



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024-25**



## FORWARD

The purpose of the Annual Report is to provide a summary of the activities of the past year and to make recommendations for future years. In addition to the Annual Report, the District publishes the School Accountability Report Cards (SARC) for each school. Both the Annual Report and the School Accountability Report Cards are made available to the public.

Roger Brossmer, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Downey Unified School District

October 2025

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## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Wayne Shannon, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Elementary  
Rani Bertsch, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Secondary

**Elementary Education**  
**Jennifer Robbins, Director**

### **Apple Distinguished Schools and Educational Technology Integration**

Elementary is committed to developing students who possess the skills necessary to thrive as learners, demonstrate knowledge in creative ways, and communicate their ideas to a broader audience. Elementary continues to create dynamic and interactive learning environments for all students while transforming learning with meaningful technology integrated throughout all content areas. Age-appropriate digital fluency goals were created to integrate educational technology tools throughout our students' academic day in TK-5. These Digital Fluency Expectations embed the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards and big ideas for each grade level. This resource has become a key tool that unifies all schools and grade levels in meaningful educational technology implementation.

The Digital Fluency expectations have helped to guide our work in integrating creative tech components into lessons. Examples of how students demonstrate creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills in our ever-changing dynamic world include making their thinking visible through various tools like Book Creator, green screen, stop motion, Pixton, Clips, podcasting, iMovie, and 3D design in Tinkercad, among others.

Coding is taught in grades TK through 5. Children use block coding to program a variety of robots, such as Dash and Sphero Bolts. In addition, ScratchJr and Scratch allow students to create projects, animations, and games. Students enjoy sharing their work as they develop computational thinking and 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills.

Each elementary school also has robotics clubs focusing on robotics and engineering for students interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). The Robotics Clubs are an excellent opportunity for students to explore the exciting world of robotics and engineering while developing valuable skills for their future endeavors. 3rd-5th robotics culminates with a VEX IQ tournament in the spring. Our students also interact with Indi, Ozobots, Dash, Sphero Bolts, Tinkercad Design challenges, VEX GO, and Littlebit Circuits.

Elementary Education is also excited to announce that we have our last two schools, Alameda and Rio Hondo, applying to be Apple Distinguished Schools (ADS). Once we receive formal designation, Elementary will have all 13 schools recognized as an ADS. Being designated as an Apple Distinguished School isn't merely a stroke of luck; it is the result of a rigorous process to foster continuous innovation within the educational institution. Elementary also hosted two ADS site visits, where educators from multiple school districts and leadership positions came to see how we integrate technology. This

is a prestigious honor where guests left inspired and impressed with what our students are able to accomplish.

### **District Student Tech Squad**

Year three of the District Student Tech Squad has been instrumental in implementing ISTE standards for students and continuing to expand opportunities around the 4 Cs of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. The goal of our district tech squad each year is to provide opportunities to build global collaborators as we unite our 13 elementary school site student leaders at meetings throughout the year. Students share highlights of the ways EdTech tools are being used on their campus with each other and then collaborate to learn new strategies to take back to their site. Throughout these meetings, students explored 3D designing with Tinkercad, programming Sphero Bolts, and programming Hopper drones in teams to take off, fly, and land on a designated target. This lesson series was designed to provide enriching opportunities for students to be empowered learners, innovative designers, computational thinkers, creative communicators, and global collaborators. Our District tech squad students also had a chance to collaborate with the Stauffer student tech squad for an exciting day of coding their own game using MakeCode Arcade.

### **Elementary Early Learning Expo**

Elementary Education has transitioned from hosting a TK-5 “Elementary Expo” to an “Early Learning Expo”, highlighting and showcasing the fantastic learning opportunities available for our youngest learners (TK and K) to continue increasing enrollment. The event was held on March 5<sup>th</sup> at Sussman Middle School. Over 500 people attended the event, with more than 80 having zip codes outside of Downey.

Our TK and K students were live and in action in replicas of classroom learning environments. Learning opportunities showcased included math, language arts, robotics (Indi, Little Bits, & Dash), music, art, wellness, LEAP, STEAMworks, innovative learning, Innovation Labs, GLAD, Future Ready elementary opportunities, and more!

All 13 schools were represented to demonstrate our coherence and to show that we offer all programs at all schools. Each family that attended received a “swag bag” and a brochure in both English and Spanish. An enrollment table was also set up so families could enroll or apply for permits on the spot.

### **Innovation Labs**

Elementary Innovation Labs are an extension of student learning, ensuring they receive a 21<sup>st</sup>-century education that empowers them to be college and career-ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character. This space is designed to enhance the learning that happens within the classroom and provides a space where our students can be creative. We have created these spaces not only for our students to use a variety of technologies, but also to spark curiosity and provide a space for them to explore and be creative in their learning. Our labs provide opportunities for our students to work on projects where they have choices when it comes to showing what they know and enable the engineering and design process to be brought to life.

In our Innovation Labs, our students are engaged in the engineering and design process. They can create a prototype of their design, test it out, iterate on their design, print and test a new one, and learn to work and communicate as a team. They are also learning the foundational principles of computer programming through coding by writing block code to make their robots move.

Some tools included in Innovation Labs are permanent green screens, Lego walls, robots (Dash & Dot, Sphero Bolt, Ozobots, Indi, etc.), ring lighting, and iPad stands for video creation, collaborative whiteboard tables, 3D printers, VR headsets, and Logitech Crayons. Examples of learning experiences for students in the Innovation Labs include coding and programming, video creation, creating music with GarageBand, broadcasting, using recording studios for projects, and robotics.

The Innovation Lab is also a place where our students can explore, discover, engineer, design, and engage in innovative tasks that spark their curiosity. This space is all about opportunity, an opportunity for our students to develop their digital fluency, coding, and robotics skills.

### **Elementary Robotics**

This year brought exciting changes to elementary robotics, including an updated timeline to Robolympics, adjustments to 4th and 5th-grade match times, and the introduction of the 5th Grade Driver Skills Challenge. Our 3rd, 4th, and 5th-grade teams competed in the VEX IQ season game, Rapid Relay teamwork challenge, with adjusted time limits for each grade level (3rd grade = 3 minutes, 4th grade = 2 minutes, 5th grade = 1 minute). These updates paved the way for our 4th and 5th-graders to compete in official VEX IQ competitions!

The goals of Elementary Robotics are to:

- Provide pathways for elementary students to learn more about teamwork and the engineering design process through VEX robotics.
- Provide 4th and 5th Graders a progressively more complex and more competitive pathway for robotics beyond Sphero Bolt
- Provide 3rd-grade an entry pathway into competitive robotics that is more complex than Sphero, Indi, and Dash.

At Robolympics, we had 273 competitors, and 57 coaches participate. From innovative robot designs to creative and strategic gameplay, teamwork, and sportsmanship, every team had so much to be proud of.

### **New Highlights This Year:**

- 3D-printed license plates
- 5th Grade Driver's Skills Challenge
- Customized VEX IQ trophies with a 3D-printed game ball
- Teams naming themselves and their robot
- Mascots and/or pep squads for every school



Elementary also competed in an official VEQ tournament at Stauffer in February. This event allowed elementary students for the first time to have a team qualify for the Southern California VIQRC Elementary School State Championship Competition. Congratulations to the Alameda CyberClaw Tigers, Lewis Wingardium Leviosa, and Price Autobots for qualifying and competing in the State competition. These three schools are ranked among the top 640 teams worldwide out of 5,647 participants! After the State competition, the Price Autobots were invited to participate in the 2025 VEX Robotics World Championship in Dallas, Texas. Price ranked 278 out of 417, but more importantly got the experience of a lifetime collaborating with students from around the world!

## **STARBASE**

This fantastic learning opportunity has been extended to all DUSD 5th-grade students. During this school year, all 5th-grade students are participating in STARBASE, a 5-day Department of Defense Youth Program that is built on a “hands-on, minds-on” learning experience around science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) at the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base.

The Department of Defense STARBASE program is a premier educational initiative sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. It provides students with hands-on STEM activities while interacting with military personnel, allowing them to observe real-world STEM applications and explore related careers. The program, held at military bases across the U.S., offers 25 hours of immersive STEM experiences, primarily focused on fifth graders, with the goal of inspiring them to pursue STEM opportunities as they continue their education.

All fifth graders in Downey Unified who are in classrooms teaching NGSS took part in the STARBASE program. Students spent 25 hours at the military base, engaging in hands-on lessons covering physics, CAD (Computer Aided Design), robotics, and chemistry—all aligned with NGSS standards.

## **GLAD and IB**

The dual immersion programs and IB continue to thrive and expand in elementary. Dual immersion classes are now on three campuses: Carpenter (Dual and IB), Garcia, and Williams. An additional dual immersion program is also being added to Unsworth for the 25/26 school year.

The Global Language Academies of Downey (G.L.A.D.) at Downey Unified School District follows a two-way 90:10 model, where students begin learning primarily in the target language and gradually increase their English instruction. Through this approach, students learn to think, read, write, and communicate naturally in both languages, becoming bilingual and biliterate by the end of the program.

Being bilingual not only enhances cognitive skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking, but also strengthens memory and multitasking abilities. It opens doors to greater career opportunities, broadens global perspectives, and fosters cultural appreciation.



G.L.A.D. empowers students to achieve high levels of academic success while developing cross-cultural skills that provide lifelong advantages.

### **Meet the Masters**

During the 24/25 school year, all students TK-5 had the opportunity to study 4 diverse art masters. Elementary TOSAs created an engaging series of lessons that supported problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking.

For each artist, there were two pre-recorded lessons that teachers utilized to facilitate instruction at a time that works best for them. During the first lesson, students observed and discussed the work and life of an art master. During the second lesson, students created their own art masterpieces. The elements of art and the artists' individual styles and contributions to the art world were emphasized, and creativity was highly encouraged. The artists studied were Monet, Mondrian, Renoir, and Van Gogh.

### **Days of Design**

Elementary students participated in three "Day of Design" engineering challenges during the school year. The purpose of these days is to have students participate in the engineering design process while showcasing their creativity and innovative thinking.

The book, materials, lesson plans, and creative extensions to enhance student learning were provided to all teachers. The first challenge was inspired by the story *The Fantastic Bureau of Imagination*. After learning about the power of creativity, students dove into the engineering process to bring their imaginations to life. The second Day of Design challenge was inspired by the book *A River of Dust*. Students used the engineering process to construct their own satellite. The final challenge was inspired by the book *The Amazing World of Video Game Development*. Students were challenged to build games with specific criteria. These Day of Design lesson opportunities continue to unite all of our elementary students in a shared design challenge where students are encouraged to think critically and creatively about how to solve a problem.

### **Dale Lostetter Carnival of Champions**

This year was the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual DUSD Elementary Dale Lostetter Carnival of Champions Track and Field meet held at Warren High School. Each elementary school sends teams from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade that compete in seven events: 50-Meter Dash, 100-Meter Dash, Baskets in One Minute, Softball Throw for Distance, Standing Long Jump, Four-Member Team 400-Meter Relay, and 400-Meter Mixed Co-Ed Relay. All events except for the relays include two boys and two girls for each competition. The 400-meter relay consists of four boys and four girls, and the Mixed relay consists of one boy and one girl from each grade. No child may participate in more than three events. The athletes/teams receive points for their placement in each event.

Teams practice for several months before the event. The event was an exciting day where families, students, and staff came together to support our elementary student-athletes. The event is made possible because of the community spirit and teamwork that support it.

## **Carnival by the Numbers**

- ✂ **500+** elementary student-athletes
- ✂ **70+** adult volunteers
- ✂ **150+** cheer/pep squad members
- ✂ **4,000+** spectators

## **2025 Carnival of Champions – Top 5 Schools**

- 🏆 **Old River School**
- 🏆 **Price**
- 🏆 **Lewis**
- 🏆 **Carpenter**
- 🏆 **Rio San Gabriel**

## **Elementary PE**

Elementary is proud to be able to provide PE instruction to every 4th and 5th-grade student. This year, there were three PE teams, each consisting of two certificated teachers and two classified PE assistants. Each PE team rotates through the different schools to provide PE lessons for two 50-minute blocks of time twice a week. Students participate in lessons designed around the California PE Frameworks. The PE team also provided recess and lunch support to all sites to support structured play, including at our TK-3 sites. The PE team promotes healthy habits, encourages students to lead active lifestyles, and supports our CC! Program.

## **Elementary VAPA**

### **Music**

Elementary Music Teachers provided general music instruction to all students in Transitional Kindergarten through fifth grade. They also supported various performance opportunities at individual school sites and district events throughout the year, including:

- The Elementary Music Teachers and fifth-grade students from Lewis Elementary led a Body Percussion activity at the State of the Schools.
- The Elementary Music Teachers and Kindergarten students from Rio San Gabriel Elementary provided an overview of the elementary music program through demonstration lessons and interactive musical experiences at the TK / K Expo.
- Facilitated student vocal and instrumental music performance opportunities at Apple Distinguished School Celebrations.
- Showcased the elementary music program during Alameda's Coffee with the Principal and Tiger Pride Music Festival, incorporating student vocal, dance, and instrumental music performances at all grade levels.

## **Elementary VAPA Partnerships**

- Downey Symphonic Society continued the longstanding tradition of offering concerts to all DUSD third graders in October 2024 and to all fifth graders in April 2025 at the Downey Theater.
- In partnership with The Music Center's education department, every elementary school selected at least one professional dance group offered by The Music Center to perform for their entire school population. These performances were so well-received that some schools used their VAPA funding to schedule additional professional dance groups to perform for their students.
- Gallatin, Rio Hondo, and Rio San Gabriel Elementary Schools sent their fifth-grade students to The Music Center's **Annual Blue Ribbon Children's Festival** to see Parsons Dance Company perform at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Students in attendance received a book about the Music Center and participated in an outdoor group dance performance on the Jerry Moss Plaza.
- Stay Arts expanded its current level of support into our elementary schools by offering customizable programming in the form of Stay Creative after-school weekly art workshops and Family Paint events. Schools utilized their Prop 28 funds to provide 4-week, 6-week, or 8-week art workshops for specified grade-level groupings led by professional teaching artists with experience in education and the visual arts. A culminating art gallery showcase allowed students, families, and staff to gather to celebrate students' artistic growth and creativity. School sites also partnered with Stay Arts to provide family engagement events or team-building opportunities for their staff members.

Every elementary school established a Dance / Pep Squad, where students receive weekly instruction and opportunities to showcase their skills by performing at school events, such as the Carnival of Champions, the Robolympics, and the Esports Championship. Our elementary schools also utilized Prop 28 funds to operate VAPA-related after-school clubs (such as Folklorico, breakdancing, drama, glee, and choir), musical instruments, art-related field trips, assemblies, themed student & family dances, and more.

## **First Best Instruction**

Elementary continues to focus on First Best Instruction (FBI) as a foundation for all we do in support of teachers and their instructional practices. These collective efforts help us ensure we are providing meaningful and engaging academic opportunities to our students. Elementary is relentless in our commitment to providing our students with relevant and rigorous first-best instruction built on the foundation of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.

Professional learning and support this year continued to be offered by our Elementary TOSAs. These included, but were not limited to:

- Monthly New Teacher Academy

- TOSAs work with grade level PLCs (over 230 meetings) to plan lessons, plan next steps, analyze work as well as individual teacher meetings (over 100)
- Modeled over 400 lessons in classrooms across the elementary sites
- PD for teachers (over 70 opportunities)
- Assisting with the structure, planning, and lesson creation in Innovation Labs
- Providing Innovation Lab PD to staff and IMTs
- Apple Distinguished School support
- Admin PD
- Weekly Tech Updates every Friday
- TTL and IMT Trainings
- Categorical Trainings
- Creating lessons for all grade levels in Math, ELA, art, and STEAM
- Creating/finding resources to support teachers for ELA, Math and Science
- Assessment design
- Supporting intervention at sites in ELA and Math
- Orientation meetings and PD for robotics coaches

### **STEAMworks**

Elementary offered STEAMworks, a 19-day elementary summer academic program, at the close of this school year to continue student learning. This engaging and rigorous learning opportunity was provided to TK-4th-grade students during the 2025 summer. This was also the first year all special education classes were integrated into all summer sites. Summer school was hosted at five sites Alameda, Gauldin, Price, Unsworth, and Ward. All elementary schools fed into these four options, except for Ward, which hosted GLAD students from Carpenter, Garcia, and Williams.

