



Photo special by CUSD Today by Jim Webb.
Pinedale's Neighborhood Resource Center is always a busy community hub. Here, Linda Amparano, who heads the center, helps some of the many visitors to the innovative center, which earned the school a 2014 Golden Bell Award.

Pinedale Elementary wins 2014 Golden Bell Award for unique Neighborhood Resource Center

CUSD Today

For the second consecutive year, Pinedale Elementary has received a prestigious Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association (CSBA).

The school won a 2013 Golden Bell Award for bridging the achievement gap through its innovative data analysis program, while in 2014 the award was given to Pinedale for the effective-

ness of its Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC). The unique center promotes community involvement and contributes to the

overall academic, physical, social and emotional success of students.

CSBA's Golden Bell Award program highlights best practices in education in all areas of operations, instruction and support services.

"Receiving CSBA's Golden Bell Award two years in a row means that Pinedale is finally being recognized for its high level of excellence," said Principal Debra Bolls. "This has allowed our staff, our students, and our community to feed a sense of pride."

The NRC was established in 1994, however, it has since evolved as staff was recognizing that there

were intangible factors at home that were contributing to students' academic struggles. These intangibles also directly impacted the school's Academic Performance Index (API) and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), which kept the school from moving out of the state's Program Improvement status.

Since 2008, Pinedale Elementary has seen a steady increase in its Socio-economically Disadvantaged (SED) sub-group. In 2012, 88.2 percent of its student population was considered SED compared to 2008 when that percentage was 77.8 percent.

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Online assessments offer advantages

By Robb J. Christopherson, Ed.D.
Administrator, Curriculum and Instruction

The question asked by a parent in the most recent installment of *2 Minutes Today* centered on the advantages of taking tests on computers versus traditional methods of assessment.

This question is very well timed as state testing is framed around an online model for the first time this year. Fortunately, much of the test will feel very familiar to students.

"On computer-based assessments there are a lot of things that are very similar to the old pencil and paper tests," said Teacher on Special Assignment Geoff Dean. "For example, a multiple choice question on a pencil and paper test requires students to bubble in an answer sheet, whereas on computer assessments they're just going to click the answer on the screen."

The move to computer testing is not being done out of convenience. The migration to this model is purposeful and provides a more authentic testing experience for students. The advantages of computerized testing are best defined using three key terms: technology-based, technology-enhanced and computer adaptive.

Technology-based advantages

The new testing was designed and built with technology as a foundation.

Students will take the tests on secure platforms with all questions, both math and English language arts, being asked in online formats. The test will include some traditional multiple choice and open-ended questions. Much of the test will be automatically scored, making results more readily available to teachers.

Another benefit of computer-based testing is that students will be allowed to respond to different types of information. For example,



Learn more at CUSD Today's companion piece 2 Minutes Today

The topic of the advantages of online testing was first featured in February's *2 Minutes Today*, a new monthly video series sent out to all CUSD parents and guardians that started in January 2015. The videos are designed to keep Clovis Unified's students, parents and community informed of important educational topics. Each video will address one question asked by parents or a topic that is impacting district schools. The more in-depth exploration of each topic will be available in the subsequent issue of *CUSD Today*. The *2 Minutes Today* videos can be found at www.cusd.com/communications/2MinutesToday.

instead of only having written passages available, technology-based testing can offer audio clips, photographs and videos. This helps create an authentic experience that better mirrors the type of items students may face in the classroom during instruction.

Technology-enhanced advantages

The next advantage is the idea that the testing will be technology-enhanced. Students will answer questions in ways never before possible with just pencil and paper.

In today's classrooms, our students demonstrate their knowledge using a variety of methods. Technology-enhanced testing will

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CUSD's 2015 Students of Promise have each overcome adversity

By Charity Susnick
CUSD Today

Imagine living in 17 different foster homes, attending seven different elementary schools in three different districts, all before entering ninth grade. For one CUSD student and 2015 Student of Promise, this has been reality.

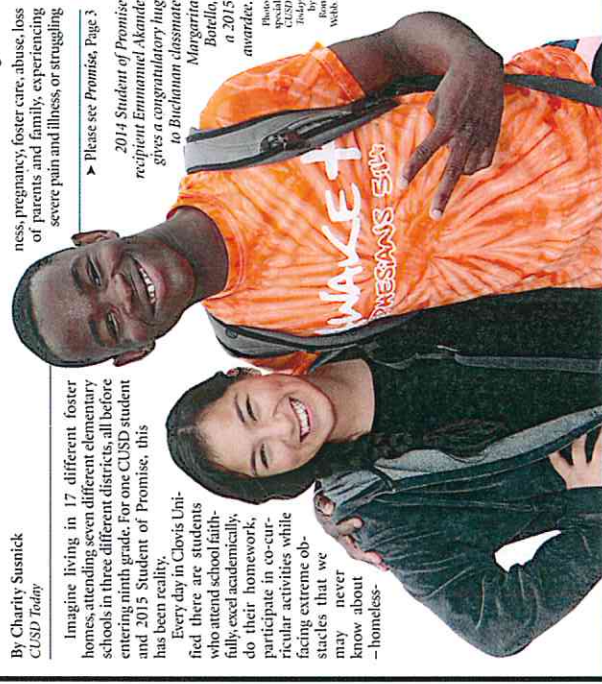
Every day in Clovis Unified there are students who attend school faithfully, excel academically, do their homework, participate in co-curricular activities while facing extreme obstacles that we may never know about — homeless-

ness, pregnancy, foster care, abuse, loss of parents and family, experiencing severe pain and illness, or struggling

► Please see *Promise*, Page 3

2014 Student of Promise recipient Emmanuel Akande gives a congratulatory hug to Buchanan classmate Margarita Bonello, a 2015 awarder.

Photo by CUSD Today by Jim Webb.



Mountain View student named poster child for hydrocephalus foundation

By Carol Lawson-Swezey
Special to CUSD Today

She loves the color purple, music, arts and crafts, and beating her family at the game "Sorry."

In many ways, Mountain View Elementary student Maddy Edgcomb is the typical preteen on the cusp of adulthood.

What separates her from many other 12 year olds are more than 30 brain surgeries and a life-threatening, incurable condition she battles every day.

Maddy was born with hydrocephalus, an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the brain, which builds up and cannot drain properly. The fluid gathers abnormally widening spaces in the brain, and placing potentially harmful pressure on brain tissues.

The primary treatment is the placement of a shunt, a surgically implanted device in the brain which diverts spinal fluid to another part of the body to drain. In Maddy's case, it is her abdomen. Because of the lack of advancements in treatment, many affected individuals are left unable to lead full and productive lives. Untreated, hydrocephalus can be fatal.

Maddy has severe learning dis-

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Photo special by CUSD Today by Carrie Ashby.
Mountain View sixth-grader Maddy Edgcomb has been named the 2015 female ambassador for the Pediatric Hydrocephalus Foundation.



COMMUNITY

Clovis Adult Education reaching new heights
Clovis Adult Education faculty and staff are constantly looking at new ways to enhance student learning and achievement. Page 7

PARENTING TODAY

Chris Herren gets real with Buchanan students
It is all too easy for each of us, with all our own imperfections, to sit back and watch people make mistakes. Page 11

VISION

Education is an important partnership
Education is a partnership between schools and our community, and it is only together that we can truly excel for kids. Page 5

Board approves new principal, hears budget update, approves 2015-16 staffing plan at February meetings

By Kelly Avants, APR
CUSD Today

Feb. 11 highlights

The Governor's 2015-16 proposed budget for California and its impact on Clovis Unified, were discussed by the CUSD Governing Board during a presentation by members of the Administrative Services office during the Feb. 11 meeting.

According to the presentation by Associate Superintendent Michael Johnson, Assistant Superintendent Mike Clear and Director Larry Corum, the state is continuing to work toward full funding of the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) by sometime after the year 2020.

The bulk of additional funds coming to Clovis Unified will be needed to cover new student services identified in the multi-year Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and ongoing expenses related to operating costs, increases in employer contributions to the state's retirement plan and healthcare expenses, and maintaining the district's school facilities.

The Governor's proposed budget will now become the focus of discussions by the legislature before a revised proposal is released in May. The state's revised budget will be used to complete the district's budget on which

the board will take action in June.

The board took a major step forward in plans to open a new elementary school at Temperance and Clinton avenues in Clovis by appointing Erin Gage, currently the principal of Freedom Elementary, to head the soon-to-be-created school community.

Gage's appointment is effective July 1, 2015.

In other action, *file board:*

- Approved a staffing plan for the 2015-16 school year that includes efforts to increase and/or restore support services to sites such as restructuring delivery of BTSA services; support for the ongoing development and reporting of the LCAP and other district assessment data; and increasing or restructuring staffing in the accounting, human resources, special education, technology, curriculum and instruction, administrative services, and educational services departments.

This action was part of a long-term planning process begun last fall to ensure that, as the district continues to grow, schools are maintained at a high-quality level.

- Approved the annual 2014-15 Master Plan for Services to English learners, the 2014-15 Title I Program Improvement/Corrective Action and Technical Assistance Plans, and revisions to the

BOARD BRIEFS

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Clovis Online Charter School

- Approved a small increase in private-pay pre-school fees. This is the first such increase to the program's costs in eight years.

The new fees, which take effect for the upcoming school year, are \$25 per day for the three-hour-a-day program and \$26 per day for the three-and-a-half hour a day program.

- Approved lease/lease back agreements for 2015-16 modernization projects at Alta Sierra and Kistner in intermediate schools; Cole, Maple Creek, Mountain View, Nelson and Red Bank elementary schools; and the Reagan Educational Center.

