



## *Historical Overview of Clovis Unified School District*

By Floyd B. Buchanan, Ed.D.

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### EFFECTIVE USE OF FUNDS

#### **Preface**

“The philosophy of finance in this district is very simple: a budget must be a financial statement of the educational program; in most large districts the educational program is a statement of the budget. That doesn’t sound like much, but it is a whole different world.”

Floyd B. Buchanan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, C.U.S.D.

Effective use of funds is paramount if a school district is to provide the best education possible with the money made available to it by the State. Contrary to the image it projects, Clovis Unified School District is not a wealthy district; rather, financial constraints have required district administrators to be innovative in obtaining additional sources of funding (e.g., grants, C.U.S.D. Foundation, and fundraisers), while being equally creative and efficient in their use of funds (e.g., energy management, quality construction for lower maintenance costs, and use of facilities to generate additional funds). Such effective use of funds did not “just happen;” it is the result of well-planned and well-organized efforts by the district staff.

Using the school-based management approach, in which the principal at each site develops a budget based on his own school’s needs for personnel, materials and support services, the district prepares each year’s budget based on these requirements, district programs, and additional prospective projects. Planning is the key. As Dr. Buchanan has pointed out, “The secret is you have to know where you are going and what you want to do, and then bring forces to bear; but, if you never have a plan, you can’t do this.” Furthermore, the district follows the policy that extra-curricular programs should be designed to be self-funding or to receive support from other programs, so that money received for educational programs is not diverted from curricular areas.

It is to this end that C.U.S.D. works to spend its monies as effectively and efficiently as possible, and it is relevant to note how the district has done this.

Clovis Unified School District began in 1960, with 5,037 students and 11 schools. Its initial annual budget was about \$3,000,000.

#### **C.U.S.D. Foundation**

The C.U.S.D Foundation was established in 1987, by the Governing board of Clovis Unified School District and certain community members. Its goal is to provide financial support to Clovis



Unified through donations from individuals and businesses in the community, and through grants and matching business grants.

Additionally, the Foundation has sponsored fundraisers, such as the Grand Opening and Grand Opening Encore Dinner/Dance held at the beginning of the school year. It was one of two recipients of the Hahn Company's Opening Night of the Sierra Vista Shopping Mall, and it has entered into a program with Guarantee Savings/VISA, whereby use of a C.U.S.D. VISA card will return money to the Foundation.

During its first year of operation the Foundation raised \$150,000 in cash and donated materials and services. The Foundation supports various educational activities, but it is particularly interested in donating funds to substance abuse programs, programs for personal and social development of at-risk students, and grants to innovative classroom projects.

### **Grants**

In following Dr. Buchanan's philosophy that "You never let a financial 'crumb' hit the floor," district administrators are always searching for grant money from the State and/or private industry to help pay for programs, projects, or additions at school sites which would otherwise not be possible.

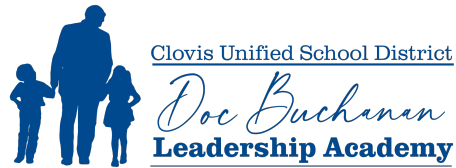
An excellent example of this endeavor is the grant received to build the co-generators that are on the Clovis West High School grounds. Prior to installation the cost of heating the CWHS swim complex was about \$40,000/year. With the co-generators on site, there is no longer any cost for heating, and enough additional electricity is generated that the overall power bill for the school site has also been reduced.

By discovering that that grant money was available from PG&E and the State, and by pursuing it actively, the district has realized a substantial on-going savings. This search for grant money is continuous, and it allows the district to flourish and to expand participation in educational programs at a time when other districts are being forced to cut back to bare bones.

### **Categorical Programs**

Services provided by school districts are generally divided into two types of programs, core and categorical. Core programs are those which provide "typical" students at typical school with usual and customary educational services, materials and staff. Categorical programs, on the other hand, are those which provide special services, staff and materials to students with "special needs." Such children may be economically disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged, may speak English as a second language (ESL), or may be gifted and talented. Whatever the "special need," the student is identified and categorized to help him succeed in his regular classroom program.

Providing services for such children results in high cost programs. Due to the need to provide supplemental services, staff and materials, and since funding for such services is not available



through core program funding, special (or categorical) funds are made available to districts from the federal and state governments, depending upon the program involved.

It is essential to note that these specialized services do not, in any way, take educational funds away from other students in the district or from a school's core programs; rather, C.U.S.D. administrators are vigilant in their compliance with these programs. Funding for each program must be kept separate, and all monies received must be used as intended and specified in the guidelines for each program.