STEAMworks ran from June 11 through July 10 from 8:00 to 12:30, five days a week. The theme this year was “*National Parks-Adventure Awaits*”. TOSAs designed hands-on SEL, Read Aloud, math, art, and engineering lessons, as well as students receiving music and dance instruction. All students were invited and had the opportunity to attend STEAMworks. There were approximately 2,000 students who enrolled in STEAMworks.

### **Science Camp**

Mary Edge-Guerra, Coordinator, Extended Day Program in collaboration with principals and staff, organized an unforgettable science camp experience for 667 fifth-grade students from eleven elementary schools at the Pali Institute in the San Bernardino Mountains. The students attended one of two sessions, from January 27-29 and January 29-January 31, where they engaged in three days of fun and educational activities.

Students participated in outdoor adventures like hikes, astronomy sessions, and a thrilling ropes course. The camp also provided unique, hands-on learning opportunities such as squid dissections and rocket building, which sparked curiosity and excitement about science. Alongside these activities, students enjoyed delicious meals and created lasting memories with friends in the scenic mountain environment.

The Pali Institute camp experience was a resounding success, made possible by the combined efforts of schools, families, community organizations, and generous donors. Through scholarships, fundraising, and other support systems, we ensured the camp was accessible to all students, regardless of financial circumstances. These partnerships have been pivotal in fostering memorable learning experiences that students will cherish for years to come

### **Elementary Esports**

The implementation of Elementary Esports offers a wealth of educational, social, and emotional benefits for our students in addition to fostering a new generation of critical thinkers, team players, and future leaders.

During the 2024-2025 school year, every elementary school received the equipment and funding necessary to operate an after-school Esports Club using Nintendo Switch gaming systems and Super Smash Bros. as part of a competitive and engaging season.

The season began in February and culminated in a thrilling district-wide championship held on Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at Warren High School.

Approximately 800 spectators gathered in person to witness the tournament and demonstrate their support and pride for the student competitors. The YouTube Livestream video also received approximately 1,200 views.

The Elementary Dance / Pep / Cheer Squads collectively performed a dance to the song “Exceptional” and continued to cheer in the bleachers throughout the evening.

Every district competitor received a certificate of participation, VIP lanyard, and a gaming goodie bag. The following championship trophies were awarded:

Third Place:	Hector Vivas (Rio San Gabriel)
Second Place:	Dylan Veloz (Alameda)
First Place:	Esteban Valenzuela (Unsworth)
Perpetual Trophy	Unsworth Elementary School

### **True Lasting Connections (TLC) Family Resource Center Program**

This year TLC, an integral part of DUSD, celebrated its 25th anniversary. During the 24/25 school year, TLC assisted 1,052 students through district-wide referrals. TLC supported families with a variety of assistance, including counseling, crisis intervention, parenting, food, clothing, dental, glasses, bereavement counseling, drug and alcohol programs, health insurance enrollment, Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas gifts and dinners, backpacks and school supplies, special needs resources, suicide prevention, low-cost immunizations, adult education, childcare, utility assistance, homeless assistance, and child abuse prevention/intervention.

In addition, a total of \$133,024.89 was raised through donations, grants, and fundraisers this school year. The main fundraiser was the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual 5K for TLC, which had nearly 1,500 participants and raised over \$70,000. TLC also received in-kind contributions

totaling \$31,282, with the two high schools raising and donating over \$29,000 combined.

### **Elementary Education Responsibilities**

- Plan, design, coordinate, and/or provide differentiated professional development (PD) for elementary staff tied to the core curriculum and our district initiatives.
- Plan Elementary Principal Meetings, including professional development and support for administrators.
- Direct the Elementary Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) Instructional Coach staff, which consists of one ELA, two math, one STEAM TOSA, two ITCs, and one SEL TOSA.
- Support elementary administrators.
- Oversee Elementary English Learner (Multilingual) Program
- Oversee Elementary Categorical Resource Teachers.
- Oversee Elementary PE Program.
- Oversee the elementary music program.
- Coordinate the Dale Lostetter Carnival of Champions.
- Oversee the Elementary Robotics Clubs/Program and Robolympics.
- Oversee creative educational technology integration, including professional learning.
- Oversee the Elementary STEAMworks Summer Program.
- Oversee the District-Wide Elementary STEM Challenges (Day of Design)
- Serve as the District's CAASPP Coordinator for SBAC Tests in ELA, Math, and Science for students in Grades 3-5, that are part of the CAASPP.
- Assist with the coordination of the GATE program for 4th-5th Grade.
- Member of HRC Steering Committee.
- Administered and monitored budgets for Title II, Part A; Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) State Funds for specific line items.
- Provide District leadership and coordination for Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ - Title II). Also, provide leadership and assistance in working with the elementary schools for ITQ - Title II
- Monitor and review K-5 student retentions submitted by schools and/or parents; confer with parents appealing site decisions to retain/promote their child.
- Assist school sites in analyzing data to improve instruction.
- Stauffer Teacher and Principal Grants
- Rotary Recognizes Readers program
- Oversee TLC

### **Future Plans and Recommendations**

- Continue to build professional learning opportunities for our teachers to help accelerate student learning.
- Continue to provide resources to support our teachers and administrators.
- \* Focus on math instruction
- Support First Best Instruction and Professional Learning Communities.
- To best support our teachers, instructional coaches are a necessity. We need to continue to leverage our coaches' skills and support to further instruction at all sites.

- Continue to build and expand our GLAD program.
- Continue to expand VAPA across Elementary sites, including partnerships
- Expand the implementation of NGSS across all grade levels.
- \* Implement the Reading Universal Screener
- Create a report card specific to language development in our dual immersion classrooms

## **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **Kathy Estevez, Ed.D., Director**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

In 2024-2025, Secondary Education continued to promote academic success for middle and high school students by focusing on our District Vision that ALL students graduate with a 21st Century education that ensures they are college and career ready, globally competitive and citizens of strong character. Our vision directly aligns with our Board's Goal on Equity which emphasizes access and inclusion for ALL of our students.

The following Secondary Education initiatives and priorities support our District's Vision and Equity Goals:

### **Equity Plan**

The Equity Plan details the district's plan of action toward achieving equity for all Downey Unified School District students. Our district's commitment to our students continues and we strive to:

- Create safe spaces for students to voice their concerns and seek support.
- Engage equity partners (students, staff, and families) in the process of developing and implementing the equity plan.
- Establish spaces for ongoing professional development for all staff.
- Establish progress monitoring protocols.



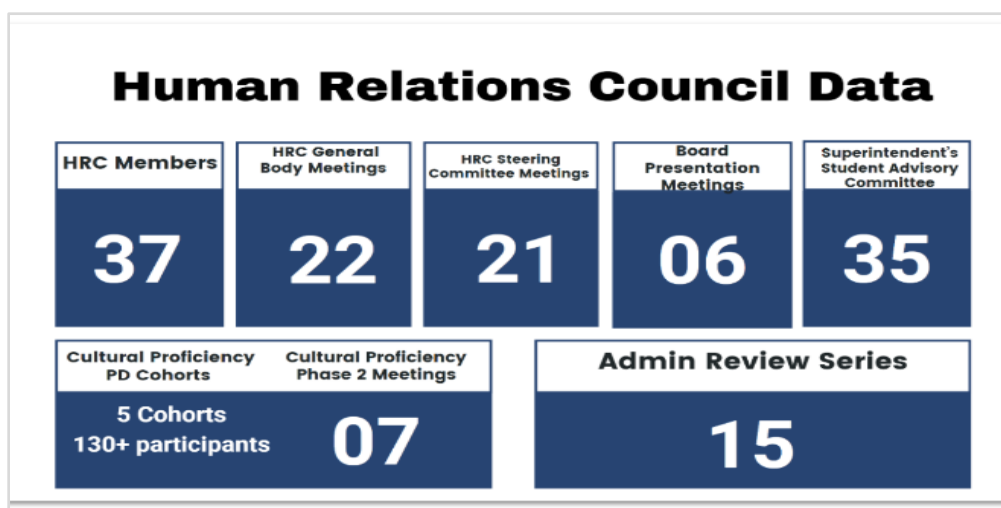
The Equity Plan is organized around four foundational themes: Belonging, Achievement, Opportunities for Access, and Transparency and Accountability. Within each theme, the equity goals include action steps, suggested strategies, persons responsible to meet the.

DUSD Equity Plan Goals	
<b>Goal 1 Belonging</b>	DUSD will implement practices addressing diversity, equity, justice and inclusion for all students, staff, and families.
<b>Goal 2 Achievement</b>	DUSD will establish learning structures and teaching practices that support and are inclusive of diverse learners as well as strengthen community partnerships.
<b>Goal 3 Opportunities for Access</b>	DUSD will continually identify underserved populations and implement targeted whole-child supports.
<b>Goal 4 Accountability</b>	DUSD will gather actionable data from student experiences and educational achievements with the purpose of establishing benchmarks and reporting on the District' status regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, and safety.
<b>Goal 5 Transparency</b>	DUSD will establish systems of accountability that create transparency for our District within our community.

### Human Relations Council

The Human Relations Council's (HRC) continued purpose is to implement an equity plan that supports and provides resources to improve our Downey Unified School District practices in acknowledging and addressing issues of safety, inequality, discrimination, accountability and systemic racism within our school system and community. Our Superintendent continued to meet with the HRC Steering Committee, and the Human Relations Council General Body to develop, implement, and assess our district's equity plan that responds to the needs of our students, families, and staff.

For the 2024-2025 school year, the HRC's progress continues to be aligned with our purpose to serve our students, families, and staff. Our 37 volunteer members supported our work throughout our school sites, programs, and community partners.

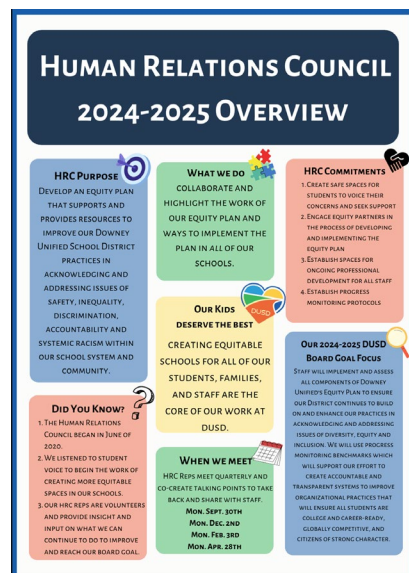


Our steering committees focus this year was to reflect on our progress through the scope of engagement, areas of strength, areas of growth, and opportunities for next steps. The committee was also key in moving our DUSD Equity Resource Bank forward through our HRC subcommittee work, and provided input focusing on site practices, which included our DUSD board policy 5145.9 regarding hate-motivated behavior.

Our HRC General Body met quarterly this year to set equity plan goals aligned with our board goal and implement action steps at their site focused on two areas: engagement with the equity plan and HRC information and implementing action steps specific to each site(s) goal. The General Body continues to review the HRC purpose, goals, progress, and next steps of our work as we implement our five equity goals.

Our engagement with the equity plan consisted of communication at all our sites with the support of our HRC reps and our diversity, equity, and inclusion TOSA through our HRC site padlets. **100% of our sites** have Human Relation Council padlets monitoring

progress of the equity plan work. This year, our [HRC one pager](#) was shared as an informational point of reference with various educational partners. In Spring, our HRC reps completed our data progress monitoring to develop a baseline of data and areas of improvement for the 2025-2026 school year.



Our *most* used form of engagement is in person presentations led or co-led with our DEI TOSA to share updates on our HRC purpose, progress, and site priorities as we move the work forward. This engagement and communication is possible with site administrator support at all levels: ES, MS, and HS. We are able to collaborate with site administrators at all levels to maintain equity as a foundational piece for initiatives taking place at our schools. Site administrator support has been an integral piece for implementing and assessing our board goal

progress.

Our HRC Body's work for the 2024-2025 school year focused on implementing action steps of our equity plan site goals set at the beginning of the school year. Each site focused on a specific equity goal, and as a whole, our General Body began focusing on professional learning on Eric Jensen's work - *Teaching with Poverty and Equity in Mind*. Each rep was provided with a book to engage in critical discussions on how we can continue to implement doses of professional learning and engagement at the sites and build capacity with discussions regarding equity and poverty as it impacts our educational work to improve opportunity gaps for students. This work will continue in the 2025-2026 school year.

As of May 2025, over 26+ equity partners/groups have engaged in providing input on the equity plan and/or action steps, which include, but are not limited to school sites, district site administrators, school site staff, departments within our Special Education Department, our Parent Advisory Committee, our District English Language Advisory Committee, our classified staff, the Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee (SSAC). The feedback is then collected, used to revise our equity plan as it is a living document, and continue action steps as indicated from the feedback.

## **INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

### **Academic Intervention**

Secondary Education has continued the implementation of iReady. iReady is an online program for reading and mathematics that helps teachers determine a student's needs, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year. iReady allows us to meet students exactly where they are and provides data to increase student's learning gains. iReady consists of two parts: Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction. Our focus last year was to provide training to our administrators and school leaders on how to understand, interpret, and use the data from the iReady diagnostics. We also worked with our PLCs in using the Personalized Instruction pathways that provide students with lessons based on their individual skill level and needs, allowing students to learn at their own pace that is just right for them. We will continue to work with middle school sites on the use of iReady. We also expanded iReady to specific subgroups of 9th grade students so that interventions can be implemented during the summer and fall of their freshman year for those who need it.

The Secondary Education Department also piloted Math Facts Lab in an effort to help our students gain Math fact fluency. We plan to continue utilizing Math Facts Lab in all of our 6th grade math classes and support classes across the District.

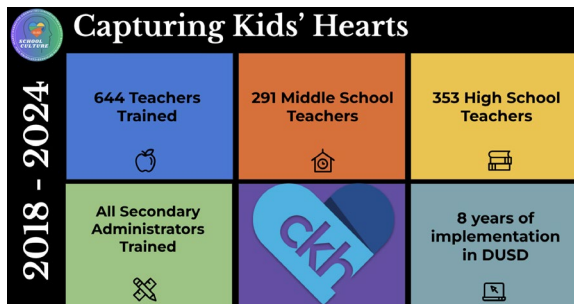
To provide targeted interventions during the school day, Stauffer, Sussman, and Doty Middle Schools, along with Warren High School, have adopted a 7-period schedule for middle schools and an 8-period block schedule for the high school. The additional period creates space for interventions that support students' social-emotional well-being through instruction in coping skills, self-awareness, organizational strategies, and time management. Academic interventions in math and English were also implemented.

### **Social Emotional Intervention**

As part of Downey Unified School District's Equity Goal #2, to create inclusive learning environments and strengthen community partnerships, we continued our collaboration with Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH). This partnership provides teachers with tools to foster a culture of well-being through strong relationships and increased student connectedness.

We are proud to have 644 secondary teachers trained across all of our middle and high schools. This immersive two-day training provides participants with strategies to create a positive classroom and campus culture. Our 2024 CKH evaluation data shows that 90%

of staff trained this year felt that this training exceeded expectations. Evidence of relationship building activities is evident at all of our secondary sites from staff greeting students at the door (each class!), to engaging games and activities, to social contracts on the classroom walls.



Our Secondary SEL Teacher Lead and Elementary SEL TOSA integrated CKH strategies into administrator and leadership meetings, student group sessions at school sites, and parent and teacher meetings. Their goal was to ensure that all students and staff are familiar with these social-emotional practices and share a common understanding

and language around CKH strategies.

### **Inclusive practices (Co-teaching and push-in Models)**

Downey USD has been working on establishing an effective inclusion model since 2017 to support all students with this board goal. Our data demonstrates an increase of 16.8% in A-G eligibility since 2017 among our students receiving special education services in the general education setting. Since 2017 we've provided 40 PD sessions, over 200 coaching sessions, 54 PD sessions for Senior Instructional Assistants (SIAs), 16 sessions with our inclusion site coaches, and 6 PD sessions for our Language Other Than English (LOTE) teachers. In the 2024-25 school year we supported 118 co-teachers who taught a total of 160 sections in middle and high schools. Co-teachers and push-in teams have been provided with professional development and coaching with our WestEd consultant & Assistant Principal on Special Assignment, based on Universal Design of Learning (UDL) strategies. UDL is an approach to teaching aimed at meeting the needs of every student in a classroom, including students with learning and attention needs (neurodivergent learners).

