

On course to grow student achievement

By Corrine Folmer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

AIM 1 of our strategic plan states the following: Maximize Achievement for ALL Students.

But what does that look like in our schools? That is a question best answered through the innovative, intentional teaching delivered by educators (surrounded by a safe and welcoming environment) every day in classrooms across our district. Educators take the time to build relationships with their students and support them to be the best they can be in mind, body and spirit.

A first-class education does not happen by chance. It starts with the establishment of high standards and an expectation that all of us can achieve those standards, both individually and collectively. That includes the high standards we apply in hiring the best people.

I truly believe that there is no better educational team in the nation than the one you find in Clovis Unified, and that is a belief based on first-hand experience as a student, parent and educator. Every day, I witness people who not only know how to do their job, but who care enough to give that job their very best. While perfection is not an attainable standard, we are a team that recognizes our students deserve no less than our very best and we strive for continuous improvement in being the best in everything we do. It is this quality and passion that is found in the people who comprise our educational team in Clovis Unified.

We also apply those high standards to the maintenance and repair of our facilities and grounds. Research and experience have taught us that students perform their best when the classrooms and schools they attend are clean, well-maintained and up-to-date. We want our students to be proud of their school.

I mentioned above that great teaching is intentional, and over the past two years our school teams

have been engaged in a district-wide effort to reassess our instructional practices. We are living in a time where students across California took troubling strides backward in their academic progress since 2019. To meet that challenge, our team sat down and reviewed the systems and expectations that have been used in the past to spur student achievement and are reestablishing and refining them for the present.

The work of our team centers around three points:

- Identifying essential standards for each grade level and ensuring teachers are intent on student mastery of those standards.

- Pinpointing resources for teachers to support them in teaching, lesson design, interventions, and benchmarking assessments, as they work to ensure that students are making progress toward the mastery of those essential standards.

- Re-examining the practices of our professional learning communities (our teacher teams) at each school, to focus on the use of student learning data to drive decisions on lesson design, interventions and re-teaching for mastery.

And while that is a quick summary, do not be led to believe this work is not hard. It is the heavy lifting necessary to meet the needs

of our students and ensure they are given every advantage possible.

I am proud of the commitment our educational team has made to delve deeper into these areas and the implementation of best practices to support our students' learning. One example of this is the work of our teachers, teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), and our Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability Department around creating resources for the essential standards being taught and assessed at each grade level.

In fact, at a recent parent meeting in one of our school areas, the work around instruction and the essential

standards was shared. While expressing enthusiasm about the essential standards effort, parents in attendance also asked how they could help support the work at home. Within a week, the TOSA team had created essential standards parent guides for math and reading.

Those standards are listed along with examples, ideas for work to reinforce the standards at home, and links to online lessons for students who are struggling in a particular standard. Their work is now being shared around our district. For any needed resources for supporting your student please visit: <https://www.cusd.com/CurriculumInstruction.aspx>.

It is the type of work I have just described that supports our mission to be a quality educational system providing the resources for ALL students to reach their potential in mind, body and spirit. Today, our students are making forward progress, and according to assessment results just released by California, their academic achievement remains 15-20% above state and county averages. Our students outperformed their peers around the State in Advanced Placement test pass rates, English Language Arts, Math and Science assessments.

We also saw our students' achievement rate grow by about a percent year-over-year, which is slightly greater than students around the state. These statistics are a testament to the work underway in our classrooms and by our educational leaders. However, just as our founding Superintendent Dr. Floyd "Doc" Buchanan once set a 90% goal for grade level achievement rates (when students were performing around the 30% level), we are not where our students need us to be – yet.

I am confident that the work that's been done to thoughtfully and intentionally bring our team together around essential standards and practices will see the number of students achieving grade level mastery continue to grow, and to grow quickly in the years to come.

Great education is also a partnership, like the one I described above with our parent meeting. It is both exciting and inspiring when we see where that partnership can take our students. Thank you for partnering with us.



Corrine Folmer,
Ed.D.

LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



Photo special to CUSD Today

Graduates of Clovis Unified make deep connections during their years in school, and recently some returned to their alma maters in celebration of homecoming events. Some even got back into the action, like these Clovis High alumni musicians who joined with the current marching band and performed on the field and in the stands during homecoming. "Once a Cougar, always a Cougar!"

“There is no place like home.”

L. FRANK BAUM, AUTHOR OF “THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ”