

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number EA-4

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Kristi Imberi-Olivares, Director
Cabinet Approval:

Date: October 30, 2020

Phone Number: 457-3896


Regarding: Student Voice Collaborative

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board an update of our Student Voice Collaborative. To further address the climate/culture of our district, a collaborative team of African American Academic Acceleration, Communications, English Learner Services, Equity and Access, Goal 2, Prevention and Intervention, Special Education, and State and Federal have begun a Student Voice Collaborative to advance equity in our schools by elevating student voices to create change and foster school site partnerships with students at the forefront. This collaborative aims to have representation across diverse student groups, with a particular focus on increasing student voice among historically underrepresented and marginalized groups to ensure all student groups have a voice and a platform to be heard. The team meets monthly to share resources, training opportunities and to continue to align efforts.

During this quarter, our collaborative met with Superintendent Robert G. Nelson Ed.D. on Monday, October 12, 2020 to discuss the focus of our Student Voice Initiative student groups and share current challenges and barriers being faced. We also presented to the Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled Board meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 to introduce our Student Voice Initiative student groups and provide them with the opportunity to share a little about their group's focus this year.

The following student groups met with Superintendent Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.: African American Academic Acceleration, Black Student Union, Communication Advisory Group, English Learner Student Advisory Group, Fresno Unified GSA Youth Voice Collaborative, and Race and Social Action Student Advisory Council. In the past quarter, our collaborative has had the opportunity to engage in training from "The Amazing Tei Street" sponsored by Goal 2, in addition to pro-bono training for our advisors from Youth Leadership Institute (YLI).

Included with this communication is a summary of updates from each of our Student Voice Initiative student groups that were presented at our Board Meeting on October 21, 2020 as well as additional materials on the two training opportunities that were provided to our students and group advisors.

If you have further questions or require additional information, please contact Lindsay Sanders at 457-3471.

Approved by Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 10/30/2020



Student Voice Initiative: An Introduction to Our Student Voice Initiative Groups

Below are 2020/21 Quarter 1 updates from each of our student voice initiative groups' goals and objectives, actions being taken to obtain student voice from their targeted student group, celebrations that they have experienced this quarter, a description of challenges/barriers they have encountered, and what their next steps are toward moving this work forward.

African American Academic Acceleration

Quarter 1 updates on goals and objectives: Our goals are to have our group made of students from all our FUSD high schools. We were able to add students from a few more regions since the last communication. We were also able to hold a series of design thinking labs to allow the students to put their thoughts into written form.

Current actions implemented to gather student voice: We are holding group sessions/labs and building documentation from student led conversations for future board or superintendent meetings.

Celebrations: Our student group has launched an Instagram/lived experience project that will allow students to share stories of their academic experience and highlight FUSD students and staff. This group of students will meet weekly to review, edit and post the stories of their peers.

Challenges/barriers: We have been unable to keep our student group at the number that we hoped to have. Though we initially had a number that was up to our expectation, we lost many due to other obligations and virtual fatigue.

Next steps: We will continue to recruit students to add to the variety of student voices and to eventually acquire representation from all regions. After obtaining these new members we will transition into the next series of design thinking labs.

Black Student Union

Quarter 1 updates on goals and objectives: This is our first BC. We represent the Black Student Union Advisory Council. We represent all the high schools in FUSD and support the work of all the BSU's in the district. Our advisors for this student council are Ms. Lisa Nichols and Mr. Pat Riddlesprigger. We are developing those soft leadership/life skills that allow us to learn how to effectively interact and communicate with others.

Current actions implemented to gather student voice: We are currently brainstorming as a council, ways to gather student voice. We are creating a survey to capture student voice to gather their feedback and ideas.

Celebrations: BSU Social Hour, BSU Advisor/Club Officers Retreat with guest presenter and Dr. Akua Award Winning Educator & Author. We are currently in a book study and reading "The Mis-



Education of The Negro by Carter G. Woodson. We are increasing our knowledge of black cultural and history with our book study.

Challenges/barriers: Attendance to site club meetings, students not motivated to attend due to virtual burn-out.