In an effort to maximize student academic achievement for all learners, this is our first year in which all our newly hired SIAs attend on-boarding professional development in effective instructional support strategies, facilitated by our Assistant Principal on Special Assignment.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (ELD)**

Now in its second year, the Secondary Education Department leads a Multilingual Learner (ML) Task Force comprising an administrator from each secondary school, the ML TOSA, and the Director of Secondary Education. Each member serves as an instructional leader and advocate, overseeing the ML program at their school site. The purpose of the ML Task Force is to address district-wide policies, practices, and goals. In conjunction, the ML Task Force supports DUSD's Designated ELD program and goals (stated below):

1. Increase reclassification rate and EL proficiency levels.
2. Increase staff (teacher, administrators, coordinators, interventionists) efficacy and support students' primary language and focus on strategies in Designated ELD classrooms.
3. Ensure compliance monitoring in order to create an effective ELD program in DUSD.
4. Support a-g completion for ML students.

In addition to supporting and strengthening our Designated ELD classes, the Secondary Education Department created a 6th-grade Combined Studies/ELD course at each middle school. This course was designed to allow our 6th-grade ML students to have the opportunity for an elective while embedding ELD curriculum within the 2-hour block of time. This course is taught by an English teacher who follows the Common Core ELA standards and applies the CA ELD standards in their instruction. These teachers were trained on the CA ELD standards and station rotation blended learning to maximize student learning and English acquisition.

Our district reclassification data this year has grown exponentially at the middle school. See the chart below.

DUSD Reclassification Data				
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Middle	6%	20%	30%	36%
High	11%	13%	14%	20%
CA State	6.9%	16.3%	15.9%	TBD

We are encouraged by the growth in middle school and plan to use supports with our high school ELD program to include:

- Coaching sessions on the English 3D curriculum online platform
- Focus on Station Rotation blended learning, ELD standards, and teacher observation on effective use of station rotation in the classroom
- ML Task Force will continue to focus on effective instructional strategies for MLs.

In the 2025–2026 school year, we will continue working together to strengthen high school ELD instruction and support the reclassification of our Long-term English Learners (LTELs). Additionally, we will monitor our ML students' progress towards A-G completion.

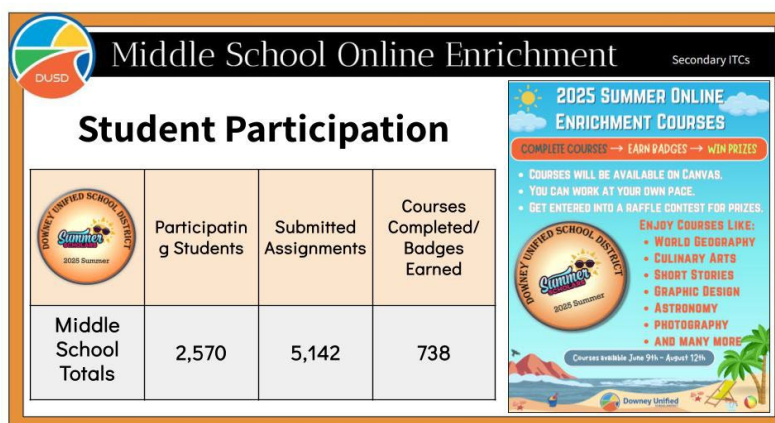
## **EXPANDED SUMMER PROGRAMS**

### **Middle School**

Downey Unified School District proudly offered summer school to all secondary students, providing engaging learning opportunities both in-person and online.

At the middle school level, approximately 1,500 students participated in our 19-day program, with most enrolled in three courses: ELA, Math, and an elective. Of these, 354 students took Accelerated Math.

In addition to our in-person offerings, Secondary Education provided self-paced, online elective courses where students could earn badges for completion. This summer, 2,570 students participated, with *Intro to Canvas*, *Astronomy*, and *Cooking* among the most popular choices. We also saw strong participation in our asynchronous Accelerated Math course, with 200 students completing the program.



### **High School**

The high school summer program focused on credit recovery, credit repair, and original credit running for 24 days. Our high school offerings expanded this year to include dual enrollment courses and Peak Performance, our partnership with Elite Academy. The high school summer school students recovered 27,415 credits this summer!

### **Technology Integration**

Our secondary schools have made remarkable strides in empowering students to take ownership of their learning by leveraging digital tools that promote creativity, collaboration, communication, and digital citizenship. Across classrooms, students are increasingly using their digital skills to demonstrate knowledge in innovative ways, supported by intentional technology integration. This progress has been recognized through Apple's invitation for two of our middle schools to apply for the prestigious Apple Distinguished School designation.

The rollout of iPads for 9th grade students marks a natural next step in our digital learning evolution. These students, having spent the last eight years engaged in the 21st



Century Learning Communities initiative, are well-versed in using iPads to create, explore, and show their learning. In preparation for this transition, our high school educators participated in targeted professional development to ensure a smooth shift from Chromebooks and to strengthen their instructional practice using the device that students know best.

Our secondary schools continue to build efficacy by meeting our students where they are so students can continue the growth of their 21st century skills to ensure they are college and career ready, globally competitive and citizens of strong character.

Below are some of the highlights of the past year:

- APL (Apple Professional Learning) is a series of training sessions focused on Apple's resources, programs, and support services designed to help educators integrate technology effectively into their classrooms. Our Instructional Technology Coaches trained 80 middle school teachers across 4 cohorts and 180 high school teachers across 7 cohorts. This initiative is aimed at enhancing instruction by leveraging technology, thereby providing students with greater voice and choice in their learning. These APL trainings were part of a broader effort to advance teaching practices and work toward earning the Apple Distinguished School designation.
- Both Griffiths and Stauffer Middle Schools have applied for Apple Distinguished School and are awaiting confirmation of that designation. Doty and Sussman are on track to apply in the upcoming school years.
- iPads have replaced Chromebooks for 9th grade students, with plans to expand iPad use to 10th through 12th grades in the coming years. To support this transition, 9th grade teachers received extensive training from our Instructional Technology Coaches on how to effectively use iPads as instructional tools. Teachers in core subjects English, History, Science, and Math were specifically trained in best practices for both student and teacher use of iPads in the classroom.

### **The Book Review Committee**

Building on the foundational work that was done in past years, The Book Review Committee (BRC) continued to meet each semester for the 2024-2025 school year. Their scope of work included:

- Utilizing the novel approval protocol to discuss literature that is relevant for Downey USD implementation of Standards-based curriculum
- Recommending literature for Board approval

The BRC continues to be composed of representative English teachers and teacher librarians from DUSD's middle and high schools. Instructional Technology Coach, Joshua Roberson, facilitated a structured process wherein teachers in the classroom were able to submit requests for novels they would like to see taught, and committee



members were able to read, discuss, deliberate and identify the appropriateness of selected novels.

Our BRC continues to review and recommend books for approval to the Board of Education that are reflective of our Equity Goals.

### **Essential Standards**

During the 2024-2025 school year the secondary schools continued our work on essential standards and benchmark assessments. Each year the essential standards are reviewed and revised to reflect our current data. Every middle school PLC lead met several times with our ITCs to review essential standards and create benchmarks. The data from the benchmarks are analyzed in order to make decisions on targeted interventions and re-teaching of standards not met. The creation and administration of benchmark assessments continues to drive our work at the school sites and within PLCs.

### **Mathematics**

During the 2024–2025 school year, the Secondary Math Committee, composed of teachers and administrators, collaborated to strengthen secondary mathematics programs.

At the middle school level, the committee developed:

- A new math support course to assist students performing below grade level in reinforcing essential skills needed for success in their grade-level math class.
- An acceleration pathway for students demonstrating exceptional mathematical proficiency, enabling them to progress toward completing Algebra 1 in 8th grade.

At the high school level, the committee led the transition from an integrated math model to a traditional course sequence, creating a comprehensive transition plan that includes placement criteria and measures of student success.

This work reflects a shared commitment to providing mathematics instruction that is responsive to student needs and supports long-term academic success.

### **Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)**

Our secondary schools continue to offer a comprehensive articulated Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) program for our students. Due to the addition of Proposition 28 funds, our schools have expanded and improved the opportunities for our students. Please see below for the many accolades and highlights from this year.

**District Programs:** Musical Theatre Conservatory (MTC), Mariachi and Dance & Pep Squads at each middle school

## Middle Schools:

- **Doty Middle School** offered drama courses from beginner to advanced, with Advanced Drama students performing *Mahouse!* in March. Our award-winning band performs at school and community events, competes in multiple competitions, and students also participate in clubs like Audio Recording, Project Rock Band, and DUSD Mariachi groups.
- **Griffiths Middle School's** inaugural marching band earned 1st place at the Music in the Parks competition, while the advanced choir and band received a silver rating at the Forum Music Festival. The advanced band also earned an excellent rating at the SCSBOA Festival and has been invited to perform in Washington, D.C., on Veterans Day Weekend 2025. This year's drama production was *Sundown Alley*, and student artwork was featured in multiple Downey Arts Coalition events. For 2025–26, new offerings include an introduction to guitar class and two additional sections of art.
- **Stauffer Middle School** showcased its vibrant arts programs with drama productions of *Frozen Jr.* and *Into the Woods Jr.*, a 13-episode student-made TV show, and daily Spartan TV broadcasts alongside over 50 short films. The marching band, Banda Filarmónica, dance, and pep squads represented the school at major community events, parades, and competitions, earning top ratings and special invitations. Students in art, yearbook, journalism, and photography produced original works, from custom designs to a fully student-created yearbook, and explored advanced creative techniques in visual storytelling.
- **Sussman Middle School's** band earned multiple honors, including a silver medal and best trumpet section at the Knott's Festival, 1st place and best drum major at the San Juan Capistrano Parade, and 2nd place at the Norwalk Parade, along with performances such as the Jazz Gala with Downey High School. In the arts, 184 students participated in PTA Reflections with one advancing to state, three had work displayed at the Autry Museum, and the school won the Downey Police Holiday Card contest. Drama students performed *Once Upon a Pine*, participated in Downey High's *The Little Mermaid*, and earned first place in technical theatre at the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California Fall Festival.

## High Schools:

- **Columbus High School** partnered with Stay Arts to host a Family Paint Night and provide an eight-lesson, four-week in-class residency for Woodruff Academy students.
- **Downey High School** celebrated major achievements across the arts, including state and national titles for the Dance Team, top awards for the marching band, color guard, drumline, and multiple jazz groups, and international competition qualification for the jazz choir. Highlights also included upgraded art show displays, museum field trips, and a vertically integrated production of *The Little Mermaid* involving students from elementary through high school.
- **Warren High School** celebrated an outstanding year in the arts, with top finishes for the dance team, award-winning performances from Folklorico Herencia, and high ratings for choir, instrumental music, and marching band. Highlights included

the musical *Chicago*, a growing choir program with over 230 students, a regional film festival win, and sweeping victories for the marching band, concert ensembles, and symphonic band at multiple competitions.

Overall, the VAPA program's success across all schools highlights the district's commitment to providing equitable access to high-quality arts education, supported by new funding and the addition of a Secondary VAPA Coordinator. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure every student can thrive in the arts and participate meaningfully in modern society.

### **Summary**

Equity and access will continue to be the foundation of our work as it will lead to increased wellness and achievement for ALL of our students. We look forward to the continued growth of innovation and resiliency of our students and staff this year by focusing on our 3 Secondary Education Priorities under the umbrella of Equity: Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Student and Staff Wellness, and Shared Leadership

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING**

In 2025-2026, Secondary Education proposes to:

- Continue to partner with Apple, on Apple Professional Learning (APL) to provide middle school teachers with the skills to learn effective instructional practices through technology integration. Continue the process of Apple Distinguished School for one more middle school for this school year.
- Begin training our 10th grade teachers on technology integration with the roll up of iPads at the high schools. Continue to support 9th grade teachers in technology integration.
- Support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in aligning essential standards for all core areas providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum to ensure equity for all students and monitor benchmarks assessments.
- Implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches that would continue to utilize PBIS and Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) strategies. Complete training of all secondary teachers on CKH.
- Continue to support teachers in the implementation of our new digital curricula; ELA (StudySync) and Social Studies (TCI).
- Continue building capacity within our schools to provide Inclusive practices (co-teaching and push-in support) within our classrooms that will ensure success for all students in order to meet our rigorous DUSD graduation requirements.

- Continue to support the implementation of the equity plan and goals in improving our practices in acknowledging and addressing issues of safety, inequality, discrimination, accountability and systemic racism with our school system and community thus allowing for access for all students.
- Support the schools in the implementation of the ELD program in regard to the ELPAC testing, curriculum, instruction, scheduling of students, and Federal Program Monitoring (FPM). Support the ML Task Force to be able to focus resources, professional development, and insight to improve our achievement of Multilingual Learners.
- Support the expansion of alternative bell schedules that provide student access to enrichment and intervention courses including extracurricular activities and athletics. These alternative schedules allow for schools to better meet students' social emotional needs, provide effective academic intervention, and offer enrichment opportunities.
- Increase math achievement for all secondary students by strengthening pedagogical practices for checking for understanding and using the results to address learning gaps within the same lesson.
- Implement the comprehensive TK–12 Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) strategic plan, developed by the DUSD VAPA Committee, to ensure equitable access for all students and to foster creativity and skill development at every grade level.
- Continue planning of a Personal Finance Course as outlined in AB2827 which commences with the graduation class of 2030-2031.

## **COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS**

### **Dr. Allan Tyner, Director**

#### **General Overview**

In the 2024-25 school year, the College and Career Readiness Department (CCR) supported Board Goals 4 and 7 and continued its implementation of CCR Program sustainability. This annual report summarizes the department's work.

#### **Supporting Board Goal 4:**

- Downey Unified will continue to leverage Career Technical Education (CTE) grant funds including the CTE Incentive Grant, K12 Strong Workforce Program, California Apprenticeship Initiative, Golden State Pathways Grant and Perkins IV to build and enhance high-priority, high-wage essential CTE pathways. We will continue to develop our pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs to support students in the development of workplace skills. We will continue to support all students from TK through 12th grade to further enrollment in CTE pathways and expand career exploration.

The Downey Unified College and Career Readiness (CCR) Department applies best practices that strengthen sustainability through further development and implementation of essential pathway elements in the Elementary, Middle, and High School segments. In 2024-25, we secured \$1,265,040 in Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) funding from the California Department of Education (CDE) and secured \$183,289 in Federal Perkins funding. We were also awarded \$1,499,601 in Round 7-K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP) grants; \$2,947,930 in Apprenticeship grants from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for Workforce and Economic Development.

### **Districtwide Articulation and Dual Enrollment in CTE**

Although there were no increases in dual enrollment for CTE programs this year, our partnership with Cerritos College remains strong through articulation agreements (credit by exam) in both CTE and non-CTE courses. Due to Cerritos College's revamp of its articulation process, all agreements were re-established from the ground up. As a result, Downey High School now holds 10 articulation agreements (6 in CTE) and Warren High School holds 4 agreements (2 in CTE). a non CTE table will appear in the College Credit Barring Courses section of this report.

<b>Downey</b>	<b>Warren</b>
Machine Tool Introduction	Machine Tool Introduction
Setup & Operation of CNC Milling Machines	Setup & Operation of CNC Milling Machines
Automotive Maintenance and Operation	
Computer Applications for Managers	
Graphic Design 1	
Introduction to Digital Photography	

### **Commercial Lab Additions**

The current status of commercial lab additions includes the following:

- Warren HS added an ambulance simulator for the new Fire Science pathway, a new CNC machine for the Mechatronics pathway,
- Downey HS added a new lift and tire balancing machine for the Automotive Technologies pathway,

All labs are operational and in use by students and teachers.

### **Match Requirements for CTE Grant Funding**

Some grants, including the K12 Strong Workforce Program (SWP) and the CTE Incentive Grant (CTEIG), require match funds at a 2:1 ratio. These matching funds encourage school districts and community colleges to invest from their base budgets in the development, support, and expansion of K–14 CTE programs aligned with regional workforce needs. Most match funds come from LCAP CTE line items, and any general

fund expenditures that wholly or partially support CTE pathways or programs may count as match. Examples include non-duplicated teacher and counselor salaries and benefits, travel and fees for competitions such as SkillsUSA, and CTE classroom equipment and supplies. Perkins grant funds, California Apprenticeship Initiative grants, and other donations are also allowable as match funds. Non-allowable match funds include concurrent CTEIG or K12 SWP grant funds and Public School Facilities Bond (Prop 51) funds.

### **LCAP-funded Programs (Serves as Match)**

LCAP and Stauffer Foundation Grant funding continued to support registration fees, travel expenses, and competition-related supplies for students and teachers participating in:

- Femeineers
- eSports (partial)
- VEX
- SkillsUSA
- FIRST Robotics

**The Femeineer Program:** In 2024–25, DUSD continued to develop and improve a robust Femeineer program, engaging 227 students across middle and high school. This year marked the first-ever Femeineer Kick-Off event in October, bringing together students from all four middle schools and both comprehensive high schools for small- and large-group STEM activities that fostered collaboration and connection across campuses. DUSD also proudly hosted the in-person Femeineer Gala, which featured a fashion show of wearable technology designs and displays of students' creative robotics projects.

