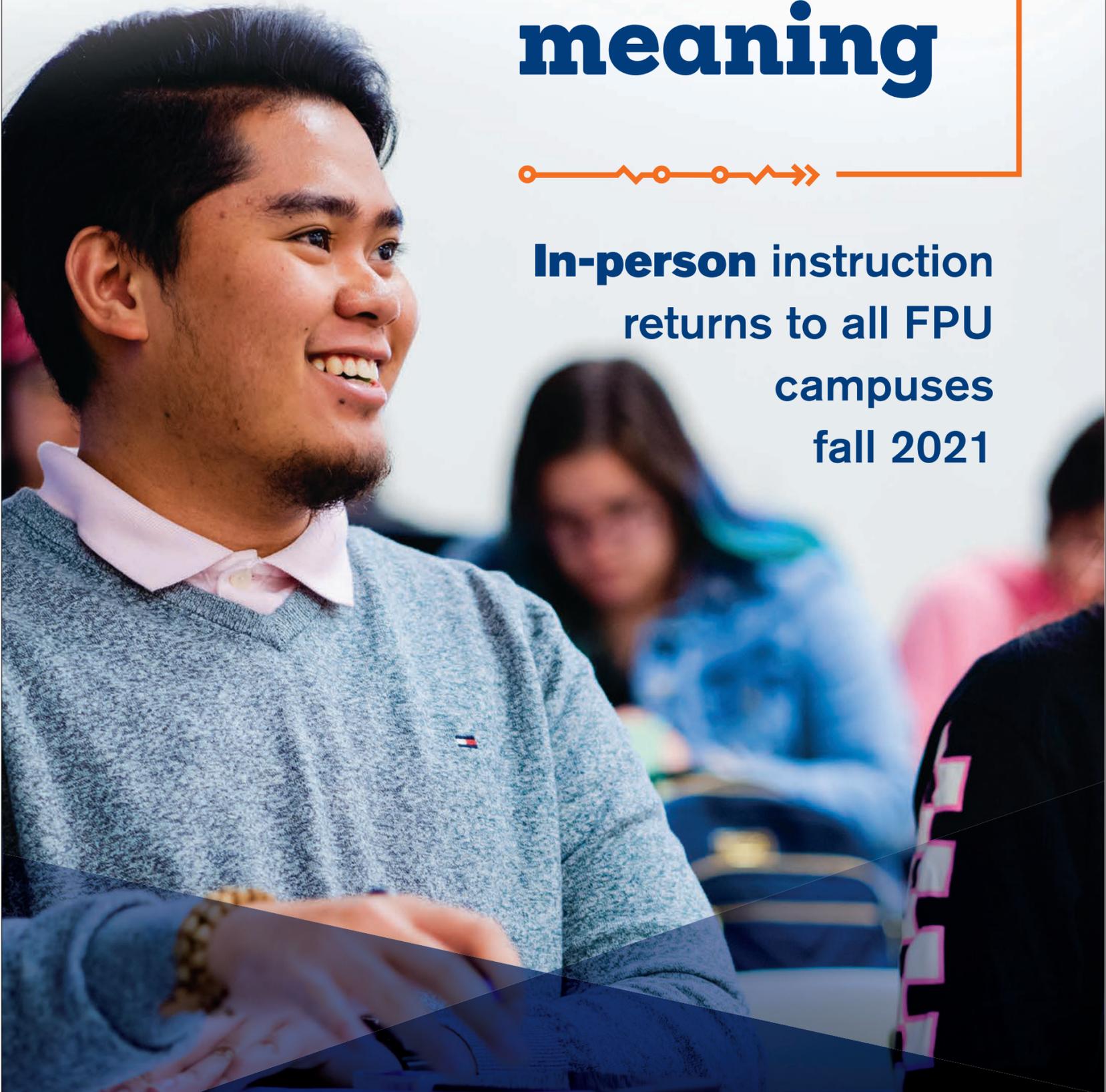


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# ➤ Announcements



Cultural presentations that may include dance and music have been part of Clovis Unified's student leadership conferences.

CUSD Today file photo.

## Conferences available for students

Clovis Unified has opportunities for students to participate in student leadership conferences each year. The district partners with the community in creating these cultural events where students can learn about themselves and one another.

Conferences include keynote speakers and professionals in the community discussing their experiences, answering questions and providing information about college and careers.

**Upcoming conferences are:**

- CUSD Asian Student Success Conference, Dec. 1, at the Reagan Educational Center
- CUSD Transition Student Conference, Jan. 25, at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District
- Fresno County Superintendent of Schools African American High School Student Leadership Conference, Feb. 1, online
- CUSD African American Student

Leadership Middle School Conference, Feb. 8, at the Clovis North Educational Center

■ Officer Jesus Ceron Latino Student Success Middle School Conference, March 11, at Kastner Intermediate

■ CUSD Latino High School Student Success Conference, March 21, Clovis North Educational Center

Clovis Unified's leadership conferences are open to all students regardless of race and ethnicity.

"Knowing each other's culture and diversity is important and can lead to better understanding between students and our community," CUSD Coordinator of Community Relations Saul Salinas said. "It's also vital students learn about paths to success as they consider their futures after high school."

More information about conferences or how to sign up is available through the district's intermediate and high schools' counseling offices.

## Awards televised Nov. 21

Clovis Unified's three nominees for the annual Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Educator of the Year Awards will be among those celebrated in a televised event this month.

Congratulations to Cole Elementary teacher Sherri Johnson (Teacher of the Year) and Clovis West High student relations liaison Richard Delgado (Employee of the Year) who are among the top-three finalists in their respective categories, and to former Clovis High Learning Director and new Principal of Boris Elementary Demetra Vincent-Walker for her nomination as Administrator of the Year.

During non-COVID times, FCSS holds an award gala, but this year and last, the event was moved to the half-hour television broadcast.

The winners of each category for Fresno County will be announced during the FCSS Awards Ceremony that airs at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 21 on ABC30.

## College financial aid window opens, workshops offered

Seniors planning on attending college in the fall of 2022 can submit their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and CADAA (California Dream Act Application) online. The application window opened in October and closes on March 2, 2022. Through these documents, students can learn if they are eligible for financial aid.

The FAFSA is not just for low income students and should be completed by ALL students planning to attend a community college for either a career certificate or transfer degree and by all students planning to attend a four-year university. The application will also be used for college scholarship information and many student athletes are asked to complete the application.

Schools have been holding online workshops to assist families in completing the



Sherri Johnson



Richard Delgado



Demetra Vincent-Walker

FAFSA. Upcoming workshops are on the following dates: Buchanan High, Dec. 1 and Feb. 15; Clovis East High, Nov. 16; Clovis High, Nov. 17 and Dec. 13; Clovis North High, Feb. 22; Clovis West High, Dec. 9 and Feb. 15. Workshops begin at 6 p.m. and links are available through school counseling centers.

The FAFSA online application is available at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>.

## 'Sound of Music' at MET

Clovis East High's Wolfpack Drama presents "The Sound of Music" on stage this month. The musical will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 11-13 and 18-20 at Mercedes Edwards Theatre, 902 Fifth St., Clovis. All health and safety protocols will be followed.

Details and tickets: [cloviseastwolfpackdrama.com](http://cloviseastwolfpackdrama.com)

## 'Christmas Carol' in December

Buchanan High's Bear Stage Production will bring the holiday season to life as they perform "A Christmas Carol" in December.

The play will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2-4 and 9-11 at the Dan Pessano Theater, 2770 E. International Ave., Fresno, located on the Clovis North High campus. All health and safety protocols will be followed.

Details: [bearstage.org](http://bearstage.org)

## CUSD holiday closures

Clovis Unified schools will be closed the week of Nov. 22 through 26 for Thanksgiving Break; and Dec. 20 through Jan. 3 for Winter Break. The CUSD District Office at Herndon and Sunnyside avenues will be closed Nov. 25 and 26, Dec. 24, 25 and Jan. 1.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Online webinar, Nov. 17

The following will be offered by the CUSD Special Education Department's Family Resource Center. For more information or to inquire about an interpreter, 327-8455 or email [familyresourcecenter@cusd.com](mailto:familyresourcecenter@cusd.com).

■ "Sibling Support: Understanding the Sibling's Perspective," 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Nov. 17, online webinar. Free. This workshop is for parents of children with special needs and siblings ages 12 and older and will be presented by specialists with the California Sibling Leadership Network. The discussion will focus on what it means to be a sibling to someone with disabilities and special needs across the lifespan from early childhood to retirement. Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/FRCsibs11-17-21>.



