

CUSD Today

April 2023

Clovis Unified School District — DEVELOPING STUDENTS IN MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

Volume 25, No. 9

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

Dr. Corrine Folmer to be next superintendent

“I will continue to put my heart and soul into Clovis Unified, our employees, our community and most importantly – our students.”

**Corrine Folmer, Ed.D.
Incoming Superintendent**

CUSD Today

The Clovis Unified School District will be under the leadership of longtime educator Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., beginning July 1 as she becomes the next superintendent. Dr. Folmer, who is a CUSD graduate, was named to the position by the Governing Board March 20 following an eight-week long search to replace retiring Superintendent Eimear O’Brien, Ed.D.

“It is a humbling honor to become the superintendent of our unique and high performing school district, and to serve our incredible community of employees, students and their families,” Folmer said in addressing the board.

“Years ago, as a student in this district, I was the great beneficiary of the core values established by (founding superintendent) Dr. Floyd Buchanan and lived out by my own teachers and coaches. Over our 63-year history, our governing boards, employees and the community have continued to uphold and honor these values.

“As the superintendent of this great district, I will be committed to those same core values and to the aims that have long served our



Photo by P.J. Lippert/CUSD Today

The Clovis Unified Governing Board announced Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., left, as the next superintendent following the upcoming retirement of Superintendent Eimear O’Brien, Ed.D., pictured at right, at the end of the school year.

district well: to set as my first and central priority our students and their academic, physical and social emotional success; to be a wise steward of our limited financial resources and to encourage efficient and effective use of every

dollar; and finally, to treat our people – the team that serves our students – as our most precious resource of all.”

Dr. Folmer is an experienced educational leader whose career spans both elementary and secondary educational roles. During a 20-year career in Clovis Unified, she has served as a teacher, guidance instructional specialist, learning director, elementary principal, and assistant superintendent of the Clovis East Area. Since 2019, Dr. Folmer has been the district’s Associate Superintendent of School Leadership where she oversaw all of the district’s schools. Prior to working in Clovis Unified, she was a teacher and resource specialist in Sierra Unified School District.

Said the Governing Board of her selection: “Dr. Folmer fosters a culture of teamwork and openness everywhere she goes. She leads by valuing, hearing and motivating those around her. The effectiveness of her approach is reflected in the substantial improvement of student outcomes during her leadership of the Clovis East area. Her breadth of experience and the respect she enjoys throughout our organization

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FARM FUELS FUN & FACTS



Clovis East High ag students gave farm tours to hundreds of CUSD elementary students – like Every Diaz, right, and Maddon Eisele and Barrett Johnson, above – to learn about animals, plants and ag mechanics.



Photos by Kendra Burt/CUSD Today

Satoshi Hirayama Elementary

New school bears name of CUSD educator, war veteran, MLB player

■ Clovis Unified’s 35th elementary school to open in Fall 2024

Clovis Unified School District’s next elementary school will be named after Satoshi “Fibber” Hirayama, who was a long-time Clovis Unified teacher and leader, and ground-breaking Japanese American.

The CUSD Governing Board, which gathered suggestions from the community and staff, announced the name March 15 for the school that is under construction at Fowler and McKinley avenues and will open in August 2024.

Hirayama worked for the district from 1965 to 1991 and passed away in 2021. The board said he was selected in part because he represents those educators who work in the classroom, those who lead schools and departments, and the district’s classified staff whom he worked with as a human resources leader under founding Superintendent Floyd “Doc” Buchanan. He



CUSD File Photo

was a teacher at Clovis High School, the first principal of Gateway High School, and devoted a large part of his career to helping disenfranchised students overcome challenges and excel.

As a Japanese American who was interned during WWII and overcame

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Foundation awards \$200,000 in grants

Across the district, thousands of students are enjoying engaging programs thanks to annual grants from the Foundation for Clovis Schools that this year are funding over \$205,000 in classroom, school and social emotional wellness projects.

Just over \$155,000 went towards projects supporting classroom and school efforts related to art, literacy, science and technological advancement programs, agricultural development, math programs, collaborative learning, and much more. Nearly \$50,000 is funding social emotional wellness efforts across the district.

The Foundation, a nonprofit group that raises money to support Clovis Unified students and educators, annually invites proposals for projects that enhance and support learning in innovative and creative ways.

“We are here to make a difference, to help close the gap Clovis Unified experiences as the lowest funded district in the area, and to let students and educators alike know we value them,” said Foundation Chairperson Mike Fennacy.

For the current 2022-23 school year, the Foundation has awarded 34 grants – 27 of which are classroom

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Class of 2023

GET READY TO CELEBRATE!

Clovis Unified will proudly graduate more than 3,000 students as they complete their senior year. Friends, family and faculty are invited to join the celebrations during the upcoming Class of 2023 graduation ceremonies.

- Clovis West High – 7:30 p.m., May 30, Veterans Memorial Stadium
- Buchanan High – 7:30 p.m., May 31, Veterans Memorial Stadium
- Clovis North High – 7:30 p.m., June 1, Veterans Memorial Stadium
- Clovis Adult School – 11 a.m., June 3, Mercedes Edwards Theatre
- Alternative Education – 6 p.m., June 5, Mercedes Edwards Theatre
- Clovis Online School – 7:30 p.m., June 6, Lamonica Stadium
- Clovis East High – 7:30 p.m., June 7, Lamonica Stadium
- Clovis High – 7:30 p.m., June 8, Lamonica Stadium

Driving Success

“Tell the truth, treat people like you want to be treated and whatever it is you do, do it well.”

Michael Miller
Clovis West High CTE automotive technology instruction and 2023 California League of Educators Teacher of the Year

For complete story, see Page 8

► Announcements



Native American Night

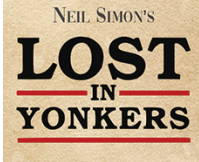
The sounds of drumming and singing from a Native American drum group recently filled the room at the Clovis Unified 10th Annual Native American Indian Program Family Night. Community members gathered to eat dinner, visit and celebrate their shared culture. Local Native American artist Bobby Von Martin spoke with the families about his life story and how art became his path to healing after overcoming obstacles. He showed some of his paintings and the stories behind them, both historical and personal. Von Martin then led a watercolor painting lesson and shared some tips and tricks for creating colorful artwork. Throughout the evening, presenters reminded the community that they are all “one big family” gathered together for an evening of cultural celebration.

Get your tickets!

The final two major high school theater productions of the year are coming right up. For more information or tickets, visit CUSD.com/tickets.

■ **‘Sister Act’ – Clovis West High’s Theater West** will perform the musical comedy “Sister Act” in April. Based on the movie with the same name, the play follows the adventures of Deloris Van Cartier, an aspiring singer who witnesses a murder and has to go into protective custody as a nun. The musical will be at 7:30 p.m. April 20-22 and 27-29; and 2 p.m. April 22 at the Mercedes Edwards Theatre, 902 Fifth St., Clovis.

■ **‘Lost in Yonkers’ – Clovis North High Bronco Drama** presents this coming-of-age tale of two brothers who must temporarily live with relatives after their mother dies and their father tries to put their life back together. The play will be at 7:30



Roof comes down at Sierra Outdoor School

At Clovis Unified’s Sierra Outdoor School, the massive amounts of snowfall in March proved to be too much for the camp’s gymnasium that collapsed from the inclement weather. Camp had been canceled at the time due to the weather and road closures, and no students were present when the collapse occurred.

Since 1970, thousands of elementary students gathered, played games and visited in the building that is part of the district’s Sonora campus that conducts science camps for Clovis Unified sixth graders and also students from around the state.

On CUSD social media, news of the gym – that for 50 years was the place for

special childhood memories to be created during teacher-student games, late-night skits, dances and more — evoked many reflections:

“That gym was an icon! The acoustics, musty fragrance, and views out the back windows will never be forgotten.”

“I remember going there in the late 70s as a student, and I went there a few years ago as the teacher. The smell of the gym was exactly the same. Great memories!”

“That gym was nostalgic and a great place to play fun and games!”

Camp was back on schedule the following week, with plans for using other buildings and areas for recreation.

p.m. May 4, 5 and 10-13; and 2 p.m. May 13 at the Dan Pessano Theater, 2770 E. International Ave., Fresno. Details: www.thebroncodrama.com.

LCAP review

At a meeting in March, parents from every school joined Clovis Unified School District site and administration staff to learn recommended student programs for the upcoming school year as part of the Local Control and Accountability Plan.

LCAP is a state-required plan describing how the district will use funds received from California’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) to provide learning and wellness action and strategies for services primarily supporting foster youth, English learner and low-income students

The recent recommendations and priorities for Clovis Unified were developed fol-

lowing months-long research and meetings with staff and the community reviewing available funding, current supports and services, and recent California Dashboard assessment findings of the district.