**eSports:** The eSports student engagement program is in its 7th year with financial support from resources outside of grant funding. It encompasses elementary, middle and high school students with funding from the CCR department. The Elementary eSports tournament was held on May 14, 2025, at Warren High School with all elementary sites entering teams that competed at Super Smash Brothers. The Middle School tournament occurred on March 5, 20 and included teams from all four middle schools competing in Rocket League. The Valorant Downey Unified eSports High School Tournament was held at the Downey Civic Theater on December 11, 2024.

**Robotics Competition:** In the 2024–25 school year, several hundred secondary students participated in robotics programs. Generous funding from the Stauffer Grant supported VEX Robotics team registrations for Doty, Griffiths, Sussman, and Stauffer middle schools, as well as FIRST Robotics team registrations for Downey and Warren high schools. Robotics teams at both the middle and high school levels continue to thrive, advancing through local and state competitions and making strong showings at the international level. Multiple teams across the district qualified for championship events. Griffiths, Stauffer, and Sussman qualified for VEX Robotics State Championships. Both Downey and Warren high schools qualified for First Robotics State Championships, with Warren High School advancing to the First Robotics World Championships in Houston. We look forward to additional opportunities for students to demonstrate their robotics skills and competitive ambitions next school year.

**Skills USA:** The CCR Department supported over 1,800 students from Columbus, Downey, and Warren High Schools with California SkillsUSA memberships. At the regional level, 269 students competed, earning 18 gold, 21 silver, and 8 bronze medals. At the state level, 124 students competed, winning 7 gold, 2 silver, and 5 bronze medals. Nineteen students advanced to the 2025 National Championships in Atlanta, Georgia, where they brought home 1 silver medal.

### **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

This year focused on assessing pathways needs and financial sustainability. Downey Unified currently has 21 CTE pathways across its 3 high school sites. See the graphic below for a list of pathways by site.

#### **CURRENT CTE PATHWAYS**

DHS Pathways	WHS Pathways	Multiple Sites
Alternative Fuels	Audiovisual Technologies	Advanced Manufacturing
Automotive Technologies	Biotechnology	Game Programming
Dance	Film/Video Production	Makeup Artistry
Education	Culinary Arts	Welding
Engineering Design	Mechatronics	
Food Science, Dietetics, and Nutrition	Plastics	
Graphic Design	Construction	
Multimedia Video Production		
Sports Medicine		
Digital Photography		



### **California Apprenticeship Initiative**

DUSD received four apprenticeship grants. These funds can count as District match for other CTE grants.

#### **Apprenticeship**

- Pre-Apprentices will be eligible to apply to be Apprentices and receive hands-on training in a real work environment, learn directly from experienced professionals, acquire practical skills, develop a deep understanding of their chosen field or trade, and gain valuable work experience.
- Apprentices can earn a wage while working and receiving on-the-job training.
- Apprentices will be registered through the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards and will be state-certified upon demonstration of skills attainment.



## **Internship Transition to Pre-Apprenticeship to Apprenticeship**

The Downey MADE Internship program evolved from in-person to all-virtual, and is now a hybrid. Downey, Warren and Columbus students were invited to participate in multiple pre-apprentice workshops that qualified students as pre-apprentices. These pre-apprentice days involved workshops titled: Social Justice in the Workplace, Planning your Financial Future (Building a Personal Budget), Leadership is a Choice, and Pitching with Purpose.

These workshops qualified students to take part in the apprenticeship program this summer.

The chart below indicates Years of Downey MADE with number of participants and style of experience.

Yr 10 - 2025	Yr 9 - 2024	Yr 8 - 2023	Yr 7 - 2022	Yr 6 - 2021	Yr 5 - 2020	Yr 4 - 2019	Yr 3 - 2018	Yr 2 - 2017	Yr 1 - 2016
102	199	158	200	175	180	115	80	35	31
Hybrid			Virtual			In Person			

Interns/Apprentices take part in a real-world hiring process with resumes and interviews and are then placed with industry professionals across a range of industry sectors, including an in-person experience with the College and Career Readiness Department.

## **CCR Data Collection**

CCR conducts student surveys to collect, track, analyze, and report on student outcome measures. As of June 3, 2025, 1,833 seniors—out of 2,047—completed the 2025 Senior Survey, with completion rates by school as follows: Columbus HS, 104; Downey HS, 907; and Warren HS, 822. The survey includes questions about high school activities and postsecondary plans and also collects personal emails and phone numbers for multi-year follow-up. This information helps inform the types of support offered to students to better ensure college and career success.

## **Supporting Board Goal 7:**

- Downey Unified will increase the four-year college eligibility rate by 5% as measured by CSU/UC a-g completion rates for all students with an emphasis on historically underachieving subgroup populations. We will continue to track course completion data as we strive to make incremental goals to improve college readiness. We will also continue to develop and refine our inclusive practices to support students who will benefit from this collaborative approach to high-quality instruction and intervention support

Improving our A-G completion rate remained a central focus for our district this year, with regular updates shared in Secondary and Combined Principals' Meetings to promote alignment and shared accountability. Our A-G Committee met monthly to drive this work forward, supporting efforts such as ongoing data analysis, the development of internal A-G tracking tools, and the identification of research-based strategies to help more students meet A-G requirements. One key outcome of this collaborative effort was the creation of College and Career Roadmaps, which outline specific milestones for elementary, middle, and high school grade segments. These brochures are designed to guide students and families through each stage of their educational journey, reflecting a coherent vertical alignment that defines a truly unified district. All of these initiatives were implemented with the goal of increasing our A-G completion rate and ensuring every student graduates prepared for college and career success.

To further support this goal, our district introduced a new A-G Interventionist position at each comprehensive high school. Grounded in the belief that "what gets measured, gets improved," these new roles were designed to provide targeted support to students as they work toward meeting college eligibility requirements. Interventionists collaborated closely with counselors, monitored student progress, and served as an early warning system, intervening proactively when students show signs of falling off track. With a particular focus on supporting students with IEPs and multilingual learners, this effort ensures that more students have the opportunity to meet A-G requirements. By recognizing students who completed courses through credit repair and recovery, and by offering continued guidance in A-G coursework, we are building a culture of support, accountability, and high expectations for all learners.

As noted above, collaborative efforts have been made to increase the four-year college eligibility rate. We have conducted extensive data analysis throughout the year to monitor student progress as measured by A-G completion rates. Please see the data below.

	<b>2024</b>			<b>2025</b>		
	Regular HS Diploma Graduates	Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Requirements	%	Regular HS Diploma Graduates	Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Requirements	%
All Students	1877	985	52.48%	1927	1196	62.07%
Comprehensive HS Only	1685	985	58.46%	1769	1194	67.50%
Comprehensive HS Only - No FY, SWD, no EL	1376	896	65.12%	1412	1075	76.13%
Students with Disabilities	227	47	20.70%	263	54	20.53%
Multilingual Learners	189	45	23.81%	203	73	35.96%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	1607	788	49.04%	1644	961	58.45%
Foster Youth	17	5	29.41%	14	5	35.71%

As we move forward in the 2025-2026 school year, our district remains committed to deepening this work by expanding the systems and supports that drive A-G success. Continued analysis of A-G data will allow us to monitor progress, identify barriers, and refine strategies to better serve all students. We will also strengthen our articulation process across the TK–12 spectrum to ensure that every grade level contributes meaningfully to college and career readiness, building on the alignment established through our College and Career Roadmaps. With the addition of another A-G Interventionist at each comprehensive high school, we will be able to provide even more consistent, targeted support that keeps more students on track for graduation and postsecondary success. At the same time, we will continue exploring additional indicators of college and career readiness to ensure our district's measures remain comprehensive, equitable, and aligned with opportunities in both higher education and the workforce.

### **CCR Programs to Support College Readiness**

#### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

In the 2024-2025 school year, 1,726 students from our two comprehensive high schools took Advanced Placement exams. A total of 3,263 AP tests were completed.

At Downey High School, 1,515 AP tests were taken in 2025, with a pass rate of 76%--a slight 1% decrease from the previous year. However, the number of students testing and passing increased significantly. In 2024, 774 students took an AP test and 600 passed, compared to 810 students testing in 2025, with 626 passing. As a result, 26 more students passed an AP exam this year than last year.

At Warren High School, 1,750 tests were taken in 2025, with a pass rate of 58%--a 15% increase from the previous year. The number of students testing and passing also rose. In 2024, 870 students took an AP test and 463 passed, compared to 946 students testing in 2025, with 595 passing. This was an increase of 132 students passing an AP exam this year than last year.

All students scoring a 3 or higher on their AP exams receive college credit depending on which institution they attend. AP exams can play a significant role in demonstrating a student's academic abilities and their commitment to challenging coursework. Generally, colleges and universities view AP courses and exams favorably, as they show that students have taken rigorous classes and are prepared for the demands of higher education.

### **College Equity and Access Support Programs**

In the 2024-25 school year, the District-wide goals for AVID included: supporting sites in sustaining the implementation of the AVID program through focusing on their site team goals, collecting evidence and school data throughout the school year, making informed decisions while continuously using the coaching and certification instrument to self-assess throughout the year.

- At each site, AVID Teams attended and provided Professional Learning opportunities to support equity and instruction throughout the school.

- Sustaining our first AVID Excel elective course at Stauffer Middle School to change the trajectory of long-term English language learners and reclassifying 70% of 7th graders in that course.
- All six secondary sites and four elementary schools, Gauldin Elementary, Lewis Elementary, Old River Elementary and Ward Elementary, attended the AVID Summer Institute for professional development to create SMART goals for their sites for the upcoming school year.
- Supported program coordinators and site administrators through monthly District-led meetings.
- Supported each site through a robust District-led tutor training and recruitment program on a weekly basis.
- Identified additional support for the AVID program through the budget and needs assessment process.
- In our secondary AVID programs, enrollment increased from 1,661 total student enrollment in 2023-2024 to 2,020 total student enrollment in 2024-2025. This upcoming school year, all our Old River Elementary students, 3rd-5th grade students from Lewis Elementary, and 5th grade students from Gauldin and Ward Elementary will learn AVID strategies in their classrooms. We have brought on two additional elementary schools into the AVID program and are expanding AVID strategies to even more students.
- AVID sites successfully completed certification processes and requirements.
- This Summer, we had an AVID ELD course available for our students at all secondary sites. Students from this class had an opportunity to visit a different college campus on a weekly basis.
- All of our AVID secondary and elementary school sites focus on four school-wide domains: Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture to provide a rigorous college-going environment throughout the schools for college and career awareness.

### **College and Career Centers**

At both Downey and Warren High Schools, the CCR Department provides the vision, direction, and financial support to Downey Unified College and Career Centers. In the 2024-25 school year, the College and Career Centers continued their work of supporting students in gaining access to financial support, work experience, and required skills identification.

### **College Credit Bearing Courses- Dual Enrollment and Articulation**

Dual enrollment is a program that allows high school students to take college-level courses and earn credits simultaneously. We increased our dual enrollment offerings from 55 in 2023-24 to 94 in 2024-25. Our Early College program completed its second year, with 120 students at DHS and WHS. Each year a new cohort of 60 freshmen students will start the program. Our overall passage rate is 95%

An articulation agreement between a high school and a community college is a formal partnership that lets students earn college credit for certain high school courses—without having to retake the same material in college. It can occur through course alignment, where the high school course is reviewed by the community college to ensure it covers the same curriculum, learning objectives, and rigor as the equivalent college course, or

credit by exam, in which students need to pass a college-approved exam or earn a minimum grade in the high school class to qualify.

<b>Downey</b>	<b>Warren</b>
ASL I	ASL I
ASL II	ASL II
Personal Finance	
Real Estate Principles	

### **Counseling and Guidance Support**

In the 2024-2025 school year, the CCR Department provided targeted support to middle school and high school counselors through a variety of coordinated efforts. We hosted quarterly combined counselor meetings to strengthen collaboration and alignment across sites, and we offered release days for transcript evaluations to ensure accurate academic planning. Counselors participated in CaliforniaColleges.edu training to maximize the platform's tools for launching college applications and supporting FAFSA completion. We also facilitated articulation meetings between elementary vice principals and middle school counselors, and between middle school and high school counselors, to share key student data, including information on students with 504 Plans and IEPs, ensuring smooth transitions and continuity of services.

Professional learning highlights from the 2024–25 Combined Counselor Meetings included:

#### **Middle School Focus**

- New course updates and offerings
- CTE articulation planning from middle school to high school
- Appropriate documentation procedures for threat assessments
- Resources and reclassification criteria for Multilingual Learners
- Training on Beyond SST for Student Success Team documentation
- Planning for math acceleration and support classes at the middle school level
- Risk assessment follow-up processes
- ParentSquare training to enhance communication with families

#### **High School Focus**

- Course of study updates, including NCAA and UC approvals
- CTE updates and new pathway development
- Dual enrollment course updates
- CaliforniaColleges.edu updates, including college application data
- A–G Status Tracker pilot, with counselor feedback on accuracy
- Risk assessment follow-up processes
- Return to traditional math sequence and updated course placement criteria
- Defining multiple measures of college and career readiness

## **Librarians**

In the 2024-25 school year, the CCR Department facilitated the secondary librarians in their work as an intra-district PLC. Within the scope of work, secondary librarians expanded their work in the areas of digital instruction, outreach, and support for students and staff.

- The LCAP funding line created for extended library center access continues to support snack, lunch and/or after school as deemed necessary and practicable at each school site. Extended library hours continue to be heavily utilized by students at all secondary sites.
- Resources are equitable among sites based on per capita needs based on grade level. There have been updates on hardware and software, print and non-print collections.
- Software subscriptions to Gale databases, OverDrive, e/audiobook collection, and NoodleTools citations have been renewed to support curricular goals and to promote personal inquiry. In addition, secondary libraries actively use COMPASS – California Online Media Program for Access and Student Success, which includes Encyclopedia Britannica, Capstone Pebble Go Science, Pro-Quest (including art resources), Gale (including Science, environment, and National Geographic for Kids), and TeachingBooks.
- Support is provided to librarians to have up-to-date resources in a variety of established and emerging formats to support multiple literacies.
- Ensuring that school library services are available 24/7 to students and staff through databases, ebooks, subscriptions, software, website development and release time to support training and development.
- Supporting libraries in the shared goal of safe and welcoming spaces for students with movable, comfortable and varied furniture to foster group work and individual seating to promote personal inquiry. Libraries have flexible space and scheduling to support the learning needs of their community.

## **CCR Recommendations**

- Continue to analyze our A-G completion data to develop strategies for increasing our eligibility rate.
- Refine district-wide A-G tracking tools within student and parent portals to monitor ongoing A-G completion progress.
- Continue to support sites in implementing flexible credit repair opportunities during the school year to increase A-G eligibility.
- Continue support for College Access initiatives including FAFSA, Dream Act, and college application completion.
- Maintain AVID support to provide college-going growth trends and continue to expand into elementary.
- Continue to strengthen TK-12 articulation with an emphasis in A-G eligibility and CTE completion.
- Evaluate and continue to improve the quality of implementation of CTE pathways and programs through intentional adherence to the CDE CTE Guiding Policy Principles and the Essential Elements of a High-Quality College and Career Pathway.



- Submit and secure CTEIG, K12 Strong Workforce, CTEFP (CTE Facilities Program) and Perkins funding.
- Expand articulation and dual enrollment agreements to support and increase students earning college credit.
- Expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for students and connect them to our pathways
- Expand support for elementary and middle school participation in CTE events

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Rebekah Ruswick, Ed.D., Director**

The 2024–2025 school year marked a period of innovation, growth, and collaboration for the Special Education Department. Presently, the Special Education Department serves approximately 3600 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that include all thirteen special education eligibilities. Guided by our district’s motto “Our Kids Deserve the Best,” we work diligently to provide high-quality, inclusive services to all learners. In 2024-2025, our team continued to expand opportunities for students, deepen partnerships, and strengthen instructional practices. This report highlights key programming, achievements, and training efforts from this year, as well as the priorities guiding us into 2025–2026.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

- Academic Growth
  - Targeted instructional efforts contributed to raising CAASPP scores in ELA and Math for students with IEPs.
  - Elementary Mild/Moderate Special Day Class Professional Learning Communities were re-established during the school day, ensuring collaboration and consistency of practice across schools. Focused engagement with our teachers centered on English and Math instruction for complex learning profiles.
- Early Childhood & Inclusive Opportunities
  - With support from the Early Intervention Preschool Grant (EIPG), Early Childhood programs relocated to LEAP @ PACE Elementary, advancing our vision of an inclusive preschool. The PACE Elementary campus has been completely revitalized to include an assessment center, a sensory gym, related service treatment spaces, a beautiful new playground, and state-of-the-art early childhood classrooms.
  - All early childhood through kindergarten students with IEPs participated in the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), deepening alignment between assessment and instruction for ages three through kindergarten.
  - For the first time in district history, Elementary Extended School Year programs partnered with Steamworks, integrating students with and without special needs and provided access to STEM for all.