CUSD Today file photo.

Keynote speakers address students, discussing their experiences growing up and sharing inspiring messages about the future.

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# Clovis Unified athletic greats enter CUSD Hall of Fame

CUSD Today

A three-time World Series baseball champion, an Olympic gold medalist water polo coach and a national track record holder are among the Fifth Class of Inductees who recently entered Clovis Unified's Athletic Hall of Fame.



Seven individuals and two Clovis Unified teams were selected for the honor in 2020 from among hundreds of nominations profiling highly accomplished district athletes. But with the COVID pandemic, the induction ceremony events were postponed and instead held last month. Inductees attended their hometown football game the night before the big event, and they were then celebrated at the Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony Oct. 30 at the Shaghoian Concert Hall with on-stage interviews and video profiles of each honoree.

"Each inductee has an incredible story of hard work, determination and discipline as they pushed themselves to be the best they could be," said Assistant Superintendent Steve France who oversees the event. "From their days attending our Clovis Unified schools to their rise as athletic greats, they have had amazing journeys. We are proud to be a part of their story."

The athletes are part of the foundational sports legends upon which Clovis Unified has built and grown its athletic dynasty. The CUSD Athletic Hall of Fame serves to preserve the inductees' important contributions to the district's history and to inspire current student athletes to dream big.

**Mark Gardner - Baseball**  
Representing: 1980s



(Clovis High) Baseball sensation. Had a 24-5 record at Fresno State over two years as a starting pitcher. Drafted in the 8th round by the Montreal Expos. Played 13 seasons in the MLB. Won 11 or more games for the Giants four times and won the World Series with the Giants three times.

**Terry Giffen - Water Polo**  
Representing: 1970s/80s/90s/2000s  
(Clovis High) Water Polo coach extra-



ordinaire. Played water polo at Clovis High. Coached 36 years at the high school level, including two at Clovis West High and 20 at Clovis High. Nine CIF Central Section Championships. 18 Conference Championships. Overall coaching record of 746-266-1.

**Latrese Johnson-Moffitt - Track and Field**  
Representing: 1980s  
(Clovis High) Track standout. At Clovis High, was the 1985 National and State high jump champion, setting the National record (6-2 3/4). 1984 and 1985 All-American. Six-time NAIA National Champion at Azusa Pacific University. Her NAIA National record for outdoor high jump still stands (6-2 3/4).



**Daniel Klatt - Water Polo**  
Representing: 1990s

(Clovis West High) Water Polo player and coach. Was a two-time All-American at Clovis West. 1995 CIF MVP. An All-American at UC Irvine. Olympic gold medalist coach in 2012, 2016 and 2020. As coach of UC Irvine's women's water polo team, has won 7 Big West regular season titles, made 6 NCAA appearances, and has been named Big West Coach of the Year 6 times.

**Rick Merlo - Water Polo**  
Representing: 2000s



(Buchanan High) Water Polo Olympian. CIF Champion at Buchanan in 1997 and 2000. All League, All Section and All-American in high school. Earned All-Conference and All-American honors at UC Irvine. Member of the 2008 Olympic Team that won the silver medal. Played professionally in Europe for three seasons.

► Please see *Hall of Fame*, Page 8

## Does your child or teen suffer from moderate or severe migraine?

**Now enrolling:** a clinical study to evaluate the safety and efficacy of a dissolving tablet called rimegepant in children and teens 6 to 17 years old with moderate or severe migraine. Rimegepant is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the acute treatment of migraine in adults.

To be eligible for this study, participants must:

- Be 6 to 17 years old
- Have a history of migraine for 6 months or longer
- Have a history of 1 to 8 moderate or severe migraine attacks (lasting more than 3 hours without treatment) per month during the past 2 months
- Be able to understand the assent form and have parent(s)/care-giver(s) who can give informed consent

This is not a complete list of study requirements. The study doctor will review all requirements with you and your child or teen.

To learn more about this study, contact:

**Perminder Bhatia, MD**  
**Neuro-Pain Medical Center**  
736 E Bullard Ave, Suite 101  
Fresno CA  
(559) 437-9700  
research@neuropain.com



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## Kids remain the heartbeat of our district

By Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

**T**HIS PAST week I was reminded again that the heartbeat of our district lies in our students, and in particular, the experiences that they have inside AND outside of our classrooms.



Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.

Yes, the pandemic continues to present challenges unlike any we had seen before March of 2020. Solutions for learning and behavioral interventions, staffing shortages, supply chain disruptions and the work associated with quarantines and contact tracing demand the wisdom of Solomon. But, layered with these mountains to be climbed is the beauty and life that have returned to our school campuses.

The last week of October is All Clovis Week in our district. This weeklong celebration of high school rivalry harkens back to the days when there were only two high schools in CUSD, and the battle over – well, everything, between the Clovis West Golden Eagles and the Clovis High Cougars was spirited and intense.

In addition to school-based rallies and competitions on campus that hype up end of the week-games, it is tradition at our district support complex to have each high school decorate the parking lot with blowups of their mascots and bring their drum lines, spirit teams or cheerleaders by to deliver a display of school pride. Their absence last year was one of the painfully stark reminders of all that we worked hard to provide to students in virtual or drive-thru format that couldn't quite compare (no

matter how hard our team worked) to the live, in-person version of education.

To watch the face of a drummer in the midst of a "drum off" is to see intensity and joy in action.

Surrounded by their fellow musicians, wearing vibrant uniforms, and drawing from their instrument a sound that can be felt from your head to your toes, our visiting drumlines are a vivid demonstra-

tion of the value of connecting learning to students' passions.

I see this truth again and again around our campuses, whether during a math or reading lesson in which a teacher taps into stu-

dents' interest in hobbies or popular movies to bring learning to life; or in our student athletes and performers who take seriously their responsibility to meet academic goals to maintain eligibility for their favorite co-curricular.

A culminating event of All Clovis Week since 2016 has been our Clovis Unified Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony, where graduates, coaches and teams from our history are recognized for their feats on and off the competition field. The stories highlight again the value of lessons learned in and out of the classroom, and the heights to which the human spirit can soar when passion pairs with inspiration and talent.

At this year's event, we honored record-holders, multi-medal Olympians, 16-season championship teams, and individuals whose dedication to a standard of excellence helped shape the district's educational philosophies that are at the core of everything we do on a daily basis. If you didn't join us at the Performing Arts Center on Oct. 30, you can still see their stories in our video archive at <https://www.cusd.com/AthleticHallofFame.aspx>. I'd highly recommend finding a few minutes to watch these stories that are part of the fabric of our community.

As our final drumline of All Clovis Week hit its last rim note and the thrum of their syncopated beats resonated in the air, I was reminded once again: this is Clovis Unified, this is why we exist, and this – our students' joy and learning – will always be at the center of everything we do in this district.

*Editor's Note: After keeping her married name throughout her daughters' childhood, Superintendent O'Farrell announced in October that she had taken steps after 20 years as a single parent to return to her family name of O'Brien.*

### LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



Special to CUSD Today

Dry Creek Elementary K-3 SDC student Damien adores his bus driver, Marty Streeter, pictured here, who inspired Damien's recent Halloween costume choice. Damien's mom, Nina Fimbres, says Streeter and Damien's previous bus drivers have been so kind to him and that makes a big difference. Streeter greets Damien with a big smile and always play the music Damien likes. "Riding the bus is his favorite part of the day." Fimbres says she is grateful for the trust the drivers have established with her son and feels their interactions with Damien are essential. "Bus drivers are very important," she says.

**"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier."**

MOTHER TERESA

## Help available for behavior, wellness concerns

CUSD Today

Compiled from CUSD lead psychologists and the CUSD Comprehensive Wellness Project

Two years of pandemic conditions in the world have left everyone suffering the aftereffects, and our students are no different. Whether it is simply adjusting to changed routines or relationships at home or school, struggling with the impact to families of changed work and/or economic circumstances, or differences in friend groups following two atypical years, many students are struggling.

Reports from families, county-wide mental health professionals and educators are that the adjustment process is a challenging one, and at schools we're seeing the effects in an increased number of student behavioral issues, high-risk lifestyle choices, anxiety/depression and social challenges. In response the district is layering even more resources into our current comprehensive wellness and behavioral support structures and taking steps to emphasize resources available to students and their families through our local schools.

