

Historical Overview of Clovis Unified School District

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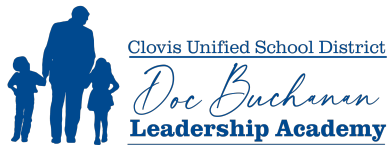
Preface

A well-rounded educational program is successfully formulated by blending academic studies and extra-curricular activities, resulting in an educated, well-adjusted citizen who is able to function as a productive member of society. Identifying and providing the proper mix of curricular and co-curricular activities have been the concerns of countless educators throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. As man's condition in life has improved through technological advances and more time has become available to seek more than mere existence, educators have tried to analyze and devise courses of study that will most benefit individual students. Since administrators of Clovis Unified School District have sought to achieve their goals of educating all children to a level where they can function in society and to helping all children become Sparthenians, they have developed a program of curricular and co-curricular activities designed to accomplish these goals.

Working under financial constraints, California and Department of Education regulations and guidelines, and community understanding of and demand for academic excellence, C.U.S.D. administrators initiated many programs in the district to increase levels of academic achievement. Recognizing five components of curriculum development and four components of an educational program, district administrators formulated plans for site-based management, pupil-motivated individualized instruction (in mathematics and reading), kindergarten readiness, district resource teachers, student advisement services, programs for drug and alcohol abuse prevention, and the Sparthenian concept. Categorical programs and mentor teacher programs were initiated by the State of California, but implementation of the guidelines was conducted locally with ingenuity that enhanced the programs' effectiveness and relevancy to C.U.S.D.'s overall academic program. With the incumbent growth of co-curricular activities and the value they add to a total education, C.U.S.D. administrators have striven, since the district's inception, to provide educational opportunities for all students. The importance of balanced curricular and co-curricular demands, to provide a complete education to Clovis' students, had to be recognized and achieved.

California State Educational Guidelines

Every California school district is affected by curriculum guidelines and financial constraints dictated by California's Department of Education. Consequently, no school program may be undertaken without consideration being given to its financial support from the State or to how it meets state-mandated educational requirements. Fulfilling state directives was not always difficult; however, California's educational system changed greatly in 1983, with the passage of the Hughes-Hart Educational Reform Act of 1983, commonly known as Senate Bill



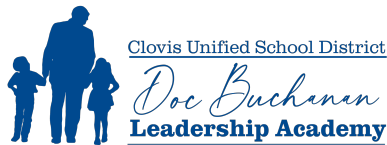
813 (SB813). The educational reform act has served as the cornerstone to California's educational reform efforts.

In 1983, because of shorter and fewer school days, California students attended about one year less of school by graduation than they did when SB813 became law. The only graduation requirement at that time was 2 years of physical education. Textbooks had been "dumbed down," and middle schools (grades 6-8) were practically neglected, with student achievement suffering greatly. Senate Bill 813 imposed mandatory high school graduation requirements: a minimum of 3 years of English, 2 years of mathematics, 2 years of science, 3 years of social science, 1 year of fine arts or foreign language, 1 semester of economics, and 2 years of physical education. SB813 established high standards and a strong core curriculum, lengthened the school day and school year calendar, developed better instructional materials, increased discipline in schools, instituted strong accountability systems, and provided steps to be taken to improve school and district management. In initiating a mentor teacher program, California State officials further attracted and encouraged a high caliber of teacher. Results of these changes have been significant, but they need to be sustained.

By the end of the 1980's, instructional time was increased 15-20%. Each major curriculum area had been strengthened, and California had received both national and international recognition for the stance it had taken requiring better textbooks. The State Department of Education further launched the California Reading Initiative, which strives to improve literacy and to improve reading instruction. To this end, a list recognizing 1,010 books for worthwhile reading was compiled and made available to teachers, administrators, parents and students. The results of these measures are that test scores have gone up across the State.

The Hughes-Hart Educational Reform Act of 1983 also established a Middle Grade Task Force to review and assess middle schools in California. This task force released a document with one hundred (100) recommendations suggesting how to improve education for California's middle school students. Among reform efforts that were encouraged were setting higher standards, increasing accountability for achieving goals, establishing stronger school (site-based) leadership, and continuing to push for more homework. The recognition of this task force was that the work set before high school students, teachers and administrators could not be accomplished without adequate preparation prior to a student's high school entrance. Such middle school recommendations and such changes in requirements for high school graduation necessarily impacted district administrators and teachers.