- Transition & Employment
  - Downey Unified established a formal partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation, creating expanded opportunities for paid job positions within the District for adult transition students.
- Student Supports & Services
  - Secured a \$1.6 million California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) grant to support mental health services provided by our Clinical Support Team (CST) and to begin the process of accessing CYBHI funding in an ongoing fashion to subsidize the salaries of our Clinical School Therapists long-term.
  - Speech-Language Pathologists implemented the *Speech Improvement Program* for articulation at the elementary level, curbing over-identification and expanding early intervention for students with articulation needs.
  - Occupational Therapists and SLPs developed more integrated *SpOT (Speech & OT) co-treatments* to enhance student outcomes.
- Community-Based Instruction (CBI)
  - The Special Education Department revised CBI guidelines and allocated budgetary support for more robust community-based learning opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in secondary settings.
- Fiscal Responsibility
  - Increased Medi-Cal reimbursement revenue through improved systems and documentation practices.
  - Maintained lean enrollment in Nonpublic Schools and Residential Treatment Centers, maximizing inclusion within district programs.
  - Increased capacity to engage in alternative dispute resolution, promoting collaborative problem-solving with families.

## **NOTEWORTHY AFFAIRS**

- Districtwide Events & Celebrations
  - Hosted our Third Annual Sensory Friendly Fall Festival at Warren High School in October 2024, attracting hundreds of students with special needs and their families for a night of fun and community.
  - Expanded Unified Sports across schools, with 14 of 20 sites now recognized as Unified Champion Schools through Special Olympics of Southern California.
  - Organized numerous Abilities Awareness Weeks, Mental Health Awareness events, and inclusive field days across elementary and secondary campuses.
  - Launched the first-ever middle school Unified Sports field day at Downey Middle School.
  - Hosted the largest Unified Track Meet in district history at Warren High School in April 2025.

## **PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**

- Received a California School Board Association (CSBA) Golden Bell Award for our Unified Sports initiatives.
- Stephanie Agudo, Elementary RSP teacher at Carpenter Elementary, co-presented with one of her own students at the *Teach for LA Conference* on “Beyond the Label: Building Relationships that Empower Students with IEPs.”
- School Psychologists Denise Evans, Sandra Wong, and Melissa Ashton presented at the *National Association of School Psychologists annual conference* on the *Thriving Kids Project SEL*.
- Program Administrators Nelida Padron and Jayro Roman along with CSTs Morgan Evans, Iris King, and Maria Vaquerano presented at *ACSA’s Every Child Counts Symposium* on “Assessment to Action: Strengthening Student Well-Being with Risk-Informed Strategies.”
- Tracy Figueroa, special education teacher at Ward Elementary, was selected to participate in the 2025–26 DRDP Field Study.
- Secured dozens of Better Together Grants, funding projects such as AAC portable chargers, inclusive gardens, outdoor wellness spaces, and more.

## **TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Trained over 300 staff members in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NCI).
- Delivered three 5-week, 10-hour intensive Behavior Management trainings (Behavior 101, Behavior 102, and Behavior 201) to over 150 instructional assistants.
- In collaboration with the Certificated Human Resources Department, established a pipeline partnership with Claremont Graduate University, supporting DUSD employees pursuing teaching credentials in special education.
- Supported a record number of CST and School Psychologist interns from partner universities.
- Launched a year-long Parent Workshop Series, well attended and highly rated by families.
- CSTs completed Wellness Toolbox Training, which will be introduced to staff districtwide in 2025–26.
- Many sites initiated Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for Senior Instructional Assistants, fostering collaboration and growth.

## **LOOKING AHEAD: 2025–2026 PRIORITIES**

- Strengthen compliance through developing and implementing high-quality IEPs and assessments, with the goal of exiting Targeted Monitoring Level 3.
- Full-scale implementation of the CYBHI initiative across schools.
- In collaboration with WestEd, define and implement systematic inclusion practices in Early Childhood programs.
- Expand employment opportunities for adult transition students in partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation.
- Support the District with SB114 Universal Reading Screening implementation.

- Collaborate with the A–G Committee to ensure the successful implementation of the Alternate Pathway to a High School Diploma for students with extensive needs.
- Continue implementation and instructional use of the DRDP for early childhood and kindergarten students with IEPs.
- Achieve recognition as a Unified Champions District through Special Olympics.
- Deepen community and family engagement with workshops led by DUSD staff.
- Build upon our conference presence and publications to share our work at the state and national levels.

The 2024–2025 school year reflects the collective effort, creativity, and commitment of the Downey Unified Special Education Department. From raising student achievement and securing landmark grants to hosting award-winning inclusion events and developing our staff, we have built strong momentum for the years ahead. Our next chapter will continue to center on equity, inclusion, innovation, and opportunity for every student we serve.

**STUDENT SERVICES**  
**Robert Jagielski, Ed.D., Senior Director**  
**Student Safety, Wellness, and Engagement**

**General Overview**

Downey Unified is committed to each student's safety, wellness, and engagement. The Student Services Department is a multi-functional team made up of highly trained and dedicated individuals who place student social-emotional needs and academic achievement as our top priority. We operate under the belief, "Every student and family deserve a safe and great local school," and that "Without Safety, Nothing Else Matters". Our goal is to provide specialized services necessary for each student to meet his or her academic potential, which strongly reflects the District's Shared Values and supports the Vision of having ALL students graduate with a 21st Century education that ensures they are college and career ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character.

The Student Services team oversees the administration, coordination, and implementation of programs that comply with compulsory education laws related to enrollment and attendance. Additionally, the district assists with serious discipline cases by facilitating Behavior Review and Intervention Team (BRIT) meetings to develop and implement plans which provide students with the resources needed to keep them on track with coursework/credits. Furthermore, the student services staff coordinate permits/transfers, emergency preparedness drills, school culture/climate activities, comprehensive school safety plans, and 504 plans.

Student Services team members help resolve complicated and serious situations in need of attention involving physical and mental health, campus safety, discipline, and alternative programs. We also act as liaisons to a wide array of community agencies that are involved with child welfare, attendance, and after-school programs. The coordination of these services, with other agencies as partners, helps to facilitate a productive and

positive environment for all educational partners. A description of the programs and services along with a statistical summary of associated data for the 2024-25 school year follows.

### **Student Programs, Services, and Whole Child Support**

DUSD has a comprehensive student support system in place that includes School Culture Teams at each campus. Character Counts!, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), and Social-Emotional Learning with a focus on student wellness and targeted mental health supports are key to our success. Every program (PBIS, WEB, Link Crew, PVWH, AVID, Capturing Kids' Hearts, etc.) is implemented to meet the identified social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of the Whole Child and does so under the umbrella of CHARACTER COUNTS! in order to focus, align, strengthen, and increase the impact of our efforts.

### **School Culture Teams**

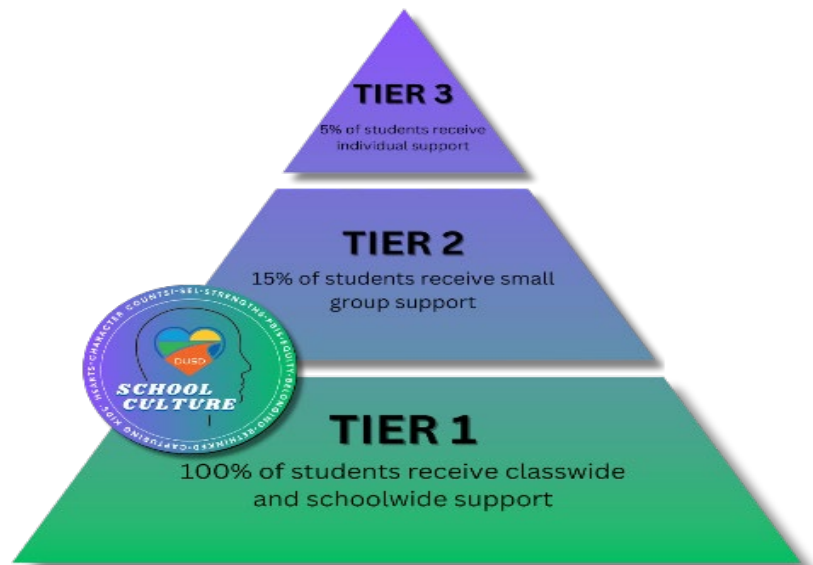
In the second year of our School Culture Teams (CHARACTER COUNTS!, PBIS, Strengths, Equity, Belonging, ReThinkEd, and Capturing Kids' Hearts), many schools retained core members, strengthening collaboration and building on last year's foundation. Our district-wide goal for 2024-2025 was for each site to apply for PBIS California State Recognition. This goal shaped our three district-wide meetings, which focused on preparing teams to meet recognition criteria.



### **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

Last year's implementation of Tier 1 PBIS supports qualified all schools to apply for bronze or silver recognition this year. Additionally, several schools have advanced their Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports, positioning them to apply for gold or platinum recognition.

This year, we held three district-wide School Culture Team meetings facilitated by Dr. Jagielski, Senior Director of Student Safety, Wellness, and Engagement, Jayro Roman, Student Services Program Administrator, Diana Israwi, Elementary SEL TOSA and Diane Huff-Medina, Secondary SEL Lead Teacher.



### September Kick-Off Meeting

- Focused on building a culture of belonging tied to attendance.
- Identified priority belonging elements.
- Shared strategies via a collaborative Padlet, updated throughout the year.
- Received a blueprint of seven PBIS recognition criteria.
- Completed the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) to guide action plans.

### January Mid-Year Check-In

- Reviewed progress on fall action plans and on culture of belonging elements.
- Scheduled and prepared for PBIS site visits (completed February – April).
- Continued work on the seven PBIS recognition criteria.

### April End of the Year Celebration

- Reviewed progress on action plans and on culture of belonging elements.
- Completed the final Tiered Fidelity Inventory for PBIS.
- Submitted official applications for PBIS California State Recognition (schools will be alerted in September about their PBIS recognition status, celebrating their accomplishments and outlining next steps for continued growth).

## **CHARACTER COUNTS!**

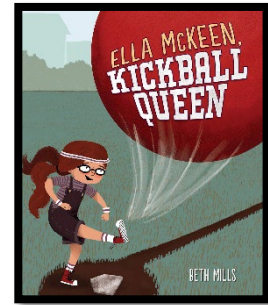
We continue to utilize the six pillars of character to develop students' social-emotional skills, preparing them to be positive, productive citizens equipped to succeed academically, personally, and professionally.

We continued the tradition of celebrating CHARACTER COUNTS! during the national week-long event in the fall, engaging all school sites with “Grateful Grams”—affirmation notes for teachers to recognize students' positive character. Sites were provided access to a shared digital folder of resources, encouraged to use the Kindness 101 videos produced by CBS in partnership with CC!, and given links to digital classroom materials from the CC! website. These grams and resources were widely shared on campuses and with families, generating strong community support.



During the second trimester, schools hold a second CHARACTER COUNTS! celebration to reinforce the six pillars through lessons, activities, and dress-up days. Since 2020, elementary schools have centered this week around a selected book with a strong CC! theme, providing all teachers with a shared text and accompanying resources.

This year's book was *Ella McKeen, Kickball Queen* by Beth Mills, which highlights emotional growth, teamwork, and sportsmanship. A hardcover copy was provided to every elementary teacher and administrator, along with a resource folder containing sample lessons and activities tied to the book's themes. Schools are encouraged to share photos of their celebrations on a shared Padlet to showcase their efforts district-wide.



We remain committed to prioritizing CHARACTER COUNTS! and continue to provide dedicated funding to support related activities, including celebration weeks, lessons, and student recognition. This year's allocations were:

- Elementary schools, \$2,000 each
- Middle Schools, Columbus/WAS, Pace, and Downey Adult School, \$3,000 each
- Downey and Warren High, \$5,200 each

We continue to partner with CHARACTER COUNTS! global headquarters located at Drake University to implement the initiative effectively. As a global program rooted in the Six Pillars and Pursuing Victory With Honor, CHARACTER COUNTS! supports our district's vision through strong character development. This year, we offered targeted training sessions for secondary teachers with a focus on supporting newer educators.

- Middle School Training - Tuesday, November 19, 2024 (42 attendees)
- High School Training - Wednesday, November 20, 2024 (30 attendees)

Each site received an allotted number of full-day substitutes who covered one teacher attending a morning session and the other in the afternoon ensuring broad staff participation.

To meet the Board's goal of regularly scheduled *Pursuing Victory With Honor* training for all DUSD coaches, four sessions were held last year, successfully training 182 coaches. This year, we identified newly hired coaches and those due for retraining. An additional training was held on November 19, 2024, with 37 coaches completing the 4-hour, in-person session in the Stauffer Library. Coaches engaged in collaborative activities focused on applying CHARACTER COUNTS! principles within their teams.

### **RethinkEd Elementary SEL Curriculum**

In the second year of implementing the Elementary RethinkEd SEL curriculum, the platform refined several lessons within the existing scope and sequence, incorporating teacher feedback to improve ease of use on their website. Teachers continue to receive one monthly lesson tied to a CHARACTER COUNTS! pillar, with suggested follow-up lessons. Monthly email reminders with direct links are sent to all teachers by the Elementary SEL TOSA to support consistent use.

Since August, 429 staff members have accessed the platform (a 7.5% increase from last year's 399), utilizing over 32,800 resources (a 233% increase from last year's 9,840) with students and staff.



RethinkEd provides monthly newsletters to elementary teachers highlighting key program components and meets monthly with our elementary SEL TOSA to gather staff feedback and collaboratively design additional classroom resources.

Additionally, our Elementary SEL TOSA offered various opportunities to support SEL for teachers, students and families, incorporating both RethinkEd lessons and other strategies:

- Five Kagan Engagement Strategy professional development sessions
- Elementary Physical Education department SEL training
- Executive Functioning three-day series in 38 classrooms (3rd-5th grade) spanning 7 school sites
- Learning Readiness training and support provided in 16 classrooms (TK-2nd) spanning 5 school sites
- RethinkEd co-hosted trainings:
  - 2 virtual “Starting the Year” sessions
  - Virtual session, “You Set Up Your Classroom on the Platform...What’s Next?”
  - Teacher Academy 3 - Integrating SEL Throughout the School Day
  - Teacher Academy 5 - Motivating Students To Be Their Best Selves
- Five Teacher Academy Professional Development Sessions
  - Engagement and Support In Math
  - Engagement and Support In Simplify Writing
  - Integrating SEL Throughout the School Day
  - Engagement and Support In Science
  - Motivating Students To Be Their Best Selves
- Individual classroom trainings and lesson support
- Culture Team support and PBIS site visits to all schools
- Parent and family training opportunities
- Reminder emails with links to the scope and sequence lessons sent twice/month
- Elementary administrators provided with monthly staff login and usage reports-

### **Staff Training for Mental Health**

DUSD continues to be proactive in providing a combination of programs and supports aimed at equipping staff to help students and families address mental health challenges. Every employee in Downey Unified receives training from a certified School Psychologist and/or Clinical School Therapist and completes Mental Health First Aid training at the start of each school year. This training focuses on recognizing at-risk signs and behaviors in both students and staff, empowering employees to provide immediate support and connect individuals with appropriate mental health resources.

### **Additional School Resources and Mental Health Supports**

With a lot more students in need of mental health supports, we strengthened our existing partnerships with local community agencies to offer outpatient counseling as needed to our over 22,000 TK-12<sup>th</sup> grade students across the district.

DUSD increased the hours of services provided by Pacific Clinics, Community Family Guidance Center (CFGC), and Jewish Family and Children’s Services (JFCS) of Long



Beach to support students with school-based counseling and/or outpatient counseling services. Additionally, DUSD has entered a new agreement with The Whole Child in order to another support system for our students.

The goal is and continues to target specific behaviors through therapeutic interventions that increase student functioning within an educational setting to reduce symptoms and restore or maintain levels of functioning consistent with requirements of learning, development, independent living, and enhanced self-sufficiency.