There will be a public review and commenting period, and the final recommendations will be presented to the Governing Board for action in late May and June. Learn more: cUSD.com/lcap

Interested in Adult Education?

Clovis Adult Education, a service of Clovis Unified School District, will hold its Career Technical Education Showcase at 10 a.m. May 16. The event will provide current and prospective adult students information about the many opportunities. Booths will include information about: Administrative Assistant, Home Health Aide, Medical Assistant-Front Office, Nurse Assistant, Vocational Nurse,

Financial Aid, Workforce Connection, Cal-WORKS, State Center Adult Education Consortium, Marjaree Mason Center, and Community Outreach. The showcase will be held at the school, located at 1452 David E. Cook Way, Clovis. Details: clovisadult.cUSD.com.

Caution: Deadly drug

Clovis Unified has partnered with local health and law enforcement agencies in efforts to raise awareness about the deadly effects of fentanyl. The prescription drug normally used under a doctor’s care is being made illegally and sold by dealers, in many cases targeting youth. The unregulated version of the opioid – even just a small amount – can be deadly by unsuspecting users. Fentanyl is the leading cause of fatal overdose in Fresno County, according to officials. Learn the facts: cUSD.com/ComprehensiveWellnessProject.aspx; fresnocounty.ca.gov/fentanyl; and opioidsafefresno.org.

Class of 2024 graduation dates

Hey juniors, mark your calendars! The graduation schedule for the Class of 2024 has been announced. Graduation ceremonies will be held May 29, Clovis High; May 30, Clovis East; May 31, Clovis Online School; June 4, Clovis North; June 5, Clovis West; and June 6, Buchanan. Adult Education will celebrate June 1; and Alternative Education June 3.

Special Education

Exceptional Person Awards

The Special Education Exceptional Person Awards for this school year will be presented April 26 at a reception honoring Clovis Unified employees and volunteers. The event starts at 7 p.m. in the CUSD Professional Development Building, 1680 David E. Cook Way, Clovis. The award recognizes those who work with or support students with special needs and whose qualities include devotion, hard work, creativity, integrity, initiative, compassion and talent.

Advisory meeting, May 17

The Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will meet at noon, May 17 at the CUSD Professional Development Building, 1680 David E. Cook Way, Clovis.

The meeting topics will be “Annual Service Plan Review, SPED Budget & Student Voices.” For information call 327-8455 or email familyresourcecenter@cUSD.com.

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Students honored for resilience, strength

Foundation awards Students of Promise scholarships



2023 Students of Promise

CUSD Today

Seventeen high school students who have made education a priority in the midst of facing heart-wrenching challenges – such as death of family members, housing insecurities, or abuse – were celebrated as Students of Promise March 22 by the Foundation for Clovis Schools.

“Unfortunately, these teenagers have experienced things no one their age should ever have to experience. The perseverance and courage they have shown as they keep showing up to school, as they keep trying their best, is so inspiring. They likely do not even realize how amazing they are, and we want them to know their efforts and tenacity are noticed,” said Foundation Chairperson Michael Fennacy.

Each year the Foundation for Clovis Schools, a nonprofit organization that supports Clovis Unified School District, selects 16 students in their junior year to receive a \$2,000 Students of Promise scholarship upon completion of high school and enrollment in further education. This year, a tie resulted in 17 students being recognized.

“The scholarship is our way to let these students know that we see such incredible promise in them, and that we believe in them and in their future. We want to encourage them to keep on striving for their dreams,” Fennacy said.

The gala event honored the 2023 Students of Promise recipients, and included a red-carpet walk, candelabra dinner and presentation ceremony.

Students are nominated for the scholarship by their school counselor, selected by a Foundation committee, and surprised with the news in late January.

“Not only is she excelling, but what she has gone through, she had to probably work three or four times harder than a normal student,” said Transitions Student Relations Liaison Shane Semien of an honoree. “She

shows that with any amount of dedication and hard work, you can surpass and become anything you want to be. She’s very firm and very sure of what she wants. There’s no wavering in that.”

“He has overcome a lot,” said Transitions Leader Ashley Wilson-Camy of an honoree. “That’s one of the great things about him. He doesn’t let the circumstances of his story take over.”

Keynote speaker Tanner Trutna was a 2014 Student of Promise and Clovis High graduate who has returned to the district and is a first-year teacher of a sixth-grade class at Dry Creek Elementary.

“When we go through struggles, we tend to believe that we are the only ones in our specific situation and we tend to feel invisible to the outside world,” he told the recipients, reflecting on challenges he has faced throughout his school years and beyond. “Each one of you sitting here has faced the trials bravely with confidence and passion. And this undeniable fact is why all of you should feel so incredibly proud of yourselves.”

This year’s Students of Promise event was supported by Premier Sponsors: Assemi Group; California Health Sciences University; Educational Employees Credit Union; Elite Team Offices; FBB Bank; Golden State Steel; Granville Homes, Lingenfelter Land Communications; Pro-Screen/Fan In a Box; and Contributing Sponsors: Central Valley Community Bank; JD Food; Precision Engineering, Inc.; and Wild Electric.

The Foundation for Clovis Schools’ Students of Promise scholarship program began in 2001 as a way to recognize at-risk students who have been attending school on a regular basis, showing responsibility and succeeding academically while at the same time facing challenging life circumstances outside of school.



Kylie Berry
Clovis High School



Rosemaé Carpenter
Clovis West High School



Andrew Carrillo
Buchanan High School



Daischa Cooks
Clovis High School



Dylan Garza
Clovis North High School



Athena Heather
Gateway High School



Regina Herrera
Buchanan High School



Chrysta Hubbard
Clovis East High School



Shalaya Klein
Gateway High School



Camila Lemus
Clovis North High School



Bobby Liles
Clovis East High School



Valeria Lopez
Clovis East High School



Rome Mancilla
Gateway High School



Angel Mendoza
Clovis East High School



Maya Tudman
Clovis East High School



Melyana Uribe
Clovis North High/
Clovis Online

*One recipient is not media cleared and not pictured.



Clovis Community College



Summer Scholars College Academy

The **Clovis Community College Summer Scholars College Academy** offers students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades an opportunity to enroll in college courses and receive college credit.

BENEFITS:

- FREE tuition.
- EARN CSU/UC General Education transferable college credit while in high school.
- COMPLETE up to two courses during the 6-week summer session (June 20, 2023 – July 28, 2023).

APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION DUE DATES

- The Summer/Fall 2023 Online Application will open on 04/01/23
- Summer 2023 High School Enrichment Packets will be accepted starting on 04/17/23. Registration begins 04/28/23.
- Fall 2023 High School Enrichment Packets will be accepted starting on 04/24/23. Registration begins 05/09/23.

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- First-generation students’ rate of transfer to a 4-year institution
- Latinx students’ rate of transfer to a 4-year institution



Details:



Questions: Contact your high school counselor or enrichment@cloviscollege.edu

Clovis Community College
10309 North Willow Avenue | Fresno, CA 93730 | (559) 325-5200
www.cloviscollege.edu



Foundation: Technology, bikes, art supplies among grants

FROM PAGE ONE

grants for rigorous academic projects and interventions, and seven that support students' social and emotional health.

CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL GRANTS

Alta Sierra Intermediate

■ **Advanced Vocabulary Development:** Upgrades a web-based program from the free to the premium version, to increase advanced vocabulary development for AP 8th graders. The premium package supports weekly vocabulary practice/quizzing for students, and data on student progress for teachers.

Boris Elementary

■ **BOLD 3D Maker Lab:** Equips Boris campus with a 3D printing lab that will be used by both students and staff to support learning and positive behavior. Students will sharpen their technical skills and problem-solving skills by creating models for themselves. Staff will be able to create personalized incentives for students showing positive behaviors and create three-dimensional model visual aids to support student learning.

Century Elementary

■ **Leveled Readers for Kids Who Love to Read:** Promotes literacy by providing books appropriate to individual learners' needs and grade level for teachers to use in small groups.

Clovis Adult Education

■ **Developing Creativity in Lifelong Learners:** Curriculum and resources for a new class choice in the field of Art/Art History at Clovis Adult School. Will fulfill state elective requirements for Clovis Adult School students to achieve their high school diploma, in collaboration with special education/adult transitions students.

Clovis Community Day School (CCDS)

■ **CCDS Math Department Intervention Tools Grant:** Supplies students with calculators that perform advanced calculations for at-risk students to use in their math classes. Engages students in additional strategies for comprehension math concepts both in their academics and in real life.

■ **Community Clothing:** Equips the school with clothing for students who need it due to dress code requirements. Ensures students do not miss critical learning time in class, while providing clothing that instills confidence in themselves and pride in the district.

■ **Forging the Future:** Purchase of a Glowforge printer and supplies, to engage high-risk students in standards-based lessons and career technical skills.