New directions for California State guidelines were developed and implemented governing several areas. There were changes in the way new teachers were recruited, trained, and assessed, with an emphasis on upgrading the skills of existing teachers. Successful schools (based on test scores) were rewarded and given greater leadership roles and opportunities, while the State of California assumed ever-greater responsibility over schools which failed consistently to meet the State's expressed goals. School districts were charged with reducing class size and providing a more rigorous curriculum. Parents gained more choice in determining their children's education. Categorical programs were streamlined, improved and held more



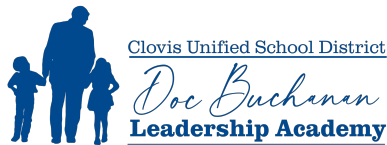
accountable for providing services expected. With the further realization that, by the year 2000, the majority of new jobs would require post-secondary education, State guidelines were drawn up to increase childcare, preschool and kindergarten options: it was recognized that preparation for school's and life's challenges must begin early, or students would not be prepared adequately to face their rapidly advancing and changing world. To ensure conformity with these guidelines, State legislators strove to establish a sound financial base for schools, so education could have adequate funding and school finance could be removed from the political arena.

The new framework established by the State stressed skills believed fundamental for all students: sophisticated thinking skills, essay writing, decision-making and discussion were all emphasized. Incentives were provided to encourage high schools to develop a 7-period day, allowing a student to take 5 solids, 1 elective, and P.E. Combining a strong stand on improving textbooks, while increasing funds allocated for instructional materials, the State called for more homework and a greater level of expectation of its students. To determine the success of these measures, California has demanded accountability to the State from local schools. Consequently, California's testing plan is being revamped and expanded in an effort to test student achievement more accurately and thoroughly. CAP (California Assessment Program) tests, which used to be administered in grades 3, 6, and 12, have been added to Grade 8, as well.

Requiring higher level thinking skills, the California Department of Education has initiated annual statewide competency tests, which are called Golden State Exams. The first examinations to be administered were in algebra and geometry, but the State is developing further tests for U.S. History and, when funds are available, for advanced algebra, languages, laboratory sciences, English literature and composition, and health sciences. In providing much mastery tests of a student's knowledge of a subject, the State can glean a more comprehensive understanding of its schools' curricula and their success in educating the State's students. More than any other time in its past, it is imperative that California's educators know the truth about the effectiveness of the educational system: California continues to grow and change daily, and the challenges posed to educational administrators are endless.

In the five years between 1988 and 1993, California needs to build 800 new schools, providing 21,000 more classrooms, to begin to handle a school population expected to be six million by the late 1990's. State officials anticipate a growth of one and a half million students in California in the 1990's. Whereas one student in four were from a non-English speaking home in 1989, an entirely different school population is expected by 2000: the student mix is predicted to be 35% Hispanic, 11% Asian, 9% African-American, 42% White, and 3% other.

This shift in the majority of students being of minority background greatly impacts all levels of education, particularly when dealing with non-English speaking students. Already the state with the second largest class size in the nation – second only to Utah – and as a state with so many non-English speaking students, it becomes imperative for California to meet its stated goal of reducing class size. By 1991, California officials have set as a goal the reduction of class



size (grades kindergarten through 8) to 24 students/class; high school classes, in core curriculum areas, are to be reduced to 20 students/class. Average class size, in 1988-1989, was 28 students/class. Statewide, such a reduction of average class size will be difficult to achieve, while simultaneously addressing enormous growth. The task before administrators in Clovis Unified School District is no less daunting, as Clovis Unified continues to grow at an amazing rate.

Curricular Programs

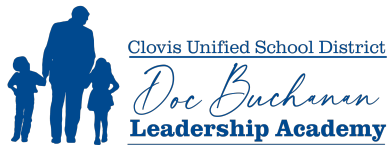
In 1987, writing in "Agenda for the Twenty-first Century: A Blueprint for K-12 Education," California State Superintendent of Schools Bill Honig stated the goal of education in California:

"...1) we need to educate more of our students to higher levels of academic competency if they are to obtain jobs and if our nation is to remain competitive in the world economy; and 2) we must instill strong civic and ethical values in our students to keep our democracy alive and help our students develop the character and judgment they need to live up to their potential."

Administrators in Clovis Unified School District appreciated the importance of these goals for C.U.S.D. prior to this explicit statement by Superintendent Honig. Such goals are the natural progression of recognition and implementation of the five components of curriculum development: 1) adjust to rates of learning; 2) adjust to levels of ability; 3) provide enrichment for those who have already mastered the basics; 4) individualize instruction; and 5) teach to subskill weaknesses. Implementation of these five components requires skill and patience of teachers in classroom situations.

Every teacher acknowledges that different children master skills at different rates. At one end of the spectrum, some students will understand a subject before being formally instructed in it; at the other end of the spectrum are students who will require specific, intense, creative and/or repetitive instruction before understanding a particular concept. A teacher must diagnose the variety of rates of learning among his students for every course taught. Inherent in this identification is the teacher's deeper understanding that each student has his own level of ability as well: within the bounds of any group, no matter the size, are people whose ability to grasp material is wildly different. Some students may ultimately understand everything that is introduced to them; others may never be able to understand a concept. Recognition of the abilities of students whom he is teaching is fundamental to a teacher's ability to instruct successfully.

When a teacher is presented with students who already understand the subject at hand, it is crucial that he provide enrichment for these students while he continues his work with other children in class. Such enrichment should be relative to the subject, but it should not be redundant nor punitive. Creativity is even more a necessity in addressing these students, since completing additional worksheets to keep students occupied is not enrichment; it is tedium of



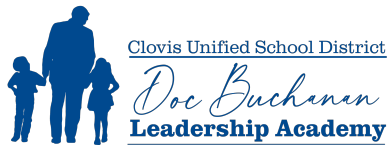
the worst sort. In providing enrichment activities for these students a teacher actually begins the process of individualized instruction that benefits every child in class. Ultimately, if a teacher can identify each student's ability to learn and the rates at which each child masters a subject, general instructional guidelines can be prepared and adapted to each specific child's needs.

Each of these four components of curriculum development leads to the fifth, and most critical component, which is teaching subskill weaknesses. Every concept has subskills which must be mastered to understand the concept as a whole. If a subskill is not learned, it can jeopardize a child's ability to be educated at the higher levels which use this concept as a base. For example, if a child takes a mathematics exam and misses two problems out of ten, his grade is 80%, or "B." That is considered a strong passing grade and an adequate base upon which to build the next instructional concept; however, if the two problems missed were about "zero as place holder" in multiplication, this child will have an increasingly difficult time in his mathematics courses and will never be able to multiply until he is taught this subskill weakness. It is incumbent upon the teacher to review tests to determine what concepts have been missed. If nearly everyone has missed a skill, it is imperative that additional instruction in that skill be given to the whole class; if only a few made errors, then those students need additional instruction and review of the concept. The important factor is the identification of each child's subskill weaknesses. Only then may reteaching, to correct the weakness, be undertaken.

Obviously, one teacher alone cannot give individualized attention to and re-teach every child in his class. The ultimate solution in overcoming this problem lies in using cross-age tutors and peer-group tutors to assist teachers and students. Not only will students who need assistance gain necessary attention and instruction, but students who are tutors will benefit from the experience of teaching other pupils: it forces student tutors to examine what they themselves know about the skill they are trying to teach, and it reinforces their knowledge of the subject as they work with fellow students.

Once the five components of curriculum development are recognized and addressed, it is necessary to study and prepare to handle the four components of an educational program. These components – mission, content, method, and evaluation – create the framework from which a teacher instructs. Once the mission – or goal – of the coursework is identified and specified, a teacher is able to adapt his materials to the course (the subject matter). The subject to be covered helps determine the teacher's method (or approach) in the teaching of concepts. The process of evaluation becomes vital to a teacher's overall effectiveness, since it is only through evaluation of content and method that a teacher can assess if his instruction has been successful in addressing the mission.

Such individualized evaluation to determine the success of teaching methods is well-suited to the concept of site-based management to which C.U.S.D. administrators subscribe. District administrators believe it is essential to allow each school site administrator and his staff the flexibility with which to decide how they will achieve district educational goals. This freedom encourages creativity and individual initiative in teaching and in administration.

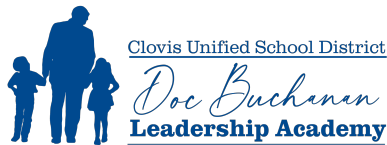


Because district administrators have also developed a format of accountability to district administrators to ensure the achievement of district-wide educational goals, on-site administrators must work to address their own individual community needs, while also meeting stated goals that apply to the entire district. Site-based management, with accountability to district administrators, is the cornerstone upon which Clovis Unified School District has built its educational system.

District administrators establish goals they believe should be attained by all students (a mission statement). Site administrators and staff choose methods to be used to accomplish these goals, including selection of textbooks, and coordinated materials. The district does provide guidelines to school staff to assist them in their textbook selection process. These guidelines consist of district-wide review (by selected teachers) of texts that have been approved by the State of California for adoption. The reviewing committee recommends from two to four series of textbooks to the Governing Board of C.U.S.D., after assessing each series with regard to C.U.S.D. Desired Exit Skills (DES) and Grade Level Objectives (GLO). Company representatives may also explain their series to the review committee. Each member of the committee completes a written assessment of each textbook, and results are compiled, and a composite ranking is determined. It is from these guidelines that individual schools may select textbooks and materials. It has been observed that, given this opportunity to select texts and materials best suited to the needs of its school community, on-site staffs are able to teach their students effectively and to achieve district goals.

Clovis Unified School District administrators have subscribed to the belief that it is necessary to monitor what is being taught at each school to determine if district goals are being met. The primary method used for monitoring is site testing, using standardized, nationally normed tests. Such examinations assist district and on-site administrators with scrutinizing results to determine if students are, indeed, reaching and exceeding the educational goals established for them. Only through such monitoring and assessment can administrators adequately manage their staffs, make suggestions and improvements, and give students the best education possible. As on-site managers, principals must work to motivate their staff and students to achieve at the highest levels; such use of appropriate testing lets principals know the degree to which they are being successful. Site testing, then, allows on-site administrators to facilitate this "3m" policy of motivating, managing, and monitoring.

One area of classroom management in which Clovis Unified has been recognized as a leader is a program called Pupil Motivated Individualized Instruction. This program is designed to hold individual students accountable for their behavior by helping them make decisions and be responsible for the outcome of their decisions. This instructional program considers both individual and group learning processes, with an emphasis on self (and group) motivation for learning, rather than having students be totally teacher oriented. By grouping students of all abilities into units of 6 or 7 to a group, and by awarding points based on the performance of the group, students learn they need to strive to do their best, if the entire group is going to benefit. Similarly, if one student has tended not to participate as fully as he is capable, or if he has acted out in class, others in the group can work with him, encouraging him to help the rest of them



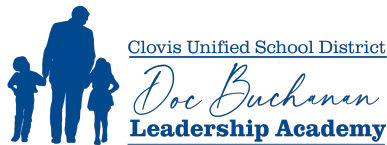
and work for the greater good (in this case, their overall point total). This use of a point system also recognizes individual performance, since a top score on an assignment can bring additional points to the entire group, thus eliminating some of the ostracization that getting good grades can frequently provoke.

This concept of classroom instructional management was first designed to assist reading and mathematics instruction in the elementary grades; however, since the program is most successful when carried on throughout the entire day, Clovis Unified's teachers generally maintain groupings for all activities in grades kindergarten through 8. This process allows teachers to become learning directors, rather than just knowledge dispensers: students look to themselves and their peers within their group for assistance in understanding a concept with which they are having difficulty, rather than expecting the teacher to tell them what they should know. Students learn that they are working to help themselves learn more, and they are not in direct competition with each other. Rather, this system allows students to reinforce concepts and discover new ones, as they help each other master new ideas (peer-group tutoring).