- CFGC is a referral counseling agency for students at all grade levels with Medi-Cal. CFGC specializes in children's mental health treatment and provides comprehensive short-term prevention and early intervention, such as non-intensive and intensive program services. For 2024-25, CFGC Clinicians provided individual school-based counseling to over 200 DUSD students through referrals from staff, and outside agencies, including DCFS.
- JFCS again provided services at all school sites and TLC. Through small group or individual counseling, JFCS provided services to over 250 students. Each elementary school received an average of 4 hours of individual and group counseling services per week; middle schools 7 hours and high schools 16 hours. This equated to 133 weekly face-to-face clinical service hours for a total of 31 weeks.
- Pacific Clinics continues to be a supporting partner with counseling referrals, and it supports our seven Wellness Centers. At each secondary site, Pacific Clinics has assigned a full-time licensed clinician that carry an average caseload of 25 students each. At are two large comprehensive high schools they assigned two clinicians and for our middle schools, there were two clinicians to support these four sites. Pacific Clinics provided the following mental health services to students and families who qualify for Medi-Cal services:
  - Mental health services for youth and their families
  - Individual school-based counseling sessions
  - Family counseling for program participants, and
  - Peer groups.

### **Clinical School Therapists (CST)**

Our twenty-two DUSD hired, full-time Clinical School Therapists (CSTs) entered their second year of existence even stronger than before as they worked to ensure the most intensive social-emotional needs of our students were met. All of our CSTs are licensed in either clinical social work, marriage and family therapy or clinical counseling. All Clinical School Therapists have Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credentials. The support provided by our CSTs includes individual and group counseling services, administering biopsychosocial assessments, conducting risk assessments, responding to psychiatric emergencies, and collaborating with various groups to assist our school sites proactively to prevent greater levels of need. Thousands of students have received individual counseling support and numerous community agency referrals have been made over the course of the school year.

## **Wellness Centers**

After opening the previous school year and providing a full year of services, our Wellness Centers at the secondary schools and Wellness Spaces at each elementary school took services to a next level during the 2024-25 school year. These centers/spaces embody the whole child approach and provide and connect students with support and resources, free of judgment. They are a safe space that students utilize to cool down, talk to someone when they may be in need, access resources, and attend scheduled counseling appointments. Additionally, these spaces have been utilized to host numerous site-specific therapy groups and all together, have assisted in normalizing emotional well-being on our campuses.

These school Wellness Centers and Spaces are a powerful and impactful investment in the health and academic potential of children and adolescents. They provide access to caring adults and services such as primary care, counseling, mentoring, and peer-to-peer support.

## **Student Attendance Rates**

The following chart shows the 2024-25 school year attendance rates for all student programs at each school site. The rates also included the previous three years which show an improvement in attendance due to the support of attendance teams and attendance recovery efforts such as Saturday School, SART, SARB and home visits.

<b><u>School</u></b>	<b><u>2021-22</u></b>	<b><u>2022-23</u></b>	<b><u>2023-24</u></b>	<b><u>2024-25</u></b>
Alameda	89.16	90.75	92.73	93.34
Carpenter	91.27	92.93	94.90	96.05
Gallatin	91.66	92.47	93.34	94.23
Gauldin	89.55	91.06	93.15	93.87
Imperial	88.37	89.85	92.75	94.18
Lewis	90.08	91.54	93.57	93.67
Price	92.05	92.84	94.63	94.89
ORS	90.49	91.92	93.87	94.40
Rio Hondo	90.54	91.36	92.36	93.31
RSG	90.26	91.32	93.90	94.88
Unsworth	91.73	92.01	93.19	93.77
Ward	88.64	90.10	92.89	93.46
Williams	89.23	89.34	92.01	92.52
Online Elementary	88.44	90.49	93.29	96.83

<u>School</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
Doty MS	90.65	93.43	94.18	94.55
Griffiths MS	90.56	93.46	94.21	94.82
Mary Stauffer MS	88.50	93.33	93.08	93.41
Sussman MS	82.90	92.07	92.94	93.18
Downey HS	89.05	92.49	93.63	94.08
Warren HS	88.31	92.52	93.21	93.32
Columbus HS	86.20	85.35	89.82	88.73
Woodruff Academy	88.66	80.57	80.49	72.61
Downey VA	90.30	87.31	Elite	Elite

### **Suspensions from School**

The total number of students who were suspended during the 2024-25 school year was 909. This was a decrease of 44 students from the 2023-24 school year.

The chart below shows a comparison of total student suspensions and total days of suspension over a five-year period:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Student Suspensions</u>	<u>Change From Previous Year</u>
2024-25	909	-44
2023-24	953	-175
2022-23	1,128	+109
2021-22	1,019	+1,006
2020-21	13	-790

The total number of suspension days for the 2024-25 school year decreased by 111 days to 2,137 compared to the previous school year.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Suspension Days</u>	<u>Change From Previous Year</u>
2024-25	2,137	-111
2023-24	2,248	-265
2022-23	2,513	+212
2021-22	2,301	+2,275
2020-21	26	-1,538

## **Behavior Review and Intervention Team (BRIT) Referrals**

Students who were in violation of Board Policies and the Education Code related to serious discipline matters were referred to Student Services for a BRIT meeting. During the 2024-25 school year, 99 BRIT meetings were held in comparison to 131 in the previous year. Meetings always included the student, parents/guardians, school site administrators, Student Services Program Administrator, the Senior Director of Student Safety, Wellness and Engagement, and other support personnel, as needed. During the meetings, the facts related to each incident were reviewed and a success plan was created by those in attendance to best support the student's needs.

None of the BRIT meetings led to a referral for expulsion this year, resulting in the student being expelled for violations of Ed Code 48915.

## **Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Intervention Agreements**

AOD agreements have been used with students who violated Education Code 48900 (c, d, or j), which pertains to incidents involving Alcohol and Other Drugs. The chart below shows a comparison of the total students who entered an AOD agreement over three years:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>AODs</u>	<u>Change from Previous Year</u>	<u>Percentage-Change from Previous Year</u>
2024-25	71	+8	+13%
2023-24	63	-26	-29%
2022-23	89	-14	-15%

The AOD intervention holds the student accountable for their actions while allowing them to get help, correct their behavior, make better choices, and complete their education.

## **Permits**

For the 2024-25 school year, records indicate that 3,419 students were on an Inter-District permit from other school districts, while 281 Downey Unified residents applied for permits to attend schools in other districts. The following chart reflects the historical trends over the last four years.

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Total Students Enrolled to DUSD on Inter-district Permit</b>	<b>Students ENTERING DUSD</b>	<b>Students LEAVING DUSD</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>2024-25</b>	3,419	841	281	<b>+560</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	3,058	807	169	<b>+638</b>
<b>2022-23</b>	2,794	834	270	<b>+564</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	2,580	755	314	<b>+441</b>

### **Peak Enrollment**

The monthly enrollment reports for 2024-25 filed with Student Services indicated that a peak enrollment of 22,344 was recorded during Month 4 October 2024.

### **Child Abuse Reports**

The state mandate of reporting suspected child abuse cases to appropriate authorities resulted in 6 reported cases during the 2024-25 school year, compared to 10 for the 2023-24, and a total of 10 for the 2022-23 school year.

### **Independent Study Program**

During the 2024-25 school year, the Independent Study Long-Term Program provided education for 71 students.

The Independent Study Short-Term Program provided education for 512 students.

### **Student Services Program Specialists**

During 2024-2025, our Foster Youth and McKinney-Vento Advocacy Specialists provided the following to the identified students and families:

- Procured academic records from students' prior school to review and ensure appropriate school placement based on educational history (i.e., sped, GATE, 504)
- Developed system to categorize students into tiers (MTSS) based on academic achievement, test scores, attendance, and behavior). Allowed for targeted interventions based on need
- Identified and met with middle and high school-aged Foster/McKinney-Vento students to identify barriers, provide appropriate interventions, identify academic, post-secondary college and career goals, and support with personal goals
- Participated in a variety of meetings (Individualized Educational Program, Student Study Team, parent conference, monthly contact with a social worker, meeting at social services, etc.)
- Continue to monitor the established MOU with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to ensure that transportation options were available for Foster Youth to stay in compliance with the School of Origin Mandate under the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Partnered with Downey Foundation for Educational Opportunities (DFEO) to provide and prioritize our students for their free before and after school program.
- In compliance with state law, held Best Interest Determination (BID) when students moved (in compliance with state mandates) to determine best school option
- In partnership with District and school site personnel, provided Christmas gifts to 50 families throughout the district.
- Leveraged LCAP funds to pay for the utilization of Hop Skip Drive when students had to move and were displaced outside of our district to ensure continuity of school placement.
- Provided students in our program with backpacks, PPE, school supplies, laundry and food gift cards as well as hygiene products during a basic needs event in August 2024 and January 2025 at PACE and throughout the school year as needed. Over 200 students participated in each event.

- Utilized LCAP funds to coordinate multiple “Kohl’s Clothing Day,” where each student was able to purchase \$150 worth of clothing for school. Also used gift cards during the year for students in need
- Planned and supervised 40 students on an educational experience at Disneyland in May 2025
- Utilized Title One Funding to provide gas to families to enable them to get their children to school every day and on time
- To promote attendance and improvements in academic achievement, students were given gift cards to In N Out or Chick Fil A when grades, attendance, or IREADY scores improved.
- Approximately 150 students were provided 1:1 tutoring through Professional Tutors of America to support students struggles in various academic subjects and to reach grade level standards
- Formed a joint venture with Shoes that Fit and LACOE to provide new shoes to 150 students.
- Provided support to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in need of filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Ensured KINGAP and foster youth applied for the Chafee Grant and other financial aid-based funds for college and career training
- Connected students to community college/university Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, foster youth liaison, and support programs
- In partnership with LACOE’s Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program, developed systems to enhance services for our foster youth county-wide as well as acquired much need school supplies and basic need items for our students
- Utilized support from LACOE’s Homeless Education Program by attending monthly seminars on data, new legislation, best practices, and other pertinent news relevant to providing support to our families under the McKinney-Vento program

### **10-20 Club**

Ronnie Fernandez is the President of the 10-20 Club and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Lloyd Vernis serves as the Director of Operations.

The 10-20 Club provides 4-week Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) programs, 4-week parent support groups, and a variety of mental wellness programs for Middle School and High School students. The 10-20 Club provided the following programs and services for the 2025-2026 school year:

### **Mental Wellness Program for High School Students**

- 4-Week Student AOD Program
- 4-Week Parent Support Program
- Decision Making
- Barbershop Program
- Fundamentals of Boxing
- Alcohol and Other Drugs

## **Health Appraisals and Services**

Due to California school closures, mandated screening requirements by the state were modified and/or completed as needed.

- **State Mandated Hearing and Vision Screenings**  
Hearing tests were performed on 7,824 students in Grades TK-12 & SDC, and 182 students referred by school staff. Vision screenings were performed on 7,944 students in Grades TK-12 and 1,365 students referred by school staff.
- **State Mandated Scoliosis Screening**  
No longer done, not mandated.
- **Contagious Diseases**  
There were 701 cases of Pediculosis (Lice).
- **Immunization Review and Compliance with State Immunization Requirements**  
Reviewed 4,517 immunizations in Grades TK-12 and reviewed 1,558 students advancing from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade for Varicella and T-dap immunization cards for verification on students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **Employee In-Service Training**  
Provided training to 496 staff members on education policy, medication administration, and strategies on how to recognize and respond to asthma incidents, diabetes, seizures, and head injuries. Gave instruction on the use of the Epi-pen for severe allergic reactions (Anaphylaxis) and provided professional development on immunization requirements for school entry. Provided 2,085 educational pamphlets to school sites and families and were available for questions/concerns regarding Blood-Borne Pathogens to all employees in the district (required by occupational safety and hazard authority).

## **TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS** **Chris Nezzer, Chief Technology Officer**

### **General Overview**

The Technology and Information Systems Department comprises the Technology Department, the Student Information Systems Department (SIS), and administrative support. These two departments work seamlessly to support our staff, students and parents with everything technology and data related. Our Student Information systems department supports Q, our student information system, that is our primary data system for enrollment, grades, attendance and many more data points for our students. From Q we report to state and federal agencies throughout the year. Technology is responsible for email, telephones, fire alarms, security cameras, paging, classroom voice reinforcement, classroom audiovisual systems and many other systems that are integral to our classrooms' everyday activities. Both departments work closely with principals, teachers, and other departments to provide the resources, data, and tools to help everyone achieve our District Vision. Our goal is to provide leadership, encouragement and exceptional support enabling 21st century learning in every classroom that extends beyond our schools and is accessible to our students wherever they are and whenever



they want that ensures our students are college and career ready, globally competitive and citizens of strong character.

The Technology and Information Systems Department consists of the following departments and personnel:

### **Technology and Information Systems**

- Chief Technology Officer
- Senior Secretary
- Assistant Director

### **Student Information Systems Department**

- Student Information Systems Manager
- Three Student Information Systems Operators
- Two Database Administrators

### **Technology Department**

- Two Network Administrators
- Two Assistant Network Administrators
- Programmer Analyst
- Two Network Specialists
- One Lead Computer/Network Support Technicians
- Eight Computer/Network Support Technicians
- Three Maintenance Electronics Technicians

### **Projects, Programs and Accomplishments**

The 2024-2025 school year saw exciting new projects in both the Technology and Student Information Systems departments. The Cisco Multi Architecture Project is the largest technology project in the history of the District and was full steam ahead this year. The Student Information Systems developed several new data visualizations for use by staff and students to monitor progress. Our in-house developed Personnel Onboarding, Reporting, and tracking system has streamlined the communication of new hires and changes to existing employees to better serve all our employees.

Maintaining a half a dozen interconnected systems spanning all locations within the district takes an incredible amount of knowledge, skill, and time. We have been able to maintain up time on par or better than the leading technology platforms in the world. In fact, most of our downtime is due to external factors beyond our control. On top of that, much of the security-related work is best left out of public documents. Our network staff maintain all our staff and student user accounts, email accounts, our room full of servers, numerous online platforms, they backup hundreds of terabytes of data, and respond to countless security alerts. While much of the work we do in Technology and Information Systems is behind the scenes, this work is critical to the smooth operation of our district.

Downey Unified continues to be recognized as a leader in integrating technology into teaching and learning. Supporting such a high-performing organization requires

constant improvement in the Technology Department and our Student Information Systems Department to ensure our teachers and students have the tools they need to continue to innovate, grow and measure their success.

### **What We Support**

At the start of the 2024-2025 school year, the Technology Department was supporting an immense quantity of technology devices in the classrooms, including:

- 12,227 Student iPads in grades K-8
- 5,511 Student Chromebooks, Windows, and Apple devices in grades 9-12
- 2,791 Staff computers and tablets
- Teacher voice reinforcement in every classroom
- Projectors / wireless display devices in every classroom
- Wireless access points in every classroom

In addition to classroom technology hardware, a few of the widespread software applications in use in our classrooms are:

- Q, our student information system by Aequitas
- Microsoft Office 365 for every staff member and student
- Google G-Suite applications for every staff member and student
- Apple Classroom for all teachers and students TK-8
- Canvas LMS for all teachers and students 6-12
- Remind / ParentSquare for student and parent communication with teachers

We also support hundreds of grade-levels and subject-specific applications in collaboration with our Instructional Technology Coaches.

Technology is also responsible for the maintenance of all fire alarms, telephones, and public address systems. We also provide audio visual equipment and support for events at school sites throughout the year.

Student Information Systems (SIS) continues to meet the demands of Federal and State reporting requirements. CALPADS continues to shrink the submission windows for their data collections, putting immense pressure on the department to do the same amount of work in a shorter period. Even with these shorter windows we continue to meet our deadlines and, in some cases, submit much earlier to ensure our low-income students get the assistance they need over the summer.

### **Cisco Multi Architecture Project**

The Board approved the project last year, 2023-24, at the August Board meeting and work began in March of that year at Ward Elementary School so we ended sixteen months into the project this year. This project will replace every piece of network equipment at all school sites and non-instructional facilities within the district. We will also expand our Camera coverage to include all paths of travel. The project includes all new state of the art voice over IP WebEx phones and a new paging system that allows for both audio and visual announcements in the classroom.

Ward was chosen since it is a smaller school and if we needed to make changes it would allow us to more accurately schedule the following sites. Next was Downey High School which started in June of last year and continued through October of this year. We worked extensively with the contractor and school administration to ensure the project met the school's needs. This required adding additional equipment and taking more time to configure everything to the school's liking. Building on the lessons from Ward, we developed a strong workflow for the project and began working at several school sites immediately following Downey High School.

