

For the
CUSD Board & Staff
 A DESTINATION DISTRICT

Upcoming events/reminders

- District Budget Committee
October 5 4:00 PM
- Board Meeting October 12,
6:30 PM
- Board Meeting October 26,
6:30 PM
- Board Technology Sub-
Committee October 28, 3:30
PM

*Every Corcoran
 Student
 Can Achieve!*

✧ **District Update** ✧

This document is to keep you abreast on upcoming items, current issues, and public relations on the many things happening in the District.



POWERFUL LEARNING & TEACHING

Most of us have probably heard about the Film Documentary being shown called "Waiting for Superman." I have seen parts of the trailer as well as responses from talk shows and opinions from teachers and non-teachers alike. I know that most documentaries can be pretty slanted and one sided, but nonetheless the message I come away with just knowing a small amount of what the film entails is teachers are important.

Great teachers make a huge difference for young people. They affect students, parents and community alike. They are the reason schools are successful. One great teacher can make the difference between the life and death of a student. This is the amount of influence teachers have on students.

Study after study shows the single most important factor determining the quality of the education a child receives is the quality of his teacher.



Great teachers set high expectations for all students.

They expect that all students can and will achieve in their classroom, and they don't give up on underachievers.

Great teachers have clear, written-out objectives.

Effective teachers have lesson plans that give students a clear idea of what they will be learning, what the assignments are and what the grading policy is. Assignments have learning goals and give students ample opportunity to practice new skills.

Great teachers are prepared and organized. They are in their classrooms early and ready to teach. They present lessons in a clear and structured way.

Great teachers engage students and get them to look at issues in a variety of ways. Effective teachers use facts as a starting point, not an end point; they ask "why" questions, look at all sides and encourage students to predict what will happen next. They ask questions frequently to make sure students are following along. They try to engage the whole class, and they don't allow a few students to dominate the class. They keep students motivated with varied, lively approaches.

Great teachers form strong relationships with their students and show that they care about them as people.

Great teachers are warm, accessible, enthusiastic and caring. Teachers with these qualities are known to stay after school and make themselves available to students and parents who need them. They are involved in school-wide committees and activities, and they demonstrate a commitment to the school.

Great teachers are masters of their subject matter.

They exhibit expertise in the subjects they are teaching and spend time continuing to gain new knowledge in their field. They present material in an enthusiastic manner and instill a hunger in their students to learn more on their own.

Great teachers communicate frequently with parents.

They reach parents through conferences and frequent written reports home. They don't hesitate to pick up the telephone to call a parent if they are concerned about a student.

Adapted from <http://www.greatschools.org/improvement/quality-teaching/what-makes-a-great-teacher.gs?content=79>

BOARD BELIEFS

The following is adapted from discussion with the Clovis Unified Board Members and Walt Buster at the July 13 Special Board Meeting:



*The Board and Superintendent
Form a Team*

Clovis Board Member: Now more than ever we need to stay focused. One of the things we did several years ago, we had one goal – student achievement. Everything was focused on that. How is this going to help student achievement? Vision with technology, facilities, everything had to be rationalized in those terms before we spent money on it. You need to prioritize things and have a clear focus. It worked for our district.

Corcoran Board Member: What do you do now as refocus?

Clovis Board Member: We have looked at everything we have spent a penny on and said, we don't have to spend the money here because it is probably not doing much. Let's take this money and use it in a different way - budget sweep and flex. They had made me realize it is important. We are refocusing things.

Corcoran Board Member: Are you saying before every budget cut? The 45-person Board members are going line by line.

Clovis Board Member: Everybody - community, staff, board members on the financial sub-committee. We went through every line item. We were a lot more...

Clovis Board Member: There are 45 people on the Clovis Budget committee. It gave this knowledge base to all groups in the district. We have faculty members that we run things by and they are on this committee. We said, anyone in this room can come up with ideas and we would listen to them. We would explore as a group if it was something the community would want.

"Look at a man the way that he is, he only becomes worse. But look at him as if he were what he could be, and then he becomes what he should be."

Goethe

"There are countless ways of attaining greatness, but any road to reaching one's maximum potential must be built on a bedrock of respect for the individual, a commitment to excellence, and a rejection of mediocrity."

Buck Rodgers

Quotes and Proverbs, This week's quote:

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.

~John Lubbock



This quote embodies the paradigm change in education from an emphasis on what and how we teach to student learning. What and how we teach is important, but the end in mind is not the teaching strategy; it is student learning. The question is not so much how we taught a lesson. The more important question is did students learn from the lesson. I remember creating what I considered powerful lessons in Biology as a young teacher. I had the content down, I had the presentation down, I had the lecture down, and I was going to “wow” my students into learning. I did little checking for understanding (I was taught the college model of lecture and hope they get it). I was surprised to see my results in my next set of quizzes and tests. Many students failed! I learned the hard way to go back to the drawing board and begin with the end in mind: how are students going to learn the content. When I focused on student performance and student learning instead of my personal “brilliance,” students succeeded! It took some humility and self-reflection to make this paradigm switch.



Administrators along with some of our teachers had the opportunity again to communicate with Rick and Becky Dufour regarding Professional Learning Communities. The message is consistent: people need to work in collaborative teams, and it hurts kids for staff to work in isolation.

The key points of discussion in these teams is to be crystal clear in communicating what is to be learned, and how students learn the information or skill. There also needs to be solid and objective evidence to determine this information. In other words, we know students are learning because of very simple to determine evidence and information. Whether or not students are learning should not be a mystery. It should be clear.