Clovis Unified School District's Department of Special Projects is responsible for applying for categorical funds and for providing direction to all schools receiving these funds. As overseer of this program, the Department of Special Projects takes advantage of every source of funding available. In addition, the department is constantly searching out other sources of revenue, with the goal of providing C.U.S.D.'s special needs students with the best education possible.

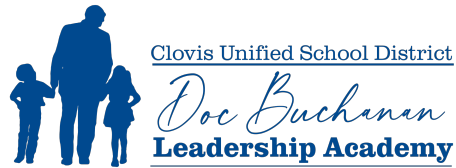
### **Lottery**

The California Lottery has had a definite impact on programs conducted by Clovis Unified School District. Because the amount of money received fluctuates, district planners have never relied on lottery funds as a source of revenue for any specific program. Consequently, lottery money is about the only discretionary income that district administrators have to prove some of the "extras" to students.

Lottery funds are currently used in three categories. The first category is incentives, which is bonuses for all employees. This amounts to 30% of the lottery funds received.

The second category is instructional materials and supplies, which accounts for 40% of the amount received. This category breaks into three sub-areas: 1) capital outlay; 2) educational supplies, not personnel or other items (this amounts to \$9 - \$10/student/school, based on ADA); and 3) a separate fund for which each school writes proposals outlining a need or a program which it feels would be beneficial. A district lottery committee then reviews the mission statements that are submitted, prioritizes them, and gives them back to the Unit and Business Leaders. These people then decide how best that money can be spent in their respective areas. The International Baccalaureate program at Clovis High School and the renovation of the chemistry lab at Clovis High School have both been funded from this program. Some money from this category generally goes to every school site.

The third category of how lottery funds are used in C.U.S.D. is a reserve fund. It amounts to 30% of the money received from the lottery. When the division of lottery funds was instituted, it was not known how much revenue would be generated each year. Rather than fund a program one year that might then have to be cut the next, it was decided to keep 30% of lottery money in reserves. Each year, when lottery funds are received, the reserves are added in, and then all the money is divided into the three categories (incentives, instructional, and reserves) in the same 30% - 40% - 30% split.



This year, when reserves are added in, C.U.S.D.'s lottery fund should amount to \$3.4 million. The incentive program and reserves will each receive \$991,400, and the instructional materials and supplies program will be given \$1,417,200 for its projects.

### **Average Daily Attendance (ADA)**

Beyond the fact that it is not possible to educate a child unless he is physically present at school to participate in the school's program, it is also financially important to every school district to have students present throughout the school year. The State of California sends money to school districts based on the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) within the school district. For Clovis Unified, this amounts to about \$2,000/student/year, which is \$11.00/student/day.

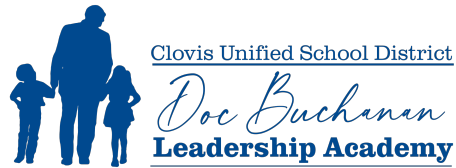
Based on an enrollment of more than 19,000 students, ADA for Clovis Unified is around \$210,000/day, with all students present. If daily absenteeism is 6% of the student body, the district loses \$12,600/day. If, however, absenteeism is only 1/2% to 1%, the district loses "only" between \$1,000 - \$2,100/day. That is an additional \$50,000/week that the school district received, if absenteeism can be kept to a minimum. In most districts absences run 6% - 7% or higher. During the 1987 - 1988 school year C.U.S.D. had an average daily attendance of 99.5%, which was an improvement from 97% (the previous year?). This resulted in the district receiving an additional \$900,000 from the State.

To accomplish this, the district hired 3 people to work as attendance clerks to monitor and to find students who were out of school. The cost of running the program is \$70,000 - \$80,000/year; but, the district sees back ten times that amount, and the students benefit by being in class.

### **Parent Club Fundraisers**

Individual school sites throughout C.U.S.D. each have very active parent clubs and booster groups which have been indispensable and generous in raising funds. The money gathered is donated back to the school community through different arrangements: if a particular need arises at a school, the principal may seek specific support; teachers may be asked what their greatest needs are; or parents may wish to fill a void which they have identified.