The cameras at the school sites have been the highlight of the project for the schools. The principal of Downey High School said they were a game changer when monitoring the campus. This has been echoed by administrators at each school as we have completed the installation of the cameras. Once we complete the installation of all systems across the district, which is expected to be completed next year, we will begin the work of integrating everything together and then we will see the true potential of all the new systems.

This year we completed installation at Ward, Downey High, Columbus High, Downey Adult School, Pace, Lewis, Sussman, Stauffer, Doty, and Griffiths.

### **Work Orders**

The Technology Department closed four thousand eight hundred work orders this year. This is about the same as last year. A significant achievement of the department was that the average time to close a work order decreased by thirty-one and a half percent. We ended the year in a very good position with less than 150 open work orders and many school sites with no open work orders as we left for summer. We continue to monitor and improve our processes and procedures to better serve our staff and students.

### **Elementary SAFE Systems**

We continued to install the Audio Enhancement SAFE (Signal Alert For Education) systems at our elementary schools this year. In each classroom there is an alert and communication system. As an added benefit, the system also serves as a voice reinforcement system for the teacher. Teachers and students can signal an emergency using either the emergency button in each classroom or the teacher may signal an emergency directly from the pendant microphone used for voice reinforcement. Once activated, the room number or location is displayed on the console in the office, a visual indicator flashes and audio alarm is also activated in the office. At the same time, an audio link is established with the room. This allows those responding to hear what is happening anywhere in the room and communicate back over the classroom speakers. The system can also call phone numbers to alert staff at other locations.

We bid for the work to complete all elementary schools starting in June with an expected completion in October of next year.

## **Staff File Management**

We completed the migration of our user files to Microsoft's OneDrive cloud storage. The primary benefits of OneDrive are that user files can be accessible from multiple devices seamlessly whether Windows or Apple and there is no complicated process when they switch devices. This was a major undertaking by the department since we had to go to every computer and transfer their files to OneDrive and remove our previous backup software. As part of this transition, we also added a second on-premises backup of our Google and OneDrive data to ensure we had multiple copies of staff data. The additional backup device allows for faster backup since this is an immense amount of data. It will also allow faster recovery if we need to access the files. We were able to purchase this device using the savings from not renewing our previous staff device backup software while still saving over fifty thousand dollars.

## **Student Information Systems**

Our Student Information Systems Department (SIS) continues to do an amazing job supporting administration, teachers, and students in the use of Q, our student information system. Their work behind the scenes ensures that our online systems have the data our administrators and teachers need to support our students. They support our office staff in all aspects of the student information system and teachers with attendance and the gradebook. They answer daily requests for reports and data to allow our staff to make informed decisions on how to best support our students.

In addition to all the support SIS provided to school sites, the SIS Department continued with the tremendous amount of work behind the scenes to help our District and schools run smoothly. Their work in CALPADs ensures we receive the funding we are entitled to; students can access online resources, and we meet all the state and federal data collection requirements. The Department continues to work closely with Educational Services, Certificated Human Resources, and Financial Services to ensure the accuracy of State data collection. Keeping up-to-date and accurate counts of English learners, socio-economically disadvantaged, and foster youth is vital to receiving the funding needed to address the unique needs of each group.

## **Online Enrollment and Registration**

Enrollment is the one-time process for families new to the district, where they provide all their initial information and required documents. Registration is when families update contact information, emergency cards, and other information required to be updated annually. Once again, this year, all schools had families complete the registration process online.

Again, this year the timeline, communication, and reporting were coordinated through Student Information Systems and the Director of Communications & Engagement. The school sites were still greatly involved in the process as registering almost twenty-three thousand students takes everyone working together. Having one timeline allowed the Student Information Systems department to send out reminders to all families and allowed our Director of Communications & Engagement to use social media to encourage families to register early. This year we had over ninety-eight percent of

students registered on the first day of school with school staff reporting that the improvements SIS made to the system made it even easier for parents.

### **Supporting Our Evolving Graduation Requirements**

This year Student Information Systems worked with our A-G committee to develop an A-G tracker for our students and parents. For students, this tracker was in Student Connection which is the online portal where students can see their grades, attendance, transcripts, and so much more information about all aspects of their school life. The A-G tracker is a visual representation of their progress along with an indicator to let them know if they are on track to meet the requirements. As the District Graduation requirements evolve to include A-G, this tool helps keep our students informed. It also has live links to show students which classes they need to fulfill outstanding requirements so they can plan their class choices. This same tool is also available in ParentConnection which is the portal for parents and guardians to see all the information about their students. This helps parents and guardians learn about the requirements to better support their students on the path to graduation.

### **Employee PORT for Better Employee Onboarding**

Downey Unified is fortunate to have a Programmer Analyst to build custom software solutions to meet our exact needs. Although standard software solutions typically address most organizational requirements, enhanced efficiency may be realized by implementing custom software tailored to the specific needs of the organization. This is no small feat as writing quality software is both a skill and an art. One recent project that has saved countless hours of labor, streamlined communication between our human resources departments, and provided a better onboarding experience for our new employees is our Personnel Onboarding, Reporting, and tracking system or PORT. This replaces very old software that was used by human resources and finance to track employees. Over the years they have looked for solutions to meet this need without finding anything that would meet all their needs. The custom solution developed by our Programmer Analyst can meet the needs and provide additional functionality to support the needs of Technology and SIS in onboarding new employees. This replaces a paper-based process that led to delays. With so much of our work and communication dependent on having an @dusd.net account this created frustration for new employees and their co-workers. PORT has enabled better communication and streamlined the process by reducing friction in onboarding new employees and processing changes in assignments.

### **Dashboards**

Last year we added a second Database Administrator to allow for more time to work on dashboards and reports for the school sites. A dashboard is a visual tool that helps you understand and monitor important information at a glance. The dashboards that were developed this year were the Multilanguage Learner (ML) dashboard and the attendance dashboard. One of the key features of these dashboards in addition to the high-level numbers and trends is the ability to drill down all the way to individual students. This allows administrators to see the big picture while providing teachers, counselors, and other service providers with individual student information to better serve their students.

This better service then leads to improvements administrators can see in the dashboards or identify strategies that are not working and make changes. This real time feedback loop helps everyone improve.

### **Observations and Recommendations**

The Technology and Information Systems Department will continue to focus on how to better support our teachers, students, and families. Data dashboards will continue to be an area of focus of the Student Information Systems department as well as additional tools to help students monitor their progress towards graduation.

As with years past we will continue to stay the course in improving each department's Hedgehog Concept. At the heart of the Hedgehog Concept is "what we can be the best at in the world." These concepts align with our focus of supporting teachers, students, and families wherever they are now more than ever. Our network administrator team continues to put more focus into the security of our online systems. Each year we see more threats and more attempts to compromise our systems. While it is never possible to be completely secure, we must and will continually improve our system's security. This builds on the previous goal of providing proactive support as many of the principles of security also focus on monitoring and proactive measures to keep systems up to date and detecting problems before they are exploited. Our other teams will continue to work in the following areas: technical support staff will continue to focus on solving problems on the first call or visit and Student Information Systems will continue to focus on making student data available for decision-making. Each of these areas is aligned with the District's Vision and Mission Statement and builds on the Shared Values of Downey Unified.

The Cisco Multi Architecture project progressed much more slowly than anticipated due to issues ranging from supplier delays, unforeseen complications, and taking the time to make sure we meet the school sites' needs as close to one hundred percent as possible. As the largest Technology project in our history, we are working to get everything done right even if that will cost us a little bit more. In the long run the additional cost now will save us significantly more than having to rework after the project is done. Next year will require a significant push to ensure we complete the project before the end of the school year.

The Cisco Multi Architecture project is also shifting workloads within the Technology Department so we continue to evaluate staff responsibilities and workloads to ensure we can support the new systems. As this project progresses, the needs will become clearer, and we will need to work with staff on new responsibilities.

Technology and Information Systems has only become stronger this year as we have filled vacancies, and our new hires have shown what they can do. Even more so, the team this year has exceeded the sum of their individual contributions. We are only getting better at helping to ensure our students receive a 21<sup>st</sup> Century education that ensures they are college and career ready, globally competitive and citizens of strong character.



**BUSINESS SERVICES**  
**Robert McEntire, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent**

**Business Office Narrative and Accomplishments**

The Business Office is responsible for directing and overseeing five functional departments, including Facilities & Planning, Financial Services, Food Services, Maintenance, Operations and Transportation Services, and Purchasing & Warehouse. The team endeavors to provide leadership and technical expertise to enhance the educational experience for students and the lives of staff dedicated to supporting them. The Business Office's primary focus for 2024-25 centered on meeting Board Goals 8 and 9. Additionally, the operational focus is centered on ensuring long-term fiscal solvency, providing professional development and sustainability, using district facilities, planning capital projects, and efficiently managing district resources.

**BOARD GOALS**

Leadership requires a true "north star," and the Downey Board of Education continues to provide directional clarity through its actions, support, and its chosen chief executive, Dr. John Garcia and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Roger Brossmer. As a department, the board's goals frame all decisions, planning, and action for the year. Some require direct action, which is detailed below. Some are intertwined in how we conduct ourselves on a daily basis. This section of the report is focused on directing action board goals.

*Goal 8: Downey Unified will start construction of Measure K Bond projects at Carpenter, Imperial, Rio Hondo, and Rio San Gabriel Elementary Schools as well as obtain DSA approval for the solar photovoltaic structures at the elementary sites and begin construction of solar photovoltaic structures at the secondary sites and district office.*

*Goal 9: As the state's financial position is in decline, Downey Unified will take deliberate actions to maintain our district's current strong fiscal position. This will be accomplished by aligning ongoing expenditures with known revenue streams while utilizing expiring one-time state funds to support students' learning recovery needs. The District will also continue to use and refine the 2024-25 Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and additional one-time state grants to implement the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)*

**Goal 9: Business Services Office Major Projects Revenue and Growth Initiatives (driven by Dr. Zegarra)**

Facility rental revenue nearly doubled, growing from \$129,494.30 in 2023-24 to \$219,757.80 in 2024-25. This increase was achieved not only through more efficient operations but also by cultivating strong partnerships with community organizations, athletic groups, and outside agencies. This growth has translated into direct benefits for our secondary schools during the 2025–26 school year, as revenues are shared with each school site in their annual budget allotment. Collectively, our middle schools—Doty, Griffiths, Stauffer, and Sussman—received nearly \$50,000 in revenue to support their programs, while our high schools—Downey, Warren, and Columbus—received more than \$50,000, ensuring that students at the secondary level directly benefit from our expanded rental partnerships.



School sites were dissatisfied with the quality and reliability of the vending machine offerings at their locations, so Business Services launched an internally managed program with three machines at each high school site. This program will expand to 6 total machines at each high school in early fall of the 2025–26 school year. This initiative ensures that all revenue stays within the district and is reinvested to support students. Dr. Zegarra spearheaded the creation of a pilot Sports Academy program, enrolling a total of 105 students—75 through inter-district permits and 30 current DUSD students. This innovative program not only expanded educational opportunities for student-athletes but also drove a significant increase in enrollment, positioning Stauffer Middle School as the highest-enrolled middle school in the district.

Collectively, these accomplishments highlight the team’s ability to grow and diversify revenue streams, cultivate sustainable community partnerships, and strategically drive enrollment growth to benefit both students and the district as a whole.

The business office generates, reviews, and coordinates all agreements and contracts in the district. Every agreement and backup document on Board agendas are reviewed and approved by the department secretary and the Associate Superintendent. They also review and advise on many agreements/contracts prior to being submitted to the agendas. Some major accomplishments include the facilities' use and program agreements with Downey Foundation for Educational Opportunities (DFEO) and Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) to operate the Expanded Learning Opportunity Program across all elementary school sites. Revised agreements provided significant operational clarity and stability, allowing the district to charge DFEO and YMCA rent for facilities used before and after school. Another improvement this year was the implementation of the first Outcomes-Based Contract (OBC) with Curriculum Associates for the i-Ready program. This approach forces vendors to “put their money where their mouths are.” If DUSD’s students do not improve, the district will not pay the full contract. The goal is to move many more contracts in this direction in the coming year.

### **Risk & Legal**

The business office coordinates and leads all property and liability claims and activity districtwide. This includes auto accidents, bus accidents, trips and falls, and more serious claims, including assault, major injury, and sexual assault and molestation. Business department staff represented the district in court proceedings, coordinating and collaborating with our insurance company, ASCIP, and were involved in daily case management and strategy. The Associate Superintendent also serves on the ASCIP Executive Committee and attends monthly meetings. The department secretary completes trainings each year regarding legal changes and topics, the District’s property and liability coverage, responding to public records requests, and other information pertinent to reducing possible liability. The district’s input and direction have compelled legal counsel to contest claims that would have otherwise been settled, resulting in settlements for ten cents on the dollar compared to our attorney’s initial claim valuation. Additionally, the business team has compelled our attorneys to put in more work building stronger cases, resulting in more reasonable settlements. This change in approach has resulted in the closure of the largest potential liability cases open with the district. Direct oversight and advocacy by the district compelled the insurance provider to defend two cases, resulting in 100% district verdicts, saving the district more than \$500,000 in unnecessary settlements (attorney’s early case estimate). The business office strives to

resolve every claim fairly and in accordance with the law. However, when claimants push too far, we fight to preserve the financial resources for all of our students.

Several public records requests were managed by the business office this year. One particularly honerous public records request required 2,300 labor hours to sort, review, package, and send out to the requester. This was in addition to the work of the technology team, which provided emails and communications data necessary for review, resulting in several hundred thousand pages of documents that required review for applicability to the request. This PRA included current hot topics such as ethnic studies, transgenderism, social-emotional curriculum and training, and other sensitive subjects.

### **Budget Development & Negotiations**

The department lead the development of the budget from the adopted budget through unaudited actuals for the 2024-25 fiscal year and provided technical expertise and leverage through deep industry networks. A detailed spend-down plan was created and revised for all one-time funds. The expenditure of the most restricted funds was first prioritized to provide maximum flexibility for the Board and leadership team moving forward. Individualized pre-negotiations training was provided for each of the three bargaining units. This work enhances transparency and enables bargaining to focus on facts rather than being sidetracked by accusations and innuendo. The Associate Superintendent acted as a senior member of the district's negotiation team at the bargaining table, providing operational impact analysis and cost assessments in real time, avoiding bargaining delays at the table.

### **School Site Support & Community Relations**

This year, the Associate Superintendent asked all department directors to be physically present at all combined principals' meetings to ensure the business unit better meets the needs of school site leaders. Directors spend much of their time in these meetings networking and making themselves available to answer questions and facilitate work to help sites run effectively. This approach provides maximum access with minimal effort for site and department leaders who are tasked with managing their extensive responsibilities. Our goal is to make that lift a little lighter.

The business department is integral in the planning, logistics, and contracting with all vendors to produce successful promotion and graduation ceremonies. Fully engaged support with ultimate ownership by the business team enables site leaders to focus on their students and staff, knowing that the business department will ensure everything is in order. The increased production value in the last two years highlights the impact of this partnership.

### **Goal 8: Measure K Construction & Solar Projects**

The Facilities Planning and Development Department made visible progress on multiple fronts. Projects at Lewis Elementary, Pace Education Center, Ward Elementary, Sussman Middle, and both Downey and Warren High Schools were completed, including upgrades ranging from classroom renovations to stadium lighting and food service improvements. At the same time, major construction projects moved forward at

Carpenter, Garcia, Rio Hondo, and Rio San Gabriel Elementary Schools. These projects, coupled with the installation of solar structures at secondary schools and the District Office, demonstrate not only our progress on promised Measure K commitments but also our ability to manage complex, multimillion-dollar construction programs across more than twenty sites. The Associate Superintendent and Administrator of Business Services registered in and completed the CASH Academy Institute from March 2024 through February 2025, when the graduation for the program was held at the annual CASH conference. The purpose of this year-long academy is to instruct leaders in all facets of school facilities planning, funding, design, construction and maintenance.

## **Conclusion**

While each department's achievements stand on their own, the Office of Business Services provided senior leadership that tied them together and moved the district forward. Facility rental revenues have doubled and expanded in-house vending services keep profits local. The District's first pilot Sports Academy was launched, which both enhanced educational opportunities and increased enrollment. Contract innovation was advanced by negotiating our first outcomes-based contract, holding vendors accountable for student results. The District is aggressively defended in litigation, saving more than \$500,000 in unnecessary settlements by directing strategy and compelling outside counsel to build stronger cases. School site leaders receive direct support by increased presence at principals' meetings and ensuring that Business Services is accessible and responsive. The department carried the full weight of graduation and promotion logistics, allowing school leaders to focus on their students and celebrations.