The Clovis Unified Comprehensive Wellness Project is the cornerstone of this effort, which began in 2017 and continues to be expanded and refined in response to needs identified on campuses around the district. Wide-ranging resources are coordinated in complement to each other through this work, led by Lead Psychologists David Weber and Jonathan Logan, and supported by hundreds of counselors, Transition Team members, teachers, school psychologists, mental health support providers, attendance and student services liaisons, and others spread across the district's campuses. In addition to building coping skills and total health, the project is also directed at developing resilience and problem-solving capabilities in youth.

You can learn more about the project at <https://www.cusd.com/ComprehensiveWellnessProject.aspx>. Layered into our project are intentional structures and

programs at every school site in addition to the valuable one-on-one relationship of a classroom teacher and individual student that includes:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) – a three tiered system to support social-emotional and behavioral needs of students at the school site
- Mental Health Support Providers – located at every 7-12 school site
- Social-Emotional Learning – programs like the Positivity Project, Character Strong and Second Step in place at every school site in the district
- Clovis Support and Intervention (CSI) Groups – trained educators leading student support groups around a number of topics
- Equity and Advocacy Groups – working across the district to identify needs around equity and advocacy for minority groups
- All-4-Youth Mental Health Clinicians – a district-wide community partnership to support those experiencing difficulties at school and at home
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) – school-based program focusing campus systems promoting positive behavior intervention before a challenge exists. Twenty schools in CUSD have been recognized for model PBIS programs.
- Behavior Consultation Team – specially trained behavior consultants work onsite to support students and families experiencing extreme behavioral challenges that interfere with a student's ability to succeed in school.
- Suicide Prevention Training – all educational employees have been trained in signs of suicide risk and resources available if a student appears in need, along with additional in-depth training for employees with specialties in counseling, psychology and intervention including ASIST and SafeTALK courses. The district also has an intentional re-entry process for students who have been hospitalized for mental health

issues to ensure a positive transition back to school.

■ Peer Counseling – trained students who meet with peers to support them around a number of social-emotional issues facing young people

Parents interested in learning more about these resources or tapping into them for challenges students are facing at home, can contact your local school.

In addition to the above elements of the district's Comprehensive Wellness Project, we take advantage of opportunities like the recent Red Ribbon Week in late October, to facilitate conversations with students and families around societal issues like substance use. As Fresno County continues to see a rising number of deaths related to the synthetic drug fentanyl, our high school teams used this year's Red Ribbon Week to screen the ABC30 documentary "Killer High" with all students.

In addition to watching the video, schools encouraged parents to also screen the piece and have conversations at home about the extreme effects of opiate drugs. School staff was prepared with facilitated student conversations along with school and community resources at the ready given the serious subject matter.

Families concerned about a child's possible substance use can turn to school and community resources available to help. In addition to a school's counselor, psychologist or nurse, members of the Comprehensive Wellness Team are available. In the community, resources like Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health (800-654-3937), California Department of Healthcare Services Substance Abuse and Referral Line (800-879-2772), or Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Support (800-662-4357) can be helpful to families as well.

The challenges facing students today need not be overwhelming, but can definitely feel that way. If your child is struggling, we encourage you to reach out for the helping hand your Clovis Unified team is ready to offer.

### — ABOUT US —

CUSD Today, Clovis Unified's good news publication, is sent directly to the homes of all CUSD parents and staff, as well as district supporters. In an effort to unify the CUSD community, the newspaper highlights the achievements of Clovis Unified students and staff; profiles new and updated Governing Board policies; and shares general news and information happening within the district.

**Circulation:** 34,000.  
**Funding:** All costs associated with producing, printing and mailing CUSD Today are entirely funded by our advertisers. To show your appreciation of their support, we ask you to consider patronizing these businesses and services as the need arises.

**Story submissions:** Please submit all ideas to the Site Coordinator at your school. Please contact your school to find out who your Site Coordinator is. Editorial deadlines are two weeks before the publication date. We do our best to include as many submissions in each issue as our editorial space will allow.

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**PATRIOTS DAY IN CUSD**



“  
Your  
video  
has  
made  
me  
smile.”

– FDNY Battalion Chief  
**James Halaby**  
Upon seeing  
Clark Intermediate  
students’ project



Michael Weinberg

# Clark students make special 9/11 connection with FDNY

CUSD Today

Clark Intermediate leadership and drama teacher Jill Mele connected her students to the 9/11 story by sharing with them a film about Michael Weinberg, one of the 343 FDNY firefighters who died that day. She had her students research each firefighter and make posters that Mele then used to create a short tribute film.

