

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.

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 on 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.

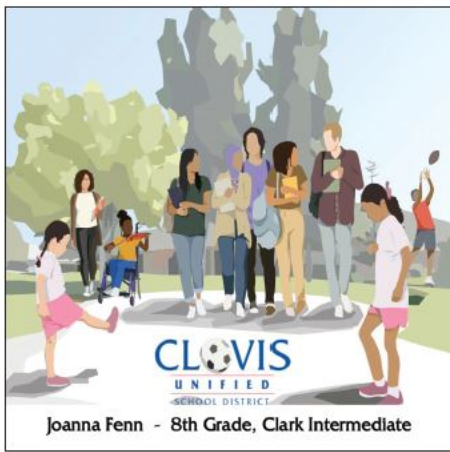
During my very first state of the district community address in 2017, I referenced a quote by C.S. Lewis that has been on my mind a lot lately. "Change isn't progress if you lose your core," Lewis said, and he was correct. Change is coming, in fact, I would say change is constant. This upcoming change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



Eimear O'Brien,
Ed.D.

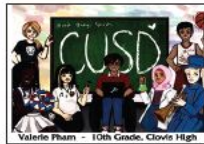
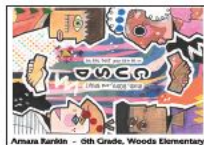
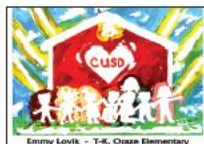
LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



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, Orazo Elemenary, transitional kindergartener; Amara Rankin, Woods Elementary sixth grader; and Valerie Pham, Clovis High sophomore – will be section fronts within the book.

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“Creativity is intelligence having fun.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN, PHYSICIST