Next steps: We are working with Fresno State Recreation Administration students to create a public service announcement (PSA) message. G2 in partnership with Fresno County Superintendent of Schools will be hosting a Screening of the Black will be hosting a screening of the *Black Panther Movie* for all Black Student Union (BSU) members and African American Student Leadership Academy (AASLA) Cohort students on October 30th. There will be a Pre & Post Educational Discussion Webinar with special guest speaker and educator Anthony T. Browder

Communication Advisory Student Group

Quarter 1 updates on goals and objectives: We are in the final stages of recruitment as we have recruited several students thus far. Our goal is 14 students spanning over all regions and representing all student populations. The goal is to provide training, learning and support in the following areas: Advocacy, leadership, communications and media, and engagement.

Current actions implemented to gather student voice: We are planning on meeting bimonthly with our group. These meeting will consist of working and planning projects. In addition to providing professional development, students will engage with different team members from the Office of Communications.

Celebrations: Our students are excited to be a part of a collective student group. They are eager to learn, participate and advocate.

Challenges/barriers: We are identifying how to integrate this work into their academic schedules. Many have expressed their workload and responsibilities continue to increase. We are in discussion of incorporating self-care and wellness into our meetings-to check in with how students are doing.

Next steps: We will begin working on projects. We currently are in the process of creating a PSA to recruit students for the LCAP Student Advisory Committee. We will then explore how to increase student utilization of online resources.

English Learners Student Advisory Council

Quarter 1 updates on goals and objectives: The EL Student Voice group is a group of students from grades 5-12 from throughout the district. Each is a second-language learner and values their home language. The group is small, about 10 active members who are either classified as newcomers, long-term, re-designated and/or heritage learners. Nearly twenty percent of the school population in FUSD is an English Learner with nearly 60 languages spoken.



Current actions implemented to gather student voice: The group of students meet weekly to check in, build new skills and to provide feedback on the vision for English Learners in FUSD. Currently, the group is reflecting on the academic programs and supports and highlighting the Glows and the Grows in these areas. During the second meeting, students went through a workshop on youth voice and learned how their voice can be elevated to bring about change.

Celebrations: The group has been celebrating that the EL group is growing in number every time they meet. The young people would also like to recognize all students district-wide who redesignate as RFEP and seniors who receive the Seal of Biliteracy. This celebration would include parents and families.

Challenges/barriers: This group was just formed this academic year so many of the structures are being developed. Current members are reaching out to fellow classmates to invite to attend. More outreach is needed; however, developing a presence at school sites is something that the group would like to develop. The thought is to have Global Ambassadors at many of the school sites (coordinated through the EL Site Reps) and then each site would send 1-2 representatives to the advisory group.

Next steps: We are looking at how we can improve our vision statement and we are looking on how to improve the outcomes for our EL students. Some suggestions are having afterschool programs for extra support, encouraging more teachers to become bilingual themselves, getting counselors to contact EL students to help them out by giving them the resources in their home language. Families need more information in their home language.

In conclusion: English learners come with assets, Value the fact that they bring different perspectives because of their language and culture. Promote more students to become bilingual, biliteral, bicultural. By learning a language, you learn their culture as well. Learning a language helps all of us to understand one another and to learn to embrace the diversity of our school communities.

Fresno Unified GSA Youth Voice Committee

Quarter 1 updates on goals and objectives: We are the Fresno Unified GSA Youth Voice Committee. GSA stands for Genders & Sexualities Alliance. We are a new group that is just getting started. Some of the goals that we have discussed in this group include: 1) to have a more LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, especially in history. 2) Change the introduction policy for students in a classroom environment to include pronouns, along with their names. This is especially important because when it is just trans students that do this, it is as if they are outing themselves to everyone; so, this should be implemented among allies to normalize introductions with pronouns. And finally, 3) inclusive coverage of same-sex relationships throughout all sex education classes.

Current actions implemented to gather student voice: GSA gathers student voice through coalitions between multiple FUSD school GSA clubs, social events, and surveys that collect data (such as bathroom policies, changing of names / pronouns, and experiences with gender or sexuality-based harassment or bullying) from individual FUSD GSA clubs. Before everything shut down, we had an LGBTQ+ focused Rainbow Prom planned, and we are currently working towards launching our large virtual meetings where students can meet from different schools and share their experiences.



Celebrations: We are celebrating that many of our schools' GSA clubs are finally up and running, and that not only are we excited to see kids attend but also really impressed because we understand that it can be hard sometimes to put ourselves out there being a part of GSA.

Challenges/barriers: A main challenge we face is spreading awareness to people about something they view as an "other" or experiences they believe do not apply to them. Information about LGBTQ+ people in school curriculum often treats LGBTQ+ individuals as subjects to be learned about rather than actual people (discussions about gender and sexuality in sex ed, for example). It is painfully clear that gender and sexuality education focuses more on the comfort of straight, cisgender people than on teaching acceptance and understanding of queer folks. Bunching a brief gender and sexuality unit in with sex education only perpetuates harmful stereotypes of hypersexuality of LGBTQ+ people – we are whole people, and we expect to be treated as such. Another challenge is that some students are not able to be fully themselves at home during distance learning and may not be able to join GSA and get support.

Next steps: Next, we are going to meet with other district leaders who can help us with our goals. We are also planning on meeting with an LGBTQ+ inclusive mentorship program that started in our district. We are going to work on developing as leaders and furthering our voices. Some of them are also graphic designers that want to help us make digital posters and flyers for awareness campaigns that matter to us.

Race & Social Action Advisory Council

Quarter 1 updates on goals and objectives: We will be hosting a virtual professional learning workshop for our RSAAC to support the learning around youth advocacy on October 13th, 2020. We will also be having a guest speaker the 'amazing' Tei street, who is one of the top motivational speakers in the country. afterward, all student attendees will be given a free copy of Tei street's book "I'm the amazing Tei street, wouldn't you like to be amazing too?"

Current actions implemented to gather student voice: As we move forward with our Site Student Groups, we plan to gather student voice through a needs assessment that our Advisory Team has created. The results of these needs assessments at each one of our high schools will help guide our action plans to address those issues and concerns. Our goal is that once we establish our site level student groups, we focus on the needs assessment early on.

Celebrations: McLane had their first principal meeting with their student leader Julio, way to lead Julio! The rest of our student leaders have contacted their principals and will be meeting with them soon to begin the process of establishing their school site student group.

Challenges/barriers: Some challenges have been finding group members, at least one representative from every FUSD high school. Another challenge has been creating meetings with our principals and school advisors to set up and start running the RSAAC club on a school wide level.



Next steps: Student leaders will have their first meeting with their principles and site advisors. Students will work with their advisor, their principle, and of course the district council to work on recruiting members for the site level groups. Once site level groups are made, the needs assessment will be pushed out. The data we receive from the needs assessment will be used to help guide our work for the rest of the year.

RACE & SOCIAL ACTION ADVISORY COUNCIL VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

(Student Voice Initiative)

WHEN

October 13, 2020
3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

WHERE

Via Zoom

Meeting ID: 959 8014 6534

Passcode: 403437

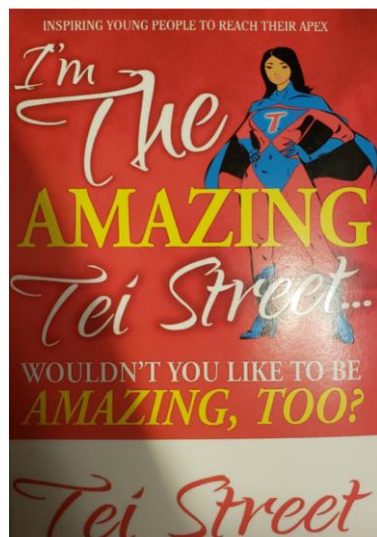
CONTACT

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559-708-2628

**All student attendees will receive a free copy of Tei Streets
"I'm the Amazing Tei Street, Wouldn't You Like to be
Amazing Too?" book. Please RSVP by October 9th.**



GUEST PRESENTER

The Amazing Tei Street
National Motivational
Speaker & Education
Consultant




Fresno Unified
School District



Youth & Adult Partnerships Training

- Learn the philosophy and practice of youth development and youth and adult partnerships
- Discover different approaches to working with youth, including your own style
- Gain a better understanding of adultism and how it stands in the way of authentic youth engagement



OCT. 27 • 10AM TO 12PM

Zoom Meeting ID: 345 208 0283

Passcode: Youthvoice