The primary difference between this method of organizing children and educators' more traditional method of grouping children is that traditional grouping is organized by subject and a child's ability level to master that subject. This alternative method of grouping children intentionally organizes students in "family groups" of many levels and abilities. Not only can these groups then cross several subject matters, but students soon learn that each student has something to offer the group. Students who might not otherwise socialize meet and come to know and appreciate each other. With groupings changed throughout the school year, all students have the opportunity to be grouped with every other student in class before the end of the school year.

Once the general atmosphere of the classroom is established favorably, the teacher is further able to work toward developing a positive self-image of each child. By assisting a child to reach for and achieve his highest level of performance, the teacher helps a child understand that academic competence is an integral part of the student's own self-image. Successful management of a classroom depends on a teacher being able to inspire students with a desire to learn; all other management problems will cease, if students truly wish to learn.

Instilling a desire to learn in a student is not an overnight process, especially if the child has been "turned off" by previously bad experiences; however, anyone who has observed a kindergarten classroom knows it is the rare exception to find a child who isn't eager to learn, to please his teacher, his parents, and himself by doing something new and doing it correctly. With a desire to capture and to nourish this eagerness, administrators in Clovis Unified School District embarked on a program of kindergarten readiness in the late 1970's that was met initially with antipathy, even rancor. The necessity of such a program, though, was evident, if students were to continue to want to learn and if they were going to join the competitive ranks of adults qualified for college and the workplace, not only locally, but nationally and internationally.

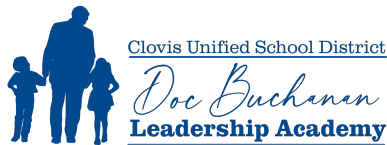


A formal program of Kindergarten Readiness was adopted in Clovis Unified in an effort to capitalize on the natural enthusiasm young children have for learning. Such a formal plan was necessitated by existing customs and beliefs of what kindergarten was and should be. Among the obstacles that needed to be overcome was an existing regulation that pre-dated C.U.S.D.'s unification: there had been a rule stating that, in first grade, no child could begin work in a reading book during the first six (6) weeks of school. Since a child's eagerness to learn to read can begin to wane, and since a child's believes – rightfully – that he is in school to learn, Clovis Unified's administrators changed this regulation. Teachers were directed to revise their curriculum to start their reading programs immediately, so children were not sitting and "waiting" to begin education's journey.

Customarily, kindergarten consisted of show and tell, drawing a picture, listening to a story, resting, having crackers and milk, and playtime. Since the kindergarten day had 180 minutes in it, 30 minutes of which were devoted to snacks and 30 minutes more to resting, effective teaching time really was 120 minutes. With time allowed for show and tell, playtime, and perhaps a picture, almost no time remained to pursue anything truly academic. Clovis Unified's Kindergarten Readiness Program addresses that problem. While teachers still worked with children to be sure they could tie their shoes, know their street address, and telephone number, and knew both their first and last names, academic programs were developed for beginning arithmetic and reading. Upon leaving kindergarten children were expected to be able to recognize numbers to 10, to count and to recognize groups of numbers. They also needed to know their alphabet, beginning sounds and some simple words. Such programs assisted students in preparing and being ready for the very intense educational programs that begin in first grade in Clovis Unified School District.

Among educational responsibilities which Clovis Unified's administrators must assume is implementation of state-mandated categorical programs. Categorical programs are those which receive money from the State of California which can be spent only for the detailed purpose specified; the funds cannot be added into the general funds of a school's or a school district's operating budget for disbursement as district administrators might wish or need. For example, bilingual education, special education, G.A.T.E. (gifted and talented), mentor teacher program, and even deferred maintenance are categorical programs. Whenever voters in the State of California vote for bonds (depending on restrictions), they categorize for what the money is allocated and how and when it can be used. These programs can be extremely expensive to operate, frequently exceeding the funds provided by the State. For that reason, local management of funds is extremely important, with the State of California moving to improve these programs by streamlining them and making them more accountable.