She shared the project with the Fire Department New York (FDNY) and, said Battalion Chief James Halaby: “It was so sad to see, but I’m so glad I did because it reminded me of how proud I am to have known such brave men.”

“The kids in your class are so lucky to have done this project. Lucky because they are all aware of fellow Americans who would have sacrificed their lives for any of them if they needed it. You don’t have to ask for proof because these firefighters have already proven it.”

Halaby said he planned to forward the video to dozens of FDNY firefighters who continue to cope with the tragedy. “I’m still sad at times, but your video has made me smile. Thank you so much!” he said.

The connection to Weinberg for Mele was unexpected. Mele was a film student in college when the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks occurred, and she saw a national news report with a woman named Patricia mourning the loss of her little brother, Michael Weinberg. Mele also had a little brother named Michael. Through the years, Mele would remember Michael’s family on 9/11, and about three years ago decided to dig deeper and learn more.

As she researched, she discovered Weinberg had been part of a film project in the early 1990s that had never been completed. She got the idea to share the film with her students but couldn’t find it. “Going totally out of

character for me, I decided to message Michael’s sister, Patricia, on Facebook,” she said.

Patricia not only responded about the film and helped her get it, but Mele and Patricia have since become a good friends. It makes sharing the events of 9/11 with her students even more meaningful to Mele.

“As an educator, this is my greatest hope. I want students to connect and feel the events that day – not just learn about them,” Mele said.

To view Clark students’ tribute to the FDNY 343: <https://youtu.be/afa1igvrZTY>

To view 9/11 Michael Weinberg film: <https://tinyurl.com/MichaelWeinberg>

### More Patriots Day tributes

Across the district, school and clubs honored the fallen victims of 9/11 on what was the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attack on American soil.

Students at Clovis East High arranged 2,977 American flags on campus to honor the lives lost. The JROTC Cadets, Fire Tech and Criminology students conducted a memorial ceremony as part of their normal flag raising detail. In some classes, an educational webinar by the National 9-11 Memorial and Museum was viewed and discussed.

Buchanan High held an early morning ceremony that honored eight fallen heroes from Buchanan in the Middle East, first responders and those lost on 9/11. The BHS Young Americans for Freedom Club created a flag display in the school’s amphitheater.

The Clovis North Chamber singers, led by director Heather Bishop, performed at the California 9/11 Memorial Ceremony in Clovis.

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Photo special to CUSD Today. Century Elementary sixth-grader Jacquelyn Franksen shares her Mexican culture during the school's Multicultural IDAC Night.

## Multicultural idea blossoms at Century Elementary

Century Elementary's annual multicultural event has evolved since six years ago then fifth-grade student Janus Kaur asked then new principal Brion Warren about introducing some cultural events at the school. She was a part of the Principal's Advisory Council (PAC), a group of diverse students who then together decided to host a cultural fashion show.

The first fashion show had students walking on stage in traditional dress and students performing cultural dances that inspired the audience. The following year the PAC decided to introduce a poster project for all students to put on the cafeteria walls to be seen during the show.

## Science – in the balance



### ■ New textbooks being piloted in K-12

Students in Mountain View Elementary teacher Debbie Lewis' third-grade class recently investigated balanced and unbalanced forces during a "Table Top Tug of War" experiment from a new textbook Lewis is piloting.

This is a big year of piloting science textbooks with books being explored in grades K-12.

"We have two teachers per school site piloting brand new science books, labs and experiments across the district," said Janet Samuelian, CUSD Administrator of Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction. "Materials are getting our kids very excited about science!"

Of the experiment in Lewis' class, "kids loved it," she said. Pictured are Mountain View third-graders Ariana Ruiz and Ibraheem Abdul Hamad tugging against Galileo Gsell as Samantha Robinson observes.

The student body seized the opportunity and excitement spread throughout the community. "So many family members attended the event that year that the PAC requested the daytime event remain, but also to include

an evening multicultural activity," Warren said.

For the last few years, Century's Multicultural IDAC night has grown and is similar to a science fair. Students create large story boards about their culture, often dress up in traditional wear, and even bring food that they have cooked with loved ones to share. Students present their story boards to the attendees, and selected students perform dances with this year Folkloric and Hindu dances spotlighted.