The monies to pay for the various programs are raised through several types of fundraisers. At the elementary level jog-a-thons, candy or pizza sales, carnivals, raffles, and spaghetti dinners generate revenue and are sponsored by the parent clubs. The schools also operate concession stands after school, and profits from them support other programs. This generates approximately another \$10,000 for each school. At the intermediate level the schools raise money from a magazine/record sales drive and a candy sale, with additional support received from patron donations to the performing arts department and snack bar revenue. At the high schools the money taken in from ticket sales at sporting events and concession stands supports the majority of programs at the schools, generating as much as \$45,000 - \$50,000/high school each year.



This revenue to each high school, used for extra-curricular programs, has been possible because of the football stadium at Clovis High School. Built in 1976, at a cost of \$1,000,000, it has already taken in \$1,000,000 in gate revenue since its completion. Constructed on concrete, steel, and aluminum, so there is a minimum of maintenance required, the stadium is now a permanent money-maker for the high school programs. It has allowed the high schools to support and offer programs which would otherwise be prohibitively expensive to the district and, consequently, unavailable. Such revenue, when coupled with the funds generated by bingo to support the high school bands, has allowed Clovis schools to participate in almost any extra-curricular area in which there has been interest shown, generally without requiring students to pay to participate.

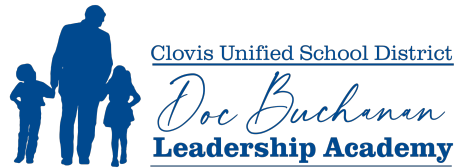
In addition to producing revenue to finance various programs, these fundraisers provide places for families to go, activities in which children can participate, and a planned use of school facilities, all of which enhance the community and benefit the students.

Through tremendous parental and community support, and with diligent effort on the part of the district administration to seek alternative financial support and to guarantee as many State funds as possible are received, C.U.S.D. acquires its financial support to run the district. It then is necessary to see that that money is utilized as effectively as possible.

### **Allocation of Funds**

Since unification it has been incumbent upon C.U.S.D. administrators to make every penny count in the education of Clovis' students. Unlike some districts, which operate under the philosophy that good financial management means "just saving money," it is the conviction of C.U.S.D. administrators that they must get the most education possible from every dollar. Saving money is important, but it is important only because it provides money for other programs. It is this basic tenet which has served as the foundation of financial decisions in Clovis Unified over the years.

Examples of this philosophy are evident throughout the school district. C.U.S.D. administrators firmly believe in managing funds as effectively as possible. This has led to a well-defined agenda on all levels of school management: a building program in which only the best quality of supplies is utilized, so that maintenance costs are lower; an active energy management program to curb sky-rocketing energy costs; facilities built that generate funds (e.g., sports fields, snack bars), whose profits subsidize extra-curricular programs; an in-house print shop which controls cost and provides flexibility to teachers, students, and administrators, while delivering top quality products; a benefits package for employees which is second to none at a cost that is well below current rates; a preventive maintenance program that controls the wear and tear of facilities from consuming precious capital building funds; and an aggressive use of computers to enhance the management effectiveness of the entire school district.



These are but a few of the areas in which Clovis Unified strives to provide as much as possible, at the very highest level of quality, to its students. Insight into the wisdom of these positions affords a clearer picture of how Clovis Unified operates as it does and why.

### **Energy Management**

With an eye always toward how best to spend its money, C.U.S.D. administrators recognized in the 1970's that energy cost containment would have to be a major policy concern. School district enrollment was increasing, while the national energy crisis was resulting in rising fuel costs. To control consumption without compromising the standards of District programs was a task undertaken with innovation and undaunted persistence.

Several areas required management to provide optimal use of District resources: bus transportation, controlled use of lights, energy efficient buildings, and new building construction. By the late 1980's, the District was realizing a half million dollar annual savings in its utility bill. This savings allowed the school district to utilize the funds for other programs, as Dr. Buchanan had indicated, "We did our energy management system to put money into other programs, not to save money for the budget."

Clovis Unified School District covers 198 square miles, so bus transportation costs are understandably high. In order to keep fuel costs to a minimum, the District coordinates schedules for picking up and dropping off students at the elementary, intermediate, and high school levels. To assist in determining the most efficient routes for each bus, administrators work with a computer program that can design routes in moments, allowing for sudden fluctuations in enrollment at school sites. Scheduling bus routes used to take 2 to 3 people working all summer to complete; now, the most efficient routes can be determined, assessed, and changed without upheaval or expensive overtime hours.