The best and most creatively managed curriculum is worthless, though, if the students for whom it is designed are not functioning well enough to understand what is being presented to them. For this reason, Clovis Unified School District's Health and Wellness Resource Center has taken a proactive role in recognizing drug and alcohol abuse problems within the district's student body, with efforts undertaken to stress prevention of these abusive behaviors.

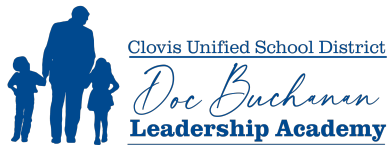


In a resolute action that was denounced by some and applauded by others, the trustees of the Governing Board of Clovis Unified School District supported district administrative efforts to determine the level of drug and alcohol abuse among Clovis' students. Notably, in January 1987, a districtwide survey of drug and alcohol use was completed by all students in grades 7 through 12. The survey was designed to provide Clovis administrators with objective information about programs already in effect in the district and to assess the needs of students in Clovis Unified in handling their problems. The results of that survey have formed a baseline against which future data can be compared. Additionally, the curriculum involved in district programs, such as Refusal Skills, Tough Love, and Quest, and direction of students to non-district programs like Ala-teen and Young Peoples' Alcoholics Anonymous are designed to aid as many students as possible in as many ways as possible.

Students, parents, and teachers all benefit from two particular pamphlets prepared by district administrators. A "Parent Handbook for Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention" was adapted by the Health and Wellness Resource Center from a similar handbook developed by Project Pegasus in Palo Alto, California. This handbook assists parents in many facets of drug abuse problems: recognizing symptoms, dealing with the problem, basic information about various drugs and alcohol, parents' rights, and responsibilities, etc. Included is an emergency adolescent referral list of various crisis hotlines in Fresno County and various adolescent alcohol/drug treatment and prevention programs. This pamphlet has been reprinted in many of the district's schools' annual student-parent handbooks, so that parents and students will have easy access to the proper emergency hotline or treatment center number should the need arise.

The second pamphlet which is very helpful to all members of the Clovis Unified School District community is the "Student Advisement Services" booklet that was compiled and published in April 1988, by the Instructional Services Unit of C.U.S.D. This document provides a quick reference to guidance services available in Clovis Unified, by grade level. The guidance service philosophy stated in the "Student Advisement Services" booklet is supported by detailed accounts of what services are available, when they are provided, by whom (with explanations of each person's job description), and what auxiliary services are available at various grade levels.

This district's philosophy is that 1) the most effective way to help students become responsible adults is to help them overcome problems that may impede them in achieving their goals; 2) guidance services are available to all district students, but they may vary according to grade level and school; 3) students will be encouraged to pursue a higher education and meet personal/social counseling needs; 4) students with atypical academic or emotional growth patterns will be helped to find alternative solutions within the system, or they will be referred to other agencies; and 5) parents will be encouraged to participate in their child's guidance program. Since this document also includes both a glossary of terms and a descriptive list of what tests are available to students to take, parents, student and teachers can determine what general and specialized services are available to the district's students and which people to contact should a specialized service be required.



The Health and Wellness Resource Center determined the need to address one further, specific issue whose potential for harm to the Clovis community could not be ignored: AIDS. In 1988, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome was regarded as reaching epidemic proportions in the United States, and a great deal of misinformation was being disseminated about the disease. A parent handbook, "AIDS: The Epidemic of the Twentieth Century," was published by Clovis Unified to assist parents in educating themselves and their families about AIDS, how it is spread, and how to protect themselves from the disease.

These handbooks, booklets and pamphlets are a small portion of the overall effort made by C.U.S.D.'s administrators to provide the most complete education possible to the students of Clovis Unified. Curriculum requirements reach far beyond the traditionally recognized subject matter addressed in a particular course; rather, a school district must address the needs of the whole student, to provide alternative management and guidance to assist at-risk students, and to develop students of good moral character. The education of a student is not complete if all facets of the student's personality are not addressed. The administrators and teachers of Clovis Unified School District try to educate the whole person, but it requires more than curricular programs to achieve this goal: the role of co-curricular programs is paramount in developing a well-rounded well-adjusted, thoughtful individual.