Clovis East High School

■ **Access to Digital Modeling to Address NGSS Performance Expectations in Chemistry and Physics:** Purchase of iPads for Chem-

istry and Physics classes to increase availability of technology, and access to Next Generation Science Standards software, modeling, and curriculum for all students.

■ **Timber Blossom Floral Walk-In Cooler:** Purchase and installation of equipment for the floral design Career Technical Education (CTE) program. Will allow students to learn all aspects of running a floral design business and expand access to professional opportunities in floral design.

■ **Wolfpack Fuel Station:** Equipment and supplies needed for a student nutrition startup in the Timberwolf athletic program. Resources to store, prepare, and serve high quality, nutrient-dense snack and hydration options to student athletes.

Clovis High School

■ **Fine Art for Students:** Provides easels and tables for an art classroom's specialized workspace which will allow students to create more technically complex pieces on a larger and competitively professional scale.

Clovis West High School

■ **AP Art History Field Trip:** Helps art department meet the college board requirement for AP art students to experience works of art and architecture in person at the Norton Simon Museum in Southern California.

■ **Collaboration Classroom:** Provision of equipment such as chairs and desks for the collaboration classroom, which houses both Peer Counseling & AP Biology. Will allow the classroom space to be modified to meet the needs of each class.

■ **eGlass for a Superb Class:** eGlass technology tools provide a new kind of whiteboard resource which allows teachers to interact with students in the classroom without needing to turn their back to the class. Use of a transparent board, a camera, and a projector creates an innovative way for teachers to engage their students in classroom instruction.

■ **Flexible Seating in the Intervention Classroom:** Furnishes a new dedicated classroom for the academic intervention program. Will provide at-risk students in this program with resources for workstations to fit the intervention students' learning needs.

Fort Washington Elementary

■ **Family "FUN"-damental PLAY:** Provides resources to create a dramatic play and literacy center in a kindergarten classroom to promote and develop student awareness of emotions and social interactions through literature and imaginative role-play.

Freedom Elementary

■ **Reading Simplified:** Accelerating Student Achievement through Phonics-Based Instruction: Provides teachers with the Reading Simplified program, supplying teachers in Professional Learning Communities with research-

based professional development and instructional strategy systems to differentiate and improve reading instruction for students.

Gateway High School

■ **Gateway Bike Project:** Gives at-risk students opportunities to apply academic principles and collaborate while building bicycles. Every bike built will be given to elementary schools in the district to serve as prizes for positive behavior on campus.

■ **Increase Physical Education Curricular Activity Offerings:** Supplies equipment for three new P.E. activity units which assist in development of students' physical strength, overall fitness and management of stress.

Kastner Elementary School

■ **Rock, Paper, Scissors, Tchouk!:** Athletic equipment to introduce students to an inclusive team sport that improves student self-confidence, cooperation, and fitness levels. Tchouk is a new sport that focuses on inclusion and teamwork.

Liberty/Clovis West Area Elementary Schools

■ **Robots and Computer Programming in the Elementary Classroom:** Purchases Dash Robots and technology kits to build them. Will introduce students to the fields of coding and programming skills, lessons in STEM, and encourage creative problem solving.

Lincoln Elementary School

■ **Lincoln Library Lions:** Purchase of grade-level reading resources for preschool through sixth-grade students. Increases the availability of reading materials that meet state standards and curriculum-supportive titles that engage and interest a diverse student population.

Reagan Elementary School

■ **Reagan Library Technology Project:** Provides iPads for the library for the implementation of an advanced reader program. Encourages high-performing readers to continue to develop literacy skills by matching reading material to the reader's skills.

Reyburn Intermediate School

■ **Reyburn Soundboks System:** Flexible and portable sound equipment to be used by students and staff during student clubs and campus events to encourage participation and promote school spirit.

Woods Elementary

■ **Dash Robots for Elementary Advancement in 21st Century Learning:** Robots for K-6 students to use at five elementary schools to develop early understanding of computer programming, coding, STEM fields, and other standards-based learning goals.

Young Elementary

■ **Destination Imagination 3D Printer & Supplies:** A 3D printer and supplies to be used by the school's Destination Imagination team to create competitive entries for three

categories of the Destination Imagination competition. Encourages and develops creativity, problem solving, and deepens student understanding of engineering and physics.

■ **YES Mobile STEAM Carts:** Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) mobile carts equipped with engaging learning activity projects for use in K-6 classrooms will allow for inquiry and exploration experiences.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLNESS GRANTS

Clovis North High School

■ **Macy's Parade Travel Enrichment Package:** Supports Band and Color Guard students representing the Clovis Unified community at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, while increasing students' exposure to professional-level experiences.

Clovis Community Day School (CCDS)

■ **Mind, Body, and Spirit:** The Clovis Way: Fitness equipment for at-risk students to promote positive behaviors and improve physical and mental health.

Clovis Elementary

■ **STEM Bins to Increase Engagement and Inclusion:** Resources to provide academic engagement opportunities for students with social, emotional and/or behavioral disorders by implementing hands-on STEM activities differentiated by grade level.

Dry Creek Elementary

■ **Breathe for Change:** Certification training to allow additional instruction for teachers and students around movement and mindfulness designed to reduce behavior problems and stress, and increase emotional intelligence and physical health.

■ **Student Book Publishing Project to Benefit Our Community:** Supports a school-wide literacy and creative writing project that will take place over the course of the school year. Students and teachers will coordinate on a published creative writing project that will result in a children's book available through a national retail chain.

Liberty Elementary

■ **Social Emotional Collaborative Learning:** Resources and materials to create collaborative learning "electives" for students that enrich learning, create opportunities for collaborative work, and build confidence.

Tarpey Elementary

■ **Promoting Literacy and Positive Behaviors Using a Book Vending Machine at a Title I School:** Purchases a book vending machine containing books within the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports system to promote positive behavior and increase access to books at home.

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Staying true to core as we lead forward

By Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.
Superintendent

IT IS hard to believe that we are approaching the conclusion of another school year, with just about a month remaining before our Class of 2023 will walk across the graduation stage. This year's graduates will hold an especially poignant place in my heart given that this class also represents the last I get to congratulate in my role as Superintendent of our special school district.



Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.

With my retirement date nearing, I've found myself reflecting a lot on leadership, continuity, and how we continue to protect the core organizational values of Clovis Unified that have resulted in success for our students for more than 60 years. Clovis Unified, in the face of change and evolving pressures from outside of our community, must remain at our core an organization that:

- Puts kids first in every decision,
- Sees education as a partnership with parents and our community,
- Lives out a belief that it's people, not programs who make the positive difference in the lives of our students (a belief which compels us to put a priority on hiring, developing, sustaining and valuing the best people for our team)

If all of that is to remain in place into the future, then leadership matters. And, not only does it matter, it is critically important. Recognizing the truth in that statement, over the past eight years, our district has been engaged in a process to define what leadership looks like in Clovis

Unified and to develop curriculum that is used to build up strong leaders within our organization.

This effort is not about "cookie cutter" or stagnant leadership, it's about building capacity within individuals to be intentional about applying a unique and well-proven educational philosophy and leadership

framework to contemporary challenges that face us today, and to ensure that the Clovis Unified team remains focused on a cycle of continuous improvement far into the future.

The Governing Board's recent appointment of Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., our current associate super-

intendent of school leadership, as the district's next superintendent has many positive implications for Clovis Unified and was an affirmation of our leadership development efforts. Not only is Dr. Folmer a graduate of our school district, she can point to her own positive experiences in our schools as a model for

the standard of care for students, breadth of opportunity, and academic excellence that remains our standard today.

She was selected among a strong pool of candidates (both internal and from across California), and her appointment provides the district with continuity that is important given the excellent work underway in our classrooms to return students to pre-pandemic levels of achievement.

My experiences with Dr. Folmer tell me that she will be a leader who holds a high standard for herself and others, and that she will value our team.