- Authorized the purchase of automated external defibrillators using a piggyback bid.

- Approved new Board Policy No. 7206 – Privacy of Electronic Records.
- Awarded bids for construction projects at Clovis East and Clovis North high schools; and for perishable and non-perishable food for the Sierra Outdoor

landfill was before."

When Panmarale told the class how trash, even recyclable items, end up in the world's oceans, polluting natural habitats and killing sea life, it made an impact on many of the students, including Frank. "I don't like it when trash gets in the ocean and animals eat it and die. Can't people recycle and put trash where it is supposed to be?" he asked.

Schools are an ideal place to teach recycling and environmental awareness, Panmarale noted. He shared with Blankenship's students the many ways they can recycle at school:

- Save packaging, colored paper, egg cartons, and other items from home for arts and crafts projects.

- Use nontoxic products, like vegetable-based inks.
- Use and maintain durable products that can be used again. Sturdy backpacks and binders can be reused from year to year, which helps reduce the amount of trash taken to the landfill.

- Buy school supplies from recycled products.
- Bring lunches in reusable cloth bags or lunch boxes instead of paper or plastic bags. They can also bring a drink in a thermal container, which can be reused.

- If they buy lunch, students should take and use only what they need, one of each of napkins, ketchup, salt and pepper packets, and utensils.

It is important that students and staff remember to

- Clovis West High girls' golf (Head Coach Ken Shipley) and girls water polo (Head Coach Scott Torosian).

Before congratulating the winning teams, the board announced the appointment of current Riverview Elementary Principal Kristie Wiens to the position of Director of Instruction and Career Technical Education; current Kasner Intermediate Principal Allison Hernandez to the position of Director of Program Evaluation; and current Assistant Director of Special Education Shannon Greene to the position of Director of Special Education. All of the appointments are effective July 1, 2015.

In other action, *file board:*

- Accepted the annual Citizens' Oversight Committee Audit Report on the district's expenditures of 2012 Measure A Facility Bond funds. Vice-Chair of the Committee Mike Prandini was present to thank the board and administration for the timely and responsible execution of the district's bond project list.

- Accepted the donation of a 2015 Loadrunner trailer to the Clovis North High Robotics program.

- Approved all conference requests, fundraisers, student trips, change orders and vol-

untary community recreation programs, as submitted.

- Approved a legal services agreement with Fox Rothschild LLP for work in the district's facility program.

- Approved the 2015-16 Deferred Maintenance Program and authorized the superintendent to call for bids for the projects.

- Approved a new secondary course of study, Foundations of Math 2, for use in the district's high schools.

- Adopted Resolution No. 3196 – Non-Recollection of Temporary Certified Employees.

- Approved a compromise and settlement agreement between Clovis Unified and the parents of a Special Education student.

- Approved a lease/lease back agreement for the construction of the Temperance-Clinton elementary school project.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the CUSD Governing Board is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, at 6:30 p.m. at 1680 David E. Cook Way in Clovis. Complete minutes and agendas for all meetings are available online at cUSD.com/board.

Copper Hills Elementary students learn about recycling

By Kathy Angelos
Special to CUSD Today

How long does it take for a plastic bag to breakdown in a landfill? What items can be reused at home? What is recyclable? What isn't?

These were some of the questions posed to Luis Panmarale, Industrial Waste and Salvage (IWS) recycling educator and credentialed teacher, as he led a recent classroom workshop at Copper Hills Elementary about the benefits of recycling.

Shana Blankenship's third grade class was excited and anxious to help determine if items brought to the Panmarale were trash or recyclable. Student volunteers were called upon to participate in the workshop, learning just how much of what many people consider trash are actually products that can be recycled. These recyclable items include school and office paper of all types; soda aerosol and tin cans; glass bottles and containers; catalogs, magazines, newspapers, inserts, wrapping paper and junk mail; milk and laundry detergent jugs; and small appliances and hand tools (anything with a cord).

"It was fun when helpers came up and sorted all the trash in the blue bin, gray bin and green bin," said student Frances.

Panmarale also explained why it is important to reduce the quantity of items sent to the landfill and showed a model landfill.

Student Shane said, "I actually didn't know what a



Copper Hills teacher Shana Blankenship's third grade class was excited and anxious to help determine if items brought to the class by Luis Panmarale were trash or recyclable.

recycle cans and bottles, and separate trash from recycling. First, recycling is taught as a practice that can be a part of every student's life, whether at school, home or at activities. Second, students take their new knowledge home and share it with their families who learn about recycling as well. Students become recycling ambassadors, sharing their newfound knowledge with the community.

The presentation was time well spent for her third graders, said Blankenship. "The presentation got the students involved. The modeling and demonstrations made it very real for them," she said. "The presentation made an impact on my students."

For more recycling information, visit www.caglaen-virromental.com.

To schedule a school or classroom recycling presentation, call 559-233-1158 x13.




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