Janus, now a sophomore at Buchanan High, recently returned to Century and discussed how the evolution of the program at Century had grown.

The multicultural night was well received by the community who was amazed by this year's 44 student presenters. "They were articulate, dedicated and shared a tremendous amount of knowledge," Warren said.

Information from the night will be used

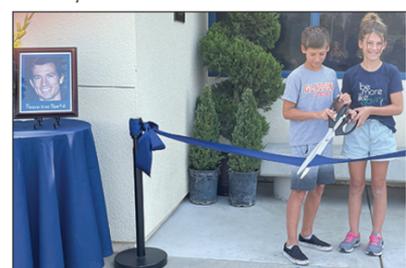
in a video to be shown later this year during Century's Multicultural Fashion Show.

"Students look forward to both events every year," Warren said.



## Bulldogs show good behavior

Cole Elementary students celebrated "Passport Day" to promote Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at their school and each student received a Cole Bulldogs spirit shirt. During the whole school event, students toured the campus and at destination spots, a staff member discussed behavior expectations, like "Be Positive" and "Say please and thank you." Students got a sticker at each stop to put on their PBIS Passport that they filled by the end of the tour.



## Gladding strong at FW

On the third anniversary of the loss of a much-admired Clovis Unified educator, students, staff and family of Gavin Gladding came together to dedicate an area at Fort Washington Elementary in his honor.

At the time of his death in a hit and run accident, Gladding was the vice principal of Fort Washington. The former teacher and Peace Corps member was known for his positive attitude about life and his focus on improving the world around him, one act of kindness at a time.

Two friendship benches in a shady spot facing the fields have been placed in his honor along with a commemorative plaque naming it as The Gladding Gathering Area. His children cut the ribbon to mark the official opening.



## Sierra Vista Elementary third graders show appreciation

Students in Kimberly Ballinger's third-grade class at Sierra Vista Elementary surprised custodian Steve Soma with a huge "THANK YOU!" recently. The class was inspired by a Positivity Project video that focused on "Other People Mindset," and they chose to celebrate Mr. Steve for everything he does for the students and campus. The class made signs and the teacher even baked his favorite dessert – a fresh peach pie – in his honor.

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# Hall of Fame: Inductees attended hometown football game night before big event

FROM PAGE 4

## Courtney (Scott) Deifel - Softball Representing: 1990s



(Clovis High) Softball catcher. In high school, earned All-League, All Valley and All State honors. Was a 2-time All-Pac 10 player and 2003 All-American at UC Berkeley. Member of the 2002 UC Berkeley National Championship team.

Played professionally in Japan League from 2004-2006. 2021 SEC Coach of the Year at University of Arkansas.



## 1979 Clovis High School Boys Golf Team Clovis Unified

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## 1999 -2014 Clovis West High School's Boys Swim and Dive Teams



16 consecutive CIF Central Section Championships. Produced 78 All-Americans.

## Daniel E. Kaiser, Ed.D. Doc Buchanan Award



During his 38-year career in Clovis Unified, Dan Kaiser was instrumental in establishing and perpetuating a legacy of athletic and academic excellence.

In addition to coach, his roles included English teacher, Learning Director, Deputy Principal, Principal, Area Administrator, Assistant Superintendent, Associate Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.

In high school, Dan was a standout athlete earning recognition as an NYL All League basketball player, third in the state for 120-yard high hurdles, and a B'nai B'rith

honoree. At UCLA, he set a school record in the 120-yard high hurdles. In 1969, Dan held the world's sixth fastest time in the 110-high hurdles.

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## Robotics: Chaos Crew formed at Fugman Elementary

FROM PAGE ONE  
quarters for the secret challenge. Originally the global project was to begin the following year in 2020 but had to be paused due to COVID. The teams began working on the challenge this February.

LEGO sent each team member a LEGO Technic Volvo A60H set, which is a replica of the world's largest articulated hauler, the Volvo A60H. Teams had an unlimited amount of LEGO bricks, and LEGO motors at their disposal, but all the parts needed to originate from that specific set. Teams were guided by a LEGO and Volvo engineer, and students were given cameras to document the process. It took until June for the young scientists to

conquer the challenge.

There were long nights at the drawing board, building and testing what their designs could do, and then sharing those tests around the world with their other teammates.