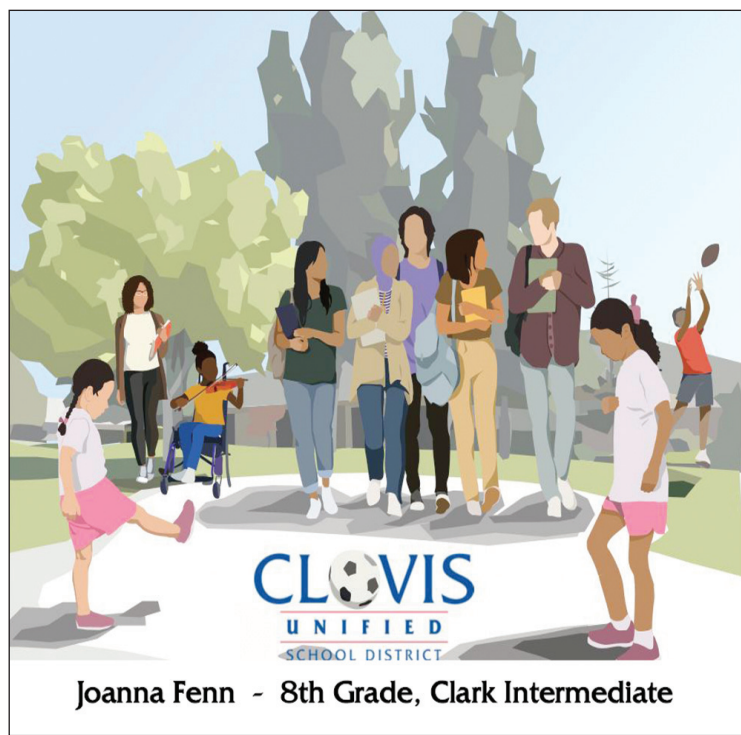
Whether it's the classroom teacher delivering instruction, the bus driver ensuring students arrive to school and home safely, the custodian ensuring school is clean and inviting, or the payroll specialist who makes sure employees are paid accurately and on time, or hundreds of others, there is a team of people behind the success of every student. Our founding Superintendent Floyd "Doc" Buchanan said it perfectly when he said, "It's people not programs who make the positive difference for kids," and I know that Dr. Folmer holds that belief as well.

I am also confident that our team is one that is worthy of believing in, as is the greater cause in which we are engaged on behalf of our students and our community. Belief in a cause worthy of our best is powerful, and will continue to propel this district and our worthy cause forward.

During my very first state of the district community address in 2017, I referenced a quote by C.S. Lewis that has been on my mind a lot lately. "Change isn't progress if you lose your core," Lewis said, and he was correct. Change is coming, in fact, I would say change is constant. This upcoming change in leadership upon my retirement, however, is one we can be sure will keep the core of Clovis Unified strongly in place.

LESSONS

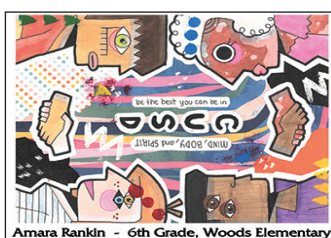
Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



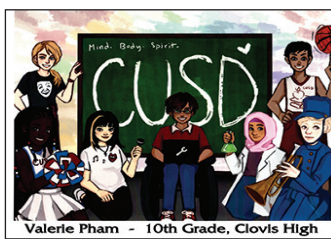
Joanna Fenn - 8th Grade, Clark Intermediate



Emmy Lovik - T-K, Ozae Elementary



Amara Rankin - 6th Grade, Woods Elementary



Valerie Pham - 10th Grade, Clovis High

Special to CUSD Today

The results are in! The Clovis Unified School District 2023-24 Budget Cover Art Contest winners were announced March 29 at the Governing Board meeting. The overall winning design by Clark Intermediate eighth-grader Joanna Fenn will be used as cover art for the district's budget book, and the work of runners-up – Emmy Lovik, Ozae Elementary, transitional kindergartener; Amara Rankin, Woods Elementary sixth grader; and Valerie Pham, Clovis High sophomore – will be section fronts within the book.

"Creativity is intelligence having fun."

ALBERT EINSTEIN, PHYSICIST

Crystal Award celebrates winners' innovation, care

Twenty-four Clovis Unified employees recently received a Crystal Award, the district's highest employee award for exceptional work in the preceding school year. They were nominated by their peers or supervisor in the fall and selected by employee judging panels to merit the top recognition.

The award is given to those employees whose passion, innovation, dedication and dynamic work ethic far surpasses their job description. These are people who in tangible, measurable ways selflessly help students reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit. They go above and beyond what is expected, and they do so without prompting. They lead and inspire others by their humble nature and heart-felt examples.

In this issue of CUSD Today, we conclude our ongoing series in alphabetical order highlighting the honorees. For complete video biographies and presentation, see cusd.com.

By Carol Lawson-Swezey
Special to CUSD Today

Aaron "Coach Pen" Penberthy

Kastner Intermediate



Aaron Penberthy, known as "Coach Pen," wears many hats at Kastner Intermediate including coach, PE teacher, assistant athletic director and mentor.

Coach Pen helped develop Kastner's athletic program systems that help coaches organize their team roster, athletic events and transportation needs. Since implementation, in the 2021-22 school year, athletic participation increased by 52% for girls and by 43% for boys, with a total of 95% female and 97% male participation!

When the campus needed an intervention teacher last school year, Coach Pen volunteered to add that to his already full playbook. He used his coaching skills to make meaningful connections, to carefully de-escalate emotionally charged individuals and situations, and to coach students toward calm-

► The Crystals

A full list of this year's winners and videos from the awards presentation can be found online at cusd.com



ness and positive change.

He will go the extra mile for his kids, like when he saw one student wearing shoes worn out and too small, so he got new shoes for him from the LA Lakers.

Coach Pen takes his support home with him, not only raising his own children, but also he provides a great experience for exchange students that his family hosts annually.

Just recently, a former student asked Coach Pen to officiate his wedding. Always a teacher, Coach Pen not only accepted the honor, but also provided marriage counseling for the young couple so they'd have a successful start.

Joaquin Rivera

Pinedale Elementary



Pinedale Elementary fourth-grade teacher Joaquin Rivera is a champion for kids. Known for his booming voice and outgoing, positive attitude, Rivera is nicknamed "The Energizer." He bounds out of the Pinedale office daily telling all who are around him: "Let's go! Let's make it a great day!"

Rivera seeks out students who are struggling either socially, emotionally or academically and encourages participation in a sport, resulting in student transformations - from challenged and reserved individuals into confident, thriving students. Participation in extracurricular activities has grown yearly under his leadership.

Using his personal example as a troubled youth who strug-

gled in school, Rivera mentors students to persevere through life's challenges. He begins each school day having his students chant the classroom mantra: "Do something today that your future self will thank you for!"

Rivera initiated "Tie it up Tuesdays," where his kids are to wear a tie. He often provides the ties himself and sees the intentional wardrobe selection as a way to show how to dress for success and develop a positive growth and achievement mindset.

Rivera has created a sanctuary in his classroom that is open before and after school and during the lunch hour. Students feel safe and valued, and often former students seeking advice or help stop by. Kids know he will always be there for them.

Lizette Ruiz

Clovis West High



As one of the first people who a newly enrolled English Learner student meets on the Clovis West campus, Bilingual Instructional Assistant Lizette Ruiz has been an essential educator for 22 years. She works one on one with each student, and she supports their growth through the acquisition of English and semiannual testing. She also proctors her students' English Language Proficiency Assessments of California. Lizette follows up with each child to ensure continued success!

During her career, Ruiz's diligence has resulted in successfully reclassifying 575 students, an average of 27 each year. In the 2021-22 school year, she reclassified 40 students, which is a testament to her care and time connecting with students. She also makes sure ESL parents have an understanding of the English Learning path and benchmarks to proficiency.

Because of Ruiz' attention to detail, ability to connect with students and families, and her diligent documentation practices, she also mentors bilingual instructional assistants around the district. She even consults other school sites on their processes surrounding English Learners.

► Please see *Innovators*, Page 9

— 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.

CUSD Today Staff

Publishing & Editorial
Clovis Unified School District
1450 Herndon Avenue
Clovis, CA 93611
Telephone (559) 327-9094
cusdtoday@cusd.com

Kelly Avants, APR
Chief Communications Officer
327-9092

Patti J. Lippert
Managing Editor
327-9094

Kellie Feramisco
Advertising Manager
327-9093

Verna Garcia
Graphic Designer

CUSD Governing Board Members

David DeFrank President 327-9000	Hugh H. Awtrey Vice President 437-6580	Steven G. Fogg, M.D. Clerk 269-7000
Deena Combs-Flores 273-9824	Yolanda Moore 437-6580	Clinton Olivier 313-6065
Tiffany Stoker Madsen 392-1014		

CUSD Administration

Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D. Superintendent 327-9100	Norm Anderson Deputy Superintendent 327-9107
Robyn Castillo, Ed.D. Associate Superintendent Instructional Services 327-9373	Corrine Folmer, Ed.D. Associate Superintendent School Leadership 327-9350
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Spelling V-I-C-T-O-R-Y

Bud Rank Elementary fifth grader Leo Wu is headed to Washington D.C. thanks to a jicama. That's the word he spelled correctly after nine competitive rounds to win Fresno County's spot in the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Leo looked a little confused the following day when his school presented him as a trophy one of the large root vegetables to celebrate his accomplishment. "It's jicama" a classmate can be heard saying on a video of the presentation. "Oh," Leo said looking puzzled at the beige root, and then he smiled. He carried around his jicama trophy with him the rest of the school day.