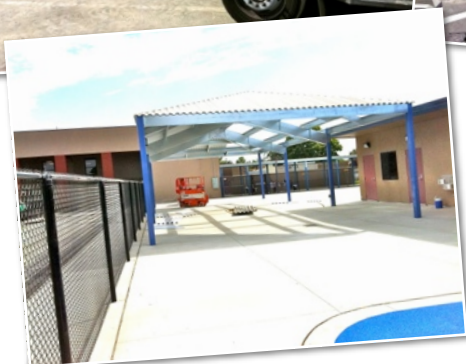
Once we know this critical information, we can act on it and make the necessary adjustments via our professional learning communities to see more and more students master what we are asking them to learn.

Teacher:

kibitzer
counsel
pundit
abecedary
skipper
trainer
righthand-person
solicitor
adviser
scholar
priest
faculty
assistant
counselor
instructor
professor
lawyer
expert
judge
helper
director
doctor
lecturer
pleader
supervisor
authority
quarterback
pedagogue
aide
educator
coach
mentor
disciplinarian
schoolteacher
monitor
preceptor
tutor
advocate
partner
confidant
attorney
referee
friend



Bret Harte PRESCHOOL PROGRESS



CUSD Vision:

Become a Destination District where people are drawn to Corcoran due to the quality, reputation and accomplishments of our schools.

CUSD Mission:

Create a positive learning environment where all students learn, achieve academically and are motivated to realize their full potential in and beyond CUSD.

Caught in the Act

Mrs. Robin Feldman

Robin Feldman lives in Corcoran and has had four children successfully graduate from Corcoran High School. She has worked for Corcoran Unified and Bret Harte for over 20 years. She is passionate about teaching students and having them meet grade level standards. Robin has spent countless hours refining her teaching practices.

She understands students' needs and is able to provide support in

those areas. Students in her classroom have consistently been strong writers and mathematicians. Robin's high expectations, knowledge of the standards, and passion for teaching have led to high levels of success in these areas. Robin has taken many leadership roles at Bret Harte, most recently with First Five as a partner in helping develop a plan to easily transition students into Kindergarten. She is also involved with the Parent Involvement Committee, which is currently in



the process of coordinating Bret Harte's Literacy Night in October. Bret Harte is proud to have a hardworking and passionate staff member on campus.

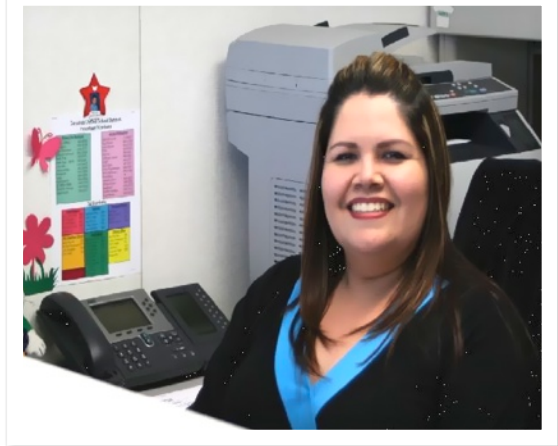
Rebecca Gonzales

If you can do five things at once and don't mind getting interrupted 10 times in the middle of doing one task then a job as a site secretary is for you. Rebecca Gonzales is a site secretary at John C. Fremont and does a great job!

Rebecca is a Corcoran native and graduated from Corcoran High School. She has four children that currently attend CUSD and has another child that is in pre-school. Rebecca has worked for CUSD for more than 10 years as both a library tech and as a site secretary.

Rebecca's daily work, focus to detail and commitment to student is partly responsible for building our school's positive culture. Everyone knows they can count on her to support them, follow through and meet timeline requirements.

Rebecca is one who displays a cheerful, relaxed, respectful and pleasing personality when working with others regardless of the situation. She also has a great love for children. She has the ability to answer phones, make copies, get supplies, apply a band-aid and juggle it all at once. Not only as the site



secretary, but also as the principal's secretary she has the great quality of knowing when to handle a problem by herself and when to refer it to the principal.

Rebecca is truly appreciated at Fremont for dedication to the students, staff and for all her hard work.

Down the Road



District Budget Committee

The first date for the newly formed District Budget Committee is **October 5 at 4:00 PM in the TLC**. The purpose of the budget committee is to:



- *Create an awareness of the budget process among all district staff.
- *Communicate the amount, sources and regulations of funding that come to the District to all district staff.
- *Provide avenue of communication for representative staff to assist in solving budget deficit issues.
- *Communicate Board budget priorities and plan in getting through this fiscal crises to all staff members.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

KINGS LAKE	BRET HARTE	FREMONT	MARK TWAIN	JOHN MUIR	CHS	DISTRICT	PARENT	SITE LEADER
1 TEACHER 1 Classified Staff Member	1 TEACHER 1 Classified Staff Member	1 TEACHER 1 Classified Staff Member	1 TEACHER 1 Classified Staff Member	1 TEACHER 1 Classified Staff Member	1 TEACHER 1 Classified Staff Member	Five Members	Five Parents	Two Principals

If one of the above does not serve as a classified union rep., there will include a classified union rep. If one of the above does not serve as a certificated union rep., there will include a certificated union rep.

Add Minimum Day to the Calendar

We are recommending to the Board a change in our school calendar to add a minimum day to December 17 (last day prior to Christmas vacation). This is due to the fact we have a different calendar this year concerning Thanksgiving. In lieu of having a minimum day prior to Thanksgiving, we have no school. However, according to CFA contract, if there is no minimum day prior to Thanksgiving, that minimum day has to be moved to the last day prior to Winter Break.

In the past, we had minimum days for students only. Now, with less than 12 month employees with minimum days, the question is whether or not we can and should have our annual Christmas celebration.