Says Hamzah to the other teams during a Zoom call shown in the film, "So, what is up guys? It's me Hamzah and we are here with Chaos Crew and we are going to do a test. So let's hope it works guys."

He shows three small LEGO truck haulers tied to a desk chair, with Chaos Crew's Tyler sitting in the chair for extra weight.

"Let's do this," Hamzah says as the motors are switched on in the hopes the robotic trucks will pull Tyler.

Tyler and the chair didn't move that time. But the kids

made adjustments and tried again.

"It's mind-blowing that children so early in their engineering journey managed to complete such a complex engineering task so well," said Libor Udržal, Master Builder and Engineer at the LEGO Group. "Even with my 20 years of experience, I would have felt daunted by the task in hand."

Said Volvo Designer Frida Jönsson, "The children showed incredible resilience and tenacity. Despite their plans literally turning to ashes on the first attempt, the teams showed that with collaboration, teamwork and a good dose of creativity, you can always find a way to succeed."

"I would be lying if I said I wasn't moved to tears by

the pride and sheer joy you could see from the teams when they realized their hard work had paid off."

Here's the project by the numbers:

- 728,168 LEGO Technic Elements were used
- 1,920 Control+ XL motors were used

- 2,000 hours of build time by LEGO engineers to build the students' design at the LEGO Factory

- 10,000 Newtons of pull force created using LEGO Technic elements

The documentary can be viewed at: <https://youtube.com/Tr-8nmpuyFI>.

LEGO has a page dedicated to this project on their website: <https://www.lego.com/en-us/about-us/news/2021/september/lego-technic-move-it-campaign>.

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## Grant:

FROM PAGE ONE  
throughout the district about plant science, food safety, and healthy eating through farm tours and an Agriculture Fair at the Ag Center.

The 2021 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funds innovative local and regional farm to school projects in nutrition education, sustainable food production and procurement, and high-quality student engagement through experiential learning. This year, 60 projects totaling \$8.5 million in grants were awarded.



CUSD Today file photo from pre-COVID  
A Clovis East High School ag student harvests lettuce that was used in a Farm-to-Table Dinner event in Old Town in 2019.

## District school psychologists honored

### Board hears latest COVID updates

By Kelly Avants  
CUSD Chief Communications Officer

Clovis Unified's Governing Board heard updates Oct. 6 about recent announcements that:

Governor Newsom has directed the California Department of Public Health to add COVID vaccination to the list of required vaccinations for students to attend in-person classes at public, private and charter schools through regulations added to the health and safety code. (Learn more on [cUSD.com](http://cUSD.com).)

Changes in contact tracing requirements for schools have been implemented following data that does not indicate a need to conduct contact tracing if only one case is reported in a classroom where students were masked and continue to remain asymptomatic. Therefore, so long as that is the case, contact tracing will be conducted at the time a second case is identified in a classroom/co-curricular program where the second case

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is not traced to an outside source. It is anticipated that this change will help reduce the amount of contact tracing and modified quarantines.

**In other action, the board:**

- Approved the Comprehensive Coordinated Intervening Services Plan as required by the California Department of Education.

- Approved a resolution authorizing the refinancing of general obligation bonds to reduce the amount of interest repayments.

- Awarded a lease-lease-back contract with Harris Construction Co. for the construction of the Terry Bradley Educational Center, the district's fourth educational center expected to open for intermediate school students in 2025.

- Authorized the execution, delivery and sale of certificates of participation totaling \$105 million to finance capital projects and approving related documents and actions.

- Approved new job de-

scriptions for the Financial Analyst II and Financial Analyst III resulting from a recent third-party study of the district's business office that included recommendations to restructure some staffing structures. The total cost of both phases of the restructure is expected to result in additional expenses annually of just over \$10,000.

- Adopted amended Board Policy No. 4118 – Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Actions – Certificated Employees to reference employee groups.

- Approved an amendment to the district's Section 125 Flexible Benefit Plan to include group hospital indemnity benefits as an eligible pre-tax expense.

- Held a public hearing on the sufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials, and later adopted a resolution certifying that the district has sufficient materials for the 2021-22 school year.

Complete board minutes and agendas are available at [cUSD.com](http://cUSD.com). The next regularly scheduled meetings of the Governing Board will be Nov. 10 and Dec. 10.

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