The fifth grader who plays sports, chess and piano said he watched spelling competitions online after a suggestion from his mom, and he decided to give it a try. He has an online coach and spends at least an hour a day studying words.

He qualified to be one of Clovis Unified's two elementary participants in the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools' Spelling Competition held in March where he competed against three dozen other spellers and finished as a co-champion. That victory advances him to a state competition, and it also entered him into a four-person runoff for the Scripps National Spelling Bee spot against the two co-champions from the FCSS elementary and intermediate school bees.

"I was so excited to win it. Then I found out I was an automatic qualifier for the Scripps National Competition and then found out I was the youngest winner in Fresno County," Leo said. "It just kept getting better after I won. It has been a dream of mine to go to Washington D.C. and compete.



"I'll get to meet my coach in person for the first time. I have only met her on Zoom."

The national bee will be held the end of May. "Spelling bees help students increase their vocabularies, develop self-confidence, and improve communication skills," said Amy Alvarado of FCSS. "While it is a competition, the environment of the Bee is supportive and friendly, and contestants often walk away with new friends."

And sometimes, with a new jicama. Congratulations to the other Clovis Unified student participants: Young Elementary's Kayleb Hodanu (fourth place, elementary); Alta Sierra Intermediate's Xara Hussain (co-champion, intermediate; second place, Scripps qualifier); and Granite Ridge Intermediate's Phong Nguyen-Tran (third place, intermediate).

Pawig, Alto II, Clovis East High School; Peyton Slaven, Soprano I, Clovis North; Meghana Vidyam, Alto I, Clovis North; Kathryn Wynkoop, Soprano II, Clovis North

■ All-State High School SATB Honor Choir: Francesca Campos, Alto II, Clovis North; Matthew Cereno, Tenor II, Clovis North; Mattox Vang, Bass I, Clovis North; Micheala Wenger, Alto I, Clovis North; Blythe Griffin, Soprano I, Buchanan; Emilia Kolbert, Alto II, Buchanan

■ All-State High School TTBB Honor Choir: Owen Cortes, Tenor II, Clovis North; Eric Cota, Bass II, Clovis North; Lance Elep, Tenor II, Clovis North; Peter Kildirian, Bass II, Clovis North; Jacob Wynkoop, Tenor I, Clovis North.

True gold at Woods

History came to life for Woods Elementary fourth graders recently, when their teachers worked with The Cranium Company and turned the campus into a Gold Rush experience for the day. The students and staff both dressed up in western wear for the event: "It truly felt like we were in 1849 doing all the things a gold miner would be doing," said teacher Heather Devany.

Students panned for gold, made a poke bag to hold their gold, wrote in Chinese calligraphy and learned how to shoot a bow and arrow. They also visited a pioneer store and decided what items they would need to purchase for a successful journey west.

Students enjoyed the experience, too. "I liked how we made the little bags of leather and then we got to keep our gold inside," said fourth-grade student Emerson Macdonald.

So dramatic!

Buchanan High took the top prize Sweepstakes Award in the annual CUSD Drama Festival held recently. Scores were given in different categories of the event, which included improvisation, monologues, two-person scene, costume design, scenic design, small musical and large musical numbers. The student or group with the highest score in each category was also awarded a trophy.

Congratulations to Jack Hammerstrom, Clovis High, monologues; Mitchell Henderson and Katelyn McGary, Buchanan High, two-person scene; Kalos Cluff, Katelyn McGary, Mitchell Henderson, Taylor Brunzell, Madyson Wright, Stella Freeman, Gianna DeLeon, Kynlee Gleason, Dodge Hyatt and Sarah Reed, Buchanan, small musical number; Buchanan drama, large musical number; Colin Cameron, Avery Chevalier, Gianna Howell, Jade Lounehom, Reed Lucas and Dominic Parlavechio, Clovis West, improv; Emily Talesfore, Buchanan, scenic design; and Jocelyn Olmos-Rodriguez, Clovis East, costume design.



Fancher Creek cares

Fancher Creek Elementary students, families and staff, and the Clovis East High Asian Club, recently participated in the school's second annual "Show Your Love" community cleanup event. More than 100 volunteers met at the school on a Saturday morning to pick up trash in the surrounding neighborhood. In just a couple hours, they picked up 942 pounds of trash – 112 pounds more than last year's event! Their efforts did not go unnoticed: a construction crew working nearby donated a pizza lunch for the volunteers to show their appreciation.

"It brings me such joy to see our students and their families serving their community," said Fancher Creek Principal Carisa Cordova.

Beautiful sounds from CUSD

Several Clovis Unified student musicians were selected to

take part in state groups that performed at the 2023 California All-State Music Education Conference, CASMEC. The annual three-day event brings music educators together to inspire and learn from one another as well as celebrate music as an essential part of a full education.

Clovis Unified musicians selected to perform as part of all-state music groups are as follows:

■ All-State Junior High School Symphonic Band: Joshua Boldt, baritone saxophone, Clark Intermediate School

■ All-State Junior High School Concert Orchestra: Ananya Chava, violin, Granite Ridge; Dylan Groger, violin, Granite Ridge; Natalie Han, cello, Granite Ridge; Kassidi Nguyen, viola, Granite Ridge; Marian Pineda, viola, Granite Ridge

■ All-State Junior High School String Orchestra: Andrew Fisher, bass, Granite Ridge

■ All-State High School Jazz Band: Jack Sullivan, trombone, Buchanan; Nathan Puopolo, bass, Clovis West

■ All-State High School String Orchestra: Jason Yang, viola, Clovis North; Abhishek Yarenahalli, viola, Clovis North

■ All-State High School Symphony Orchestra: Atom Paz, violin, Buchanan; Sophia Brown, French horn, Clovis High; Frank Buma, bass, Clovis High; Henry (Junghun) Kim, violin, Clovis North; Baylin Lamee, French horn, Clovis North; Sonia Rao, violin, Clovis North

■ All-State High School Concert Band: William Damrose, trombone, Buchanan; Oscar Alvarez, trombone, bass, Clovis High; Jason Hilario, Bb clarinet, Clovis East; Luke Blancas, flute, Clovis West

■ All-State High School Wind Symphony: Nicholas Gabrielson, percussion, Clovis North

■ All-State High School Symphonic Band: Gavyn Tapp, Bb clarinet, Clovis High

■ All-State Junior High/9th Grade SATB Honor Choir: Alta Sierra, Dominic Olaes, Baritone

■ All-State High School SSAA Honor Choir: Rebecca Aparicio, Alto II, Clovis North; Lucia Magallo, Alto I, Clovis North; Crystal Henderson, Alto I, Clovis High; Samuelle

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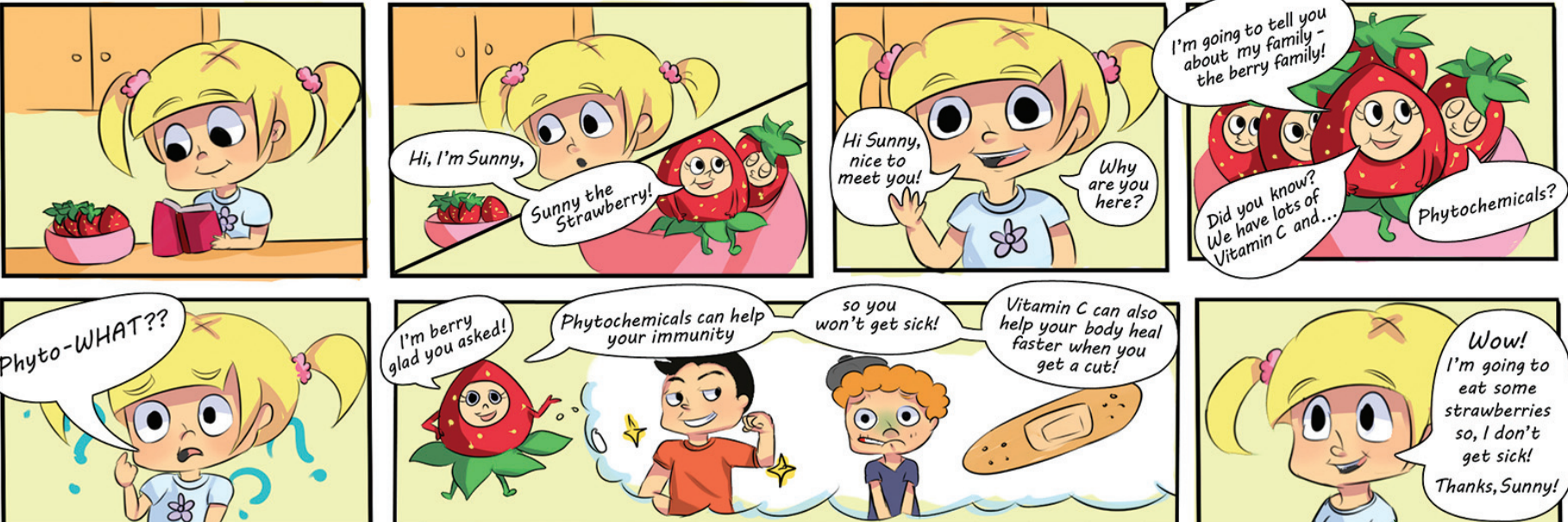
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Summer learning plentiful in Clovis Unified

■ Sign-ups coming up for art, science, sports and more

CUSD Today

The school year isn't over yet, but it's time to start planning for summer! Clovis Unified has several opportunities for kids to enjoy a variety of engaging activities in June and July that will begin taking signups soon. The following district programs are available:

CART Summer Academy

CART – the Center for Advanced Research and Technology that is a joint facility of Clovis and Fresno unified school districts – offers a Summer Academy for kids to invent, experiment, create, learn and have fun. Children who will be in fourth through seventh grade in the fall of 2023 can attend the one-week session that is from 8 to 11:30 a.m. June 12 to 16 at CART, 2555 Clovis Ave., Clovis.

Hands-on project-based learning experiences offered are: Builders Workshop, Game Design, Lemonade Stand – Microbusiness, Mini-Med School, Optical Illusions, Pixel Playground, and Robots, Rockets & Airplanes.

Registration opens April 12. The academy costs \$199 before June 2, and \$250 after that date. The fee includes a T-shirt.

Details: CART.org or call 248-7400.

CTE Summer Academy

The College and Career Readiness Department will offer the Career Technical Education (CTE) Summer Academy for the third year. Held on all high school campuses, the popular, free program will feature several three-week courses in June and July for Clovis Unified students entering 6th through 8th grades in the fall. Offerings will include:

■ **Engineering Essentials at Buchanan High:** Students will explore the world of engineering! During the course students will learn foundational skills relating to multiple fields of engineering and build projects in groups and teams to develop their skills. (June 20 – July 6)

■ **Graphic Design for Beginners at Buchanan High:** Students will learn the basic elements of graphic design like color use, principles of design, typography, writing for media and basic photography skills. They will create several projects including logo design, event poster and a thematic portfolio that can be accessed both digitally and in print.



■ **“Carpentry” at Clovis High:** Students will learn safe and efficient use of woodworking procedures used by professional furniture and cabinet makers, life skills for maintaining equipment at home and ethical work practices.

■ **3-D Design Workshop at Clovis High:** Students will be introduced to basic design concepts and discover how to use Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software to model and 3D print their own creations. Students will create unique solutions to design prompts that will challenge them to think creatively and work collaboratively. This course combines creative and technical skills, so it appeals both to those who like the arts and those who prefer math and science.

■ **Laugh n' Learn at Clovis North:** Students will have time to unplug and participate in activities that promote teamwork, games, crafts and lots of FUN!

■ **The Art of Storytelling at Clovis North:** Students will learn the basics of story writing and storytelling, plus the elements of plot structure and character development to develop themes that are important to the development of Child and Adolescent Literature, and they will create their own mythological story. At the end of the session, you will receive a professionally bound copy of your story!

■ **“A Look into Health Careers” at Clovis North:** Students will learn all about Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Automatic External Defibrillator, and First Aid, and they will have the opportunity to earn certification in these skills from the American Heart Association. Other skills acquired will be vital signs and signs, symptoms and response to drug overdose. (Three options of a one-week class: CTE Session #1: June 12-15; CTE Session #2: June 20-22; CTE Session #3: June 26-29)

■ **Intro to Teaching at Lincoln Elementary:** Participants will learn about important aspects of education including teaching techniques,

how schools are run, how students learn, and the many diverse career opportunities in the field of education. In addition, participants will gain experience working with elementary age students as tutors for Lincoln's summer school program.

■ **Wheels and Reels at Clovis West:** Join the immersive Cars and Video Production program, where students will learn the basics of auto maintenance and hone storytelling skills through film production. Get hands-on experience repairing classic cars while also mastering the art of video creation. Each program will be held from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Thursday, and there will be no classes held on June 19 or July 4. Space is limited.

Details: Watch for the full listing of courses, dates and enrollment information at cusd.com/CTEsummer.

Sports & Recreation

The CUSD Clovis Community Sports and Recreation Department offers youth programs for children ages 3 to 12. Youth programs are offered in softball, t-ball, baseball, rugby, futsal and flag football. Year-round competitive and recreational programs are offered in gymnastics, swimming, dance, cheerleading, volleyball and water polo. The department also offers area camps that include sports, band, music, cheer, computers and a variety of other activities.

Details: See upcoming summer offerings at ClovisRec.com or call 327-9225.

Summer Expanded Learning

Summer Expanded Learning Program (formerly Summer Campus Club and ELOP) will provide an enriching full-day experience for students currently enrolled in Clovis Unified TK-sixth grades. Each week of the six weeks of the program will have its own theme with activities, field trips, guest speakers, projects and more specifically planned to engage students

in learning while having fun!

Some activities will include Bricks 4 Kidz, The Bubble Guy, STEM projects, arts and crafts, and a visit to the Chaffee Zoo.

The Expanded Learning Summer Program will be held at selected elementary school sites Mondays through Thursdays (all CUSD is closed Fridays), June 20-July 27, and they will be closed for June 19 and July 4 holidays. The fee is \$50 per day and free to students from Title I/CEP schools or who have qualified for a fee waiver. A light breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack is provided.

Applications will be available online via Parent Connect, starting at 5 p.m. May 5. Enrollment is on a first come first serve basis.

Details: cusd.com/CampusClub

Summer Fun

The Summer Fun program, coordinated by CUSD's Community Education, offers a variety of classes for children ages 4 to 13. The program is open to all students in this age range, regardless of their home district. Class registration begins online May 1.

Summer Fun classes will be held Monday through Thursday, June 20 to July 20, from 8 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. at Century Elementary. Kids can take one class or up to four. Most classes are \$199 and meet twice a week for two hours.

The program offers a variety of fun learning opportunities including arts, crafts, computer, cooking, foreign language, math, music, drama, reading, writing, science, sports, dance and much more. Some of the highlights this year include: Easy Meals, No Bake Desserts, Ultimate Frisbee, Watercolor Painting, Playwriting and much more. There are also opportunities for kids to take Scuba Diving classes!

Course catalogs will be distributed to all CUSD elementary schools during April and will also be available online.

Details: Summer Fun, ClovisCommunityEd.com/summer-fun, 327-2880 or email SummerFunInfo@cusd.com.

Summer Public Swim

A designated Clovis Unified swimming pool will be open to the public this summer. Cool off at Clovis West High, to be open from 12:30 to 2:20 p.m. on all Wednesdays from June 7 to July 19.

Day usage fee is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children 12 and younger. Children must be at least 13 years old to use the pool without an attending adult (18 or older).

Academic summer school enhances education

CUSD Today

Academic summer school in Clovis Unified strives to meet the needs of students and families by addressing learning loss or providing further educational opportunities.

“Clovis Unified offers summer school for students who need additional instruction or practice to master grade level standards at the elementary level, and we will provide options for students with impacted schedules to take classes for original credits as well as students who need credit recovery at the secondary level” said CUSD Summer School Administrator Karen Boone.

Elementary grade levels (TK-6)

The elementary summer academic program will be held Monday through Thursday, June 20 (June 19 is a holiday) to July 13; there will not be class July 4. Each school area will operate one elementary site, and some areas will operate two to serve the district's students. The summer school programs for elementary and intermediate grades are designed to provide students with targeted, meaningful, and engaging instruction for essential skills in English and/or math. English Learner students will attend the summer school site for their area. All students at all elementary sites will receive daily language acquisition lessons designed to help all students master their English skills.

Summer academic programs for students in grades TK to sixth will be held at:

- Tarpey Elementary: all Buchanan area students
- Jefferson Elementary: students who attend Clovis, Gettysburg, Jefferson, Mickey Cox and Sierra Vista
- Weldon Elementary: students who attend Cedarwood, Red Bank and Weldon
- Fancher Creek Elementary: students who attend Fancher Creek, Orazo, Reagan, Freedom and Young
- Temperance-Kutner Elementary: students who attend Boris, Temperance-Kutner and Miramonte



► Academic Summer School

- **Elementary: June 20 to July 13**
- **Secondary: June 20 to July 27**
- **Transportation: Available to enrolled students. See cusd.com/summerschool for schedules (available at the end of May).**
- **Campus Catering: Free breakfast, lunch available to students under 18 on school days, from Summer Seamless program.**

■ Mountain View Elementary: all Clovis North area students

■ Lincoln Elementary: students who attend Lincoln, Liberty, Fort Washington, Maple Creek and Valley Oak

■ Pinedale Elementary: students who attend Pinedale and Nelson

Space at each site is limited. Students with at-risk grades will receive priority enrollment. Parents may contact their school regarding availability and site location for their school area.