Clovis Unified has been a leader in controlling electricity costs through careful management of light use at school sites and the District office building. One District administrator is in charge of a computer program which controls when lights are on in school facilities throughout the District. Although there are manual overrides to this system at each site, school site administrators also know this schedule, and they can plan events accordingly. For example, the lights at Clovis High School's football stadium turn off at 11:30 p.m., after a football game. School personnel know this, so clean up is completed in a timely fashion and loitering is kept to a minimum. Although it seems a small savings, to be concerned about lights, when the electrical use is added up at each school facility, it amounts to a substantial savings.

The renovation of many Clovis school buildings, with the installation of carpet and air conditioning systems, provides for more energy efficient and more comfortable structures. Even though air-conditioned buildings are more comfortable in hot weather, the cost of air conditioning can be exorbitant. To this end, C.U.S.D. administrators worked with the State and utility officials to install air conditioning systems that are much more efficient to operate than



are standard ones. By pursuing this innovative system and the grant money available to cover installation costs, C.U.S.D. saved both on the capital expenditure and on maintenance costs.

Some of the greatest energy cost containment is available to Clovis Unified with the building of its new schools. Availing itself to the latest insulation and fuel-efficient technologies, the newest buildings even have motion sensors for controlling lights. All appropriate energy savings are considered and utilized in making the buildings energy efficient, and the students are provided with an environment that assists the learning process.

All of these policies have been shaped by Clovis Unified's need to contain rising energy costs. Through skillful management and shrewd investigation of and application for grants, C.U.S.D. has realized a significant savings over what its utility bill could have been, had not these measures been taken, and the quality of programs offered in the school district has not been jeopardized. As a result, it has been possible to continue to fund other programs with the savings recognized in energy cost control.

### **Funding through Facilities**

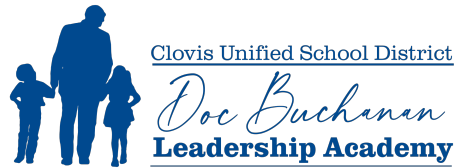
“One of the reasons we get such mileage out of our money in Clovis is that all those functions, which can be revenue-producing as well as educationally enhancing to the children, we combine the two; and anything on which we can make money, we roll over into other programs to keep them going.”

Floyd B. Buchanan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, C.U.S.D.

With this fundamental principle in mind, C.U.S.D. administrators have been motivated to utilize school facilities to attain two goals: 1) if there are programs available to students at the school sites, the students of Clovis have a place to go and something organized to do in their spare time; and 2) by having school facilities open to outside organizations (e.g., Little League, 4-H, soccer, Bobby Sox, etc.), extra funds are generated to be used for additional school programs.

Activities that take place at school sites have many benefits. One major advantage to utilizing school sites in this manner is the direct benefit of having something for the children to do that is entertaining, instructive and constructive. The community atmosphere that this engenders is without parallel: adults volunteer their time to coach or work with young people; students have someone working with them, giving them a chance to try to learn something new; and the facility is used, so everyone gets the most out of the facilities. Additionally, if students are involved in activities at the school, they will be less likely to vandalize the structures. In the best sense, the school is a composite of the community and the spirit and support that is reflected in the community.

It is a bonus, then, that these facilities and the programs run there generate funds for the school district; but, this is not an accident. The snack bars at the elementary sites, the football stadium and concession stand at the high school, and the rental of space to outside



organizations for use during afterschool hours are all revenue producers. Without the funds generated by these facilities, Clovis administrators would be in the position of having to cut back on programs throughout the District.

As a result, District administrators constantly assess programs and facilities to determine if there are better ways in which to utilize them, or if there are ways that might make a program more cost effective or revenue producing. Planning is the key element.

### **Print Shop**

From its inception Clovis Unified administrators have held to the philosophy that the staff at each school site should be able to choose textbooks from the State approved textbook list which best serve the needs of its students. Consequently, not every school, particularly at the elementary level, uses the same texts. Because District administrators also believe it is important for each student to have whatever worksheets and supplemental materials accompany a textbook, and because these materials are extremely expensive when purchased from the publisher, C.U.S.D. elected to develop a full-scale, in-house print shop to print these materials locally. The return on this investment has been remarkable.

The chief problem with supplemental materials, by their very nature, is that they are consumable. Where a textbook can be used year after year, once a worksheet is completed, it cannot be reused. The value, though, of these supplemental materials is that each student can work directly on the task at hand, without having to copy exercises from a book. The child, then, can write on and keep copies of his work.

As a result, District administrators contracted with textbook publishers to gain the right to reprint supplemental materials in the District's print shop. Not only have the savings been significant, but the in-house capability has provided greater teaching flexibility, faster service, and greater quality and efficiency in providing the school district with a wide variety of printed materials.