Secondary grade levels (7-12)

Summer School for secondary students will be held at three sites this year: Kastner for Clovis West area students; Clovis North for Clovis North area and Buchanan area students;

and Clovis High for Clovis High area and Clovis East area students. In-person credit recovery and original credit classes will occur from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., June 20 to July 27. A summer school program for current seventh- and eighth-grade students will be held at all three sites and include lessons in English, math, leadership and study skills. Eighth-grade students will also take health. Independent Study summer school will operate Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and students' appointments will be scheduled by their independent study summer-school teacher.

A Newcomer's Academy will be held for English Learner students in grades 7 – 11 at Clovis North. Students will receive instruction in English skills and art; students will receive 5 units of fine arts credit in addition to boosting their English skills through targeted instruction based on their English learner level.

Due to the highly impacted courses and short duration of the summer session, strict discipline and attendance policies are enforced daily. For a student to receive credit for a summer school course, he or she must attend the entire summer school session and not miss more than one day of instruction. One absence is permitted. On the second absence of a semester class, the student will be dropped from the summer school program.

The purpose of the summer session for grades 7-12 is two-fold. First, the summer session provides high school students with the opportunity for “credit-recovery” to master the essential elements of incomplete/failed courses. Original credit summer school for high school students who will have an impacted schedule in the fall will continue to be available both in-person and through independent study class for those who meet requirements. If a student meets the criteria, high school counselors will enroll the student into summer school during the registration process.

To register or receive more information, contact your student's high school counselor.

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Clovis West teacher is league's educator of year

Clovis West High Career Technical Education automotive technology teacher Michael Miller learned recently he won the California League of Educators State Educator of the Year. As part of the CTE program, he teaches students professional skills alongside automotive skills.

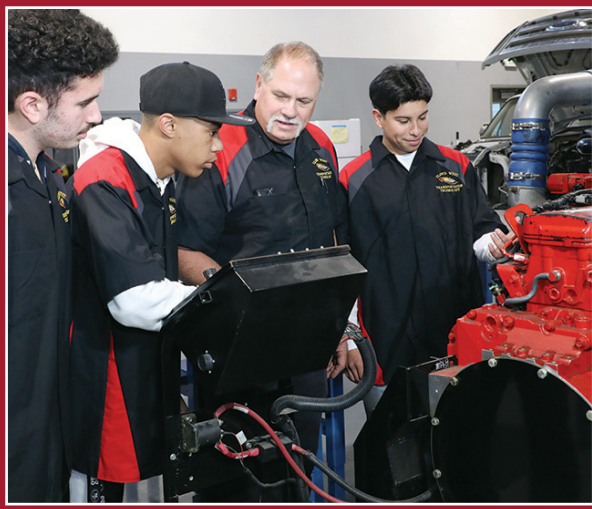
"I'm humbled, honored, shocked, glad and thankful" Miller said of the state award. The mechanic who worked in the auto industry for three decades said as a teacher he set out to "build the best auto program there was." He never expected to be recognized in the educational world.

During the pandemic, Miller expanded the CTE Transportation program for when students returned. It now includes a full diesel shop and courses focused on alternative fuel vehicles and asset management. This helped the program reach more students and created a real-world atmosphere in the classroom.

His favorite part of the job is working with kids doing what he loves. He was inspired to become a teacher by his own auto technology teacher back in high school, Michael Brandt.

Miller still keeps in touch with Brandt who visited Miller's classroom last school year and was one of the first Miller called to let him know about the award.

"What should be said about him cannot be put in words. Mr. Miller is by far the best teacher I have ever met. He is like Ketchup - he goes with everything," said CW sophomore Matthew Toste. "This classroom is like a family to me, and I can come here with any burden and it will be lifted off my shoulders. You can talk to



Q: What was your very first job?
A: Delivering newspapers and working at A&W when I was 13 years old.

Q: You have owned two automotive shops. Why did you become an automotive teacher?
A: I took a CTE auto technology class 40 years ago as a student and had an amazing teacher. I always knew I wanted to work in the trades, but I began to think about teaching someday. ... After 35 years in the industry, I liked the idea of giving back and teaching students who want to learn hands-on, students who maybe don't fit into a box. Those are my people!

Q: What have you learned working with high school kids?
A: There's several things!
 ■ You don't always need to be so serious.
 ■ Laugh when you get the chance.
 ■ Ask them, and they'll tell you their dreams. Once a relationship is built, then it isn't so hard to teach them.
 ■ Be a father to kids who need direction and reassurance. Make an impact on their lives.

Q: What are you known for at Clovis West?
A: My class is a family atmosphere. Everyone is welcome who is ready to learn. And, I always have a desk full of snacks for my students.

him like he's your father" Miller said he enjoys mentoring his students and works to create a welcoming environment. He teaches his students about being on time, being professional and being of good character, while also teaching them the parts and mechanics of a car.

"Tell the truth, treat people like you want to be treated and whatever it is you do, do it well," he advises. Students also say he is funny. "Every day he has a new joke. He is the most positive person," said CW junior Evan Durazo. "Mr. Miller and this class make a difference in my life."

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Innovators: Highest employee honor presented

FROM PAGE 5

A colleague said it best, “What made Lizette unique and effective is that she has never seen herself as part of a program. She sees herself as part of an educational team – a teacher and mentor with her students.”

Susan Rutledge
Business Services



Susan Rutledge has a way with numbers! Clovis Unified’s Assistant Superintendent of Business Services leads directors responsible for departments that include Campus Catering, Transportation, and Budget and Finance.

Modeling high standards and a strong work ethic, Rutledge encourages her directors to approach their roles with innovation and a drive to excellence. She seeks ways to alleviate the district’s low per-pupil funding. In 2021-22, this included navigating new CARES Act and state one-time funding of almost \$200 million! She led the way in identifying requirements and restrictions placed on the funds, and found solutions to maximize resources.

Rutledge transitioned employee timekeeping to an automated system, which reduced hundreds of staff hours annually in managing hard copy time sheets. She saved the district by taking on the role of Interim Director of Budget and Finance, and then she strategized to restructure the department, benefiting her entire team and the district. Sue also helped bring the Tyler Drive system to the district’s bus fleet, which enhances student safety and improves bus driver efficiencies.

On top of all that, Rutledge seamlessly led the migration of Munis — launching it for more than 680 district employees involving nine departments. She also makes time to mentor peers statewide and present at state conferences.

Loree Sisterson
Reagan Educational Center



Loree Sisterson’s colleagues say, “Her heart sets her apart!” The school office supervisor at Reagan Educational Center “loves big” as a mentor, teacher and coach. She extends respect and dignity to everyone, regardless of their role on a campus with over 4,400 students and 300 employees.

Each year, Sisterson holds a “New to the REC” meeting for all first-year teachers and clerical staff to educate them on important logistics. She follows up with an open-door policy for all.

She optimizes systems and workflow to maximize management. A major example is her juggling of two separate budgets for Reayburn Intermediate and Clovis East High under one office. Under her management, she can quickly share with the leadership team purchase order status and account balances and predict budget adjustment needs based on yearly expenditures.

Sisterson’s Timberwolves passion extends far beyond her workday. She is a REC Foundation Board member, volunteering her time to attend monthly meetings, plan fundraisers, organize the annual Howl event and advocate for numerous scholarship opportunities for REC students. With her natural bridge-building nature, Sisterson has been the catalyst to the Foundation granting over \$100,000 last year to diverse campus groups and organizations that might not have received support otherwise.

Lauri Vaughn
Cedarwood Elementary



As a Cedarwood Elementary teacher for 26 years, Lauri Vaughn prides herself on keeping campus traditions alive. Says her principal, “Lauri keeps the pulse and heartbeat of Cedarwood going!”

Vaughn understands that relationships and student self-esteem can accelerate learning! She structures her class to be a collaborative space where students work as a team, and encourages them to

And the Crystals go to ...

- Toni Jo Beltran, Gettysburg Elementary Resource Specialist
- Sheryl Boe, Director of Transportation
- Annette Burger, Buchanan High School Secretary II
- Sarah Burress, Clovis East High Activities Director
- Trina Hairabedian, Cole Elementary Instructional Assistant I
- Stephanie Hanks, Clovis High Principal
- Ginger Hazel, Temperance-Kutner Elementary Teacher
- Cheryl Hedrick, Garfield Elementary Library Technician
- Jennifer Hunt, Mickey Cox Elementary Office Supervisor
- Charlotte Loeffler, Mountain View Elementary Teacher
- Bobby Mammen, Clark Intermediate Teacher, Athletic Director
- Elizabeth Marquez, Miramonte Elementary Teacher
- Michael Miller, Clovis West High Teacher
- Andrew Nabors, Facility Services Coordinator
- Dan Pantoja, Clovis West Area Student Relations Liaison
- Abigail Paxton, Buchanan High Teacher
- Aaron Penberthy, Kastner Intermediate Teacher
- Joaquin Rivera, Pinedale Elementary Teacher
- Lizette Ruiz, Clovis West High Bilingual Instructional Assistant II
- Susan Rutledge, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services
- Loree Sisterson, Reagan Educational Center School Office Supervisor, Sr.
- Lauri Vaughn, Cedarwood Elementary Teacher
- Carol West, Mountain View Elementary Teacher
- Maila Yang, Tarpey Elementary Teacher

feel comfortable and safe.

As a first/ second combination teacher, Vaughn intentionally sets up areas in her classroom to support differentiated learning, and she plans STEM and technology lessons to strategically engage students at their varied levels.

Student challenges inspired Lauri to create Deployment, an opportunity for staff to target specific learning goals for struggling students. Data collected from the first round of Deployment inspired teachers to seek more Deployment and affirmed the time invested as valuable as it maximizes achievement for ALL students!

Her care goes beyond her own classroom. She is the first to say, “Send them to me,” if a student is struggling or needs a break. Vaughn has spent lunch periods and afterschool prep time to assist the special education teachers with modeling and coaching.

In addition to teaching and fulfilling the duties of grade level captain, Vaughn is also Cedarwood’s Faculty Senate representative, school tech guru, yearbook coordinator and leads the Sunshine Committee.

Carol West
Mountain View Elementary



In Carol West’s fifth grade class at Mountain View Elementary, students regularly enter a transformed world.

West teaches lessons and benchmarks by designing high interest, engaging learning experiences through creative room transformation. She knows kids learn best by doing and collaborating with peers. To enhance global cultural and technological learning, she uses Virtual Reality headsets enabling students to visit Africa, Asia and The International Space Station! She assigns students various roles when learning concepts, like Taxation without Representation. During a math problem solving and logic lesson, West facilitated an Escape Room for her students with the task of unlocking an oven to salvage Thanksgiving dinner before it burnt

to a crisp! Following the return from distanced learning, West recognized a need to more intentionally check-in with students’ emotional well-being and started Monday Moods, where students place post-it notes under the mood they are experiencing. This practice not only increased her students’ engagement, but now all upper grade classrooms are using Monday Moods as routine practice.

As Kid Nation Coordinator, Carol organized a schoolwide Parade of Nations assembly where students and staff created flags from their country of origin. Everyone marched in the amphitheater to the tune of “We Are Family.”

West’s administration called her “A leader of leaders” as she was key in implementing an upper-grade grading policy and classroom management system. She successfully facilitated the huge organizational undertaking for all three grades to departmentalize.

Maila Yang
Tarpey Elementary



Maila Yang is a second grade teacher at Tarpey Elementary, who is known by her students as Mrs. Xiong. She starts each day with Mindful Moments – an exercise which the 26-year-veteran teacher began post pandemic. The daily meditation includes students stretching to calm, soothing music and imagining filling up balloons with their troubles, then blowing them away as they envision a happy place. They set an intention for the day, such as patience or kindness, and are encouraged to share how they are feeling.

Yang is a master of developing life skills in students and staff alike. She initiated a staff Return to School Student Success Workshop, where they practiced strategies such as “Positive Praises,” “Belly Breathing” and “Mindful Mentoring.”

Tarpey School Psychologist, Dr. Suja George said, “Maila is the model teacher for behavioral support! What makes it more amazing is her openness and ability to share her strategies and provide mentoring to others.”

Yang repeatedly takes students with significant behavioral challenges, yet sends zero referrals to the office. When she received a new student who had multiple referrals the previous year, she worked collaboratively with him to build self-awareness and identify his triggers so he could use her provided coping skills. The student learned to self-regulate.

Yang also developed a Multi-Tiered System of Support in her class and set up a daily check-in/check-out process to review with her students. She is often the tier-two support for other students when teachers ask for help.

Folmer:

FROM PAGE ONE

will serve her well as she leads the district in our never-ending pursuit of excellence and a fair break for every kid.”



Dr. Folmer attended Jefferson and Weldon Elementary schools, Clark and Alta Sierra Intermediate schools, and Buchanan High from which she graduated.

“I will continue to put my heart and soul into Clovis Unified, our employees, our community and most importantly - our students,” Folmer said.

Dr. O’Brien, who has been Clovis Unified’s superintendent for six years and education for 39 years, will retire June 30 to relocate closer to family and assist in caring for her aging parent.

School:

FROM PAGE ONE that challenge to excel academically and athletically, Hirayama is also an example of perseverance.

Hirayama was drafted into the MLB St. Louis Browns after being a highly successful student athlete in baseball and football at Fresno State University, only to put his career on hold to serve the U.S. Army in the Korean War. He then went on to become the first Japanese American to play in Japan’s professional baseball league.

At Clovis Unified, he was a longtime supporter of athletics and was inducted into the district’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 2018.

Since childhood, Hirayama was known as “Fibber,” but not for reason’s one might think. He explains in a video made for the Hall of Fame that people had difficulty pronouncing his name, and since he was born in February, they created the nickname “Fibber” from that. It stayed with him all of his life.

To watch a profile video about Hirayama: <https://vimeo.com/clovisunified/halloffame/video/297777574>.

For updates on Hirayama Elementary School: hirayama.cusd.com.

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CUSD hosts Latino student success conferences



DARE TO BELIEVE

In March, Clovis Unified hosted the CUSD Latino High School Student Success Conference and the Officer Jesus Ceron Latino Student Success Middle School Conference. Both featured motivating messages by keynote speakers and dialogue with local mentors about their experiences in school and career. At the high school conference, TikTok star and Valley native Leo González, pictured right, shared his journey that included tragedy and even homelessness, but he kept pushing ahead and pursuing his dreams. He didn't always know where they would take him, he said, but he just knew he had to keep trying. At the intermediate conference, keynote speaker Dr. Yammilette "Yami" Rodríguez, told students to be bold. "Dare to believe," she said, echoing the conference's theme.

Photos by Kenny Gilman and Joey Elswick, CUSD Today



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Board announces new leadership

By Kelly Avants
CUSD Chief Communications Officer

► BOARD BRIEFS

March 29

The Governing Board appointed Dr. Marc Hammack, Clovis West Area Superintendent to the position of Associate Superintendent of School Leadership effective July 1, replacing Dr. Corrine Folmer who will become the district's superintendent. The board also approved a four-year contract for Folmer effective upon her assumption of the role following the retirement of Superintendent Dr. Eimear O'Brien.

In other action, the board:

■ Approved the annual agreement with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Center for the upcoming school year.

■ Approved the Clovis Unified Home-to-School Transportation Services Plan

for fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24, a copy of which is available from the district's Business Services Office.

■ Approved a resolution regarding emergency contract work to make electrical repairs to Clovis High School following damage that occurred during a storm on March 28.

March 15

The board named what will be the district's 35th elementary school after longtime Clovis Unified educator, professional baseball player, war veteran and internment camp survivor Satoshi Hirayama. Hirayama Elementary will open in August of 2024 at Fowler and McKinley avenues.

In other action, the board:

■ Approved the second interim financial report with

a positive certification indicating that the District will be able to meet its financial obligations for the remainder of the 2022-23 school year as required by Assembly Bill 1200.

■ Approved the increase of an existing contract with BICC Central California, LLC, for additional district-wide behavioral support trainings.

■ Awarded the phase 2 construction bids for Hirayama Elementary/ES35 to Bush Construction.

■ Approved engineering services for the off-site water and sewer facilities at Terry Bradley Educational Center to QK Engineers.

The next meeting of the Governing Board is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. April 19 in the boardroom located at 1680 David E. Cook Way in Clovis. Complete minutes, agendas and videos of Governing Board meetings are available online at cUSD.com.

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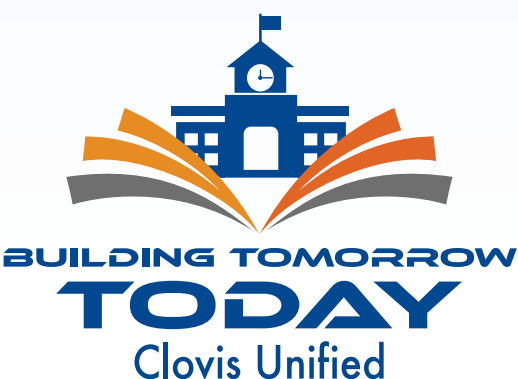
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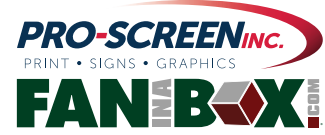
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