Taken together, the 2024–25 year was one of resilience, innovation, and disciplined leadership. Facilities advanced modernization under Measure K; Financial Services navigated a tightening economy with strength; Food Services delivered equity through nutrition; MOT ensured daily operational excellence; and Purchasing and Warehouse modernized procurement. At the center, the Business Services Office provided integration, strategy, and executive leadership to ensure that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts.

## **FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Annie Aung, Director**

### **General Overview**

The Facilities Planning and Development Department includes a Director, a Facilities Support Technician, a Facilities System Coordinator, and a Construction Coordinator. The department is responsible for managing the Measure K Bond funds and projects and using other funding sources. Work is coordinated and performed on all twenty-two District sites, including the District Office.

Below is a list of projects completed during the 2024-25 school year and many in development. Facilities continues to work on communicating with all sites and other departments to ensure that all needs and requests are being addressed as projects are planned and executed.

## **Projects, Programs, and Accomplishments**

Projects completed in 2024-25:

- Lewis Elementary School DHH Portable Relocation
- Lewis Elementary School Campus Wide Fire Alarm Upgrade
- Pace Education Center Kitchen Renovation
- Pace Education Center Asphalt & Parking Lot Expansion
- Pace Education Center Portable Relocation
- Pace Education Center Asphalt & Site Work on Campus Side
- Pace Education Center Classroom Renovations
- Pace Education Center Interior & Exterior Paint
- Pace Education Center Interior & Exterior Fencing
- Pace Education Center Restroom Fixtures and Water Fountains
- Pace Education Center Playground Equipment & Rubber Surfacing
- Ward Elementary School Kitchen Service Line
- Sussman Middle School Food Service Renovation
- Downey High School JROTC Portable Relocation
- Downey High School Stadium Light Retrofit
- Downey High School Stadium Speaker Upgrade
- Phase 1 (Secondary Sites) Solar Structures
- Warren High School Fire Science Portable Relocation
- Warren High School Stadium Light Retrofit
- Warren High School Stadium Speaker Upgrade

Projects currently in construction or bidding:

- Carpenter Elementary School Interim Playground – in construction
- Carpenter Elementary School New Construction - bidding
- Garcia Elementary School Modernization – in construction
- Rio Hondo Elementary School Modernization – in construction
- Rio San Gabriel Elementary School Interim Playground – in construction
- Rio San Gabriel Elementary School New Construction – bidding
- Phase 2 (Elementary School) Solar Structures – in construction
- Middle School Gyms (4) HVAC – in construction
- Sussman Middle School Walk-In Renovation – in construction
- Columbus High School Kitchen Renovation – in construction
- Various Schools HVAC Repairs, CO2 Monitors, & Filter Replacement – in construction

Projects Waiting Plan Approval in DSA:

- Carpenter Elementary School Modernization
- Carpenter Elementary School New Construction
- Garcia Elementary School New Construction
- Rio Hondo Elementary School New Construction
- Rio San Gabriel Elementary School Modernization
- Rio San Gabriel Elementary School New Construction

## **Future Planning**

The Facilities Planning and Development Department will continue to work with District leadership; Maintenance, Operations and Transportation Services; Technology and Information Systems; and all sites to provide the highest quality service, as stated in the updated Facilities Master Plan. The Facilities team will continue to work on communicating well with all involved parties to resolve issues and develop solutions as quickly as possible and will continue to work together to provide a safe environment for the students and staff of the Downey Unified School District. The team will also continue to work with Energy Conservation partners to move forward with Energy Savings Projects. Using Measure K and all available funding sources, the plan is to continue to provide successful and efficient projects for the students, staff, and community the District serves.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**Michael Martinez, Senior Director, Budget and Finance**

### **General Overview**

The Financial Services Department includes the functions of accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, voluntary deductions, budget, and general accounting.

After two years of strong State economy, the economy declined through the 2024-25 fiscal year. As a result of the strong economy in prior years, the district received one-time funding for various Instructional Programs and Learning Recovery in prior year and finished spending down these resources during the year. These one-time resources allowed the district to continue supporting many valuable and innovative programs for our students and trainings for our teachers and support staff. Providing a “quality” education to all students supports our District Vision that all Downey Unified students graduate with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century education, are college and career ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character.

Due to the complexity of changing rules and reporting requirements at the Federal, State, and County levels, keeping our staff well informed was a priority. All employees attended a variety of Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) training sessions. Senior staff members attended staff development sessions offered by the California Association of School Business Officials and School Services of California.

### **Current Year Accomplishments**

Below are a few highlights from the Financial Services Department for 2024-25. Our mission is to provide the best service and support possible to the district in an efficient, transparent, and cost-effective manner in all areas of payroll and accounting, budget and finance, fringe benefits and voluntary deductions. Our goal is to provide the best customer service to our peers, students, community, and all stakeholders.

The Department worked with all educational partners to develop a fiscal solvency plan for a period of five years. This plan included spending down one-time funding, budget reductions and shifting of funding resources between various programs. The Department played a critical role in ensuring that the plan met local, state and federal guidelines while supporting student learning and achievement. All funds spent during the fiscal year will be audited within the next couple of months by the district's external auditors and State auditors during the next Federal Program Monitoring (FPM). The department was proactive and preparing sufficient supporting documentation to comply with fiscal oversight requirements. The FPM State audit is scheduled for the month of October.

In 2024-25, the district was able to negotiate with all bargaining units. As a result of the weak economy, together, the District, the Downey Education Association Teachers' Union and the California School Employees' Association Unit I and Unit II negotiated a 0% increase for 2024-25 in salaries for all employees. The 2024-25 settlement was based upon consideration of the district receiving 1.07% COLA.

In November 2014, Downey residents passed the Measure "O" schools' construction bond in the amount of \$248 million. The proceeds from the first sale of bonds in the amount of \$50 million were deposited with the District in October 2015. A second issuance in the amount of \$135 million was deposited in February 2019, followed by a third and final issuance in the amount of \$63 million, which was deposited in May 2021. These funds were completely spent by the end of 2023-24. During 2024-25, the Department continued to work with the auditors to complete the corresponding audits as required by the State School Facility Program (SFP).

In November 2022, Downey residents passed the Measure "K" schools' construction bond in the amount of \$504 million. The proceeds from the first sale of bonds in the amount of \$125 million were deposited with the District in June 2023. During the year, the Department continued to work closely with the Facilities Department to spend these funds appropriately and provided financial reporting support to the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee.

In 2024-25, the district continued to make significant progress in implementing the new Integrated Financial and Human Resources System, BEST, in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). This project aims to replace outdated systems. While the Financial and Budget modules have fully transitioned, the Payroll and Human Resources modules are still in process and the full implementation is expected to be completed by April 2027. A collaboration work group between the Payroll and Human Resources departments was implemented to prepare for a smooth transition. The group met bi-weekly all year.

In the 2024-25 school year, the Department continued to provide Administrative Unit services for all Special Education students educated by the Downey-Montebello Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). The Financial Services Department worked closely with our Special Education Department to provide training and support regarding budget and finance. Additionally, the team continues to improve reports used for decision making by Special Education leaders.



In the 2024-25 school year, the Department continued to work with the Downey Foundation for Educational Opportunities (DFEO) to administer the After School Program (ASES) and the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP).

The District Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is a collaborative effort of several educational groups within the district and community, which includes administrators, staff members, students, parents, the community, and our Board members, who reviewed the 2024-25 LCAP throughout the school year. Financial Services worked closely with administrators and other educational staff to ensure proper administration of the LCAP for the benefit of our students. Meetings with the various educational partners were held to discuss progress and revisions to the LCAP. Financial Services continued to work with administrators to provide fiscal guidance.

In 2024-25, the district filed “Positive” certifications in all interim reports, stating that the district can maintain the required reserves and the projected expenditures for the current and subsequent two years.

In collaboration between Financial Services, Human Resources and the Classified Bargaining Units, the district established the Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP). This valuable program is implemented by the California Department of Education to provide districts with matching money for eligible and participating classified employees who elect to withhold a portion of their monthly paycheck for the 2025-2026 school year.

In 2024-25, the Financial Services staff processed 10,968 vendor payment checks for approximately \$219,764,335. The Department also processed 62,672 payroll checks for approximately \$350,371,690. In addition, the Department issued 3,903 W2 tax forms.

### **Future Planning**

In 2025-26, the Department is planning to continue working with all educational partners to finalize spending plans and file the corresponding quarterly reports for the remaining one-time funding. Tentatively, this process will continue over the next two years.

In 2025-26, the district, along with LACOE, will continue with the implementation and integration of BEST's human resources system. The current HRS systems and other third-party accounting and finance programs will be eliminated. Users will continue to be trained until full implementation is potentially completed by April 2027.

In June 2023, employees were offered a retirement incentive, leading to significant participation and successful implementation. This initiative, facilitated by the Business and Financial Services Departments, underscored the district's strategic approach to maintaining a strong fiscal position while supporting staff transitions. Similarly, the district will be offering a similar incentive in June 2026, and the department will be actively involved in the administration of this program.



The ever-increasing complexity of compliance and reporting requirements of school district finances necessitates the retention of highly qualified employees, adequate staffing and professional competency. Financial Services staff members will attend training sessions pertinent to their positions. Senior staff members will be encouraged to attend appropriate off-site offerings that will enhance their on-the-job knowledge. Attending LACOE, California Association of School Business Officials and School Services of California sponsored training sessions is always a priority. The department will continue to implement a system of cross-training for all staff within the same job classification.

The District's LCAP supports the mission of the District and, more specifically, the goals of the District. There are requirements to monitor and revise the LCAP, as necessary, to remain in compliance with LCFF, the District's LCAP and its educational partners. In 2025-26, Financial Services will continue to work closely with the Educational Services Department to ensure the LCAP is implemented and funded as planned at both the department and site levels.

In conclusion, the Financial Services staff anticipates and looks forward to another productive and successful school year.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

### **Marc Milton, Director**

#### **General Overview**

<u>Department Statistics</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>Change</u>
Total lunches	2,521,702	2,542,334	0.01%
Total breakfasts	1,281,490	1,347,089	5.1%
Total CACFP At-Risk after-school snacks and suppers (combined)	289,068	371,701	28.6%
Unduplicated Pupil Count (UPC)	73.1%	78.4%	7.3%
Average daily a la carte sales	\$3,060	\$2,925	(4.4%)
Total sites	20	20	-----
Budget-Total Revenues	\$24,252,115	\$23,731,518	(2.1%)
Enrollment (DUSD & County Students)	22,222	22,462	1.1%
Catering Revenues	\$43,416	\$52,364	20.6%

SY 2024/2025 saw the continuation of California's Universal Meals Program, AB 130, which mandates that each public-school student be offered one free breakfast and lunch every school day. This program is subject to budget appropriation and given the ongoing conditions of the Governor's budget, the continued funding of this program highlights the legislature's commitment to ensuring access to food for students at school. AB 130 also requires that high poverty schools participate in a federal meal provision. A high poverty

school is defined as those that meet the minimum eligibility requirements to participate in the federal CEP, or Community Eligibility Provision. All DUSD schools meet that requirement, and as a result, it was determined in SY 2023/2024 that the Food Services Department would participate in Provision 2. This provision allows the department to establish a base year of eligibility for students based on a meal application. The eligibility established from that effort stays with the student during the provision cycle, which is 4 years (3 years, plus the base year), eliminating the need to collect meal applications in the non-base years. SY 2023/2024 was our base year, which means that the next meal application collection process will take place in SY 2027/2028, unless conditions or regulations change.

Participation in SY 2024/2025 was a mix of positive increases in some areas while other aspects of the program were flat compared to last year or slightly down. Lunch participation was relatively flat while breakfast followed the pattern from last year and continues to increase, albeit a lower increase than in SY 2023/2024 (12.8% increase vs. 5.1%). Participation in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) experienced a large increase of nearly 29%. This program provides meal supplements to students enrolled in enrichment activities after-school and during holiday breaks and is operated in collaboration with DFEO and YMCA. The dramatic increase in the after-school meal program participation is credited to ongoing efforts to increase enrollment in those enrichment programs and higher quality food items offered to students.

The catering program revenue rebounded in SY 2024/2025 by over 20% due to the efforts of the Supervisor Operations Specialist, Sandra Velazquez, in her first full year in the position.

The a la carte program revenue decreased by over 4%, following the trend from last year. This is because of the ongoing employee attendance challenges that persisted in SY 2024/2025, again following recent trends. The department experienced an average of 18 absences daily across all school sites, directly impacting the site's ability to keep a la carte points of service open consistently. When a site is short-staffed for the day, employees who are usually assigned to a la carte points of sale are reassigned to locations where reimbursable meals are served so students had access to more complete nutrition of the complete reimbursable meal rather than purchasing snack food items.

In response to the ongoing challenges in hiring and retaining employees, the department continued the onboarding orientation trainings for all new Food Service employees to review expectations and provide important information. Additional positions were added to all schools to better support meal service, with 6 positions for secondary schools and 39 at the elementary level. The elementary positions were created in response to the need of additional student support during mealtimes, primarily due to the increase in TK enrollment.

The supply chain for food has stabilized over the past two years, however, costs are rising at unprecedented rates due to external economic factors impacting food, equipment, and supply manufacturing. The department leveraged one-time funding provided to food service departments across the state to improve access to meals and

feature more freshly prepared items that are minimally processed and of higher nutritional quality for students. The majority of the \$2.1M in Kitchen Infrastructure and Training (KIT) Funds were used to make investments in facilities and equipment that will provide lasting assets to the department for years to come.

Downey USD Food Services was also awarded more than over \$1.2M in Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) funds, and over \$500k in School Food Best Practices (SFBP) funding that were used to purchase product and equipment by June 30, 2025, to support freshly prepared items and higher quality meals.

Some highlights not already mentioned include:

1. Facility improvements at the following sites:
  - Sussman: walk-in freezer and refrigerator replacement
  - Columbus: replaced kitchen floor, wall finishes/paint, new lighting, new prep and ware washing equipment
  - Warren: kitchen dish room redesigned to install a dish machine and improved ware washing processes; installation of two more custom, branded food service kiosks
  - Secondary schools: new robust, custom branded lunch line barriers
  - Downey, Warren, Stauffer, Griffiths: new custom branded electric service vehicles purchased to provide flexible, mobile food service to remote areas of campuses
  - Downey and Warren cafeteria improvements: replaced existing and added new video monitors in cafeterias to digitally display menus and improve video quality to enhance the student experience; installed large, custom designed banners on the exterior of the buildings to promote the food service program
  - Pace: kitchen modernized to support the Leap program expansion
  - All sites: various equipment replacement and additions including dozens of new ovens, along with multiple steamers, kettles, prep tables, storage shelving, sinks, salad bars, and utensils for every site in the district.
2. Established a permanent full-time Senior Accounting Assistant position to support the accounting functions of the department.
3. Continued support of the LEAP early childhood program and Elite Academy at Pace by providing delivery of daily hot lunches for enrolled children.
4. Established contracts for fresh local produce and regenerative beef products vendors to provide the freshest, highest quality products possible to students.

### **Staff Development**

The department continued with the online professional development learning platform where multiple bilingual resources and trainings are available for staff to access anytime. This professional development program satisfies the USDA requirement for ongoing training of Food Services staff and provides practical information directly related to school food service that can be used in daily operations.

Department administrators and staff attended a variety of conferences and professional development trainings throughout the year, including:

- Collaborated with district partners to provide Clifton Strengths Training for all Food Service Supervisors and Lead Food Service Assistants.
- All Food Service Assistant II positions (primarily responsible for cooking the food) were certified as ServSafe Food Handler Managers.
- Provided an “Unlock Your Next Opportunity” professional development workshop for Food Service staff.
- Southern California School Nutrition Association Supervisory Chapter 1 Meetings: 9/20/2024, 1/31/2025, 5/9/2025
- Super Co-Op Southern California Summit: December 2024
- School Services of California Governor’s Budget Workshop: January 2025
- California School Nutrition Association Child Nutrition and Industry Summit: May 2025
- Bi-monthly CDE Nutrition Services Division School Nutrition Town Hall meetings

### **Future Planning**

Execute meal service out of new facility at Pace to support the Leap programs.

All California public school students will continue to be offered one breakfast and one lunch at no cost every school day, regardless of whether they are in the Free, Reduced, or Paid eligibility status.

Collaborate with the Facilities Department to maximize the approved use of Food Services funds in modernizing elementary schools under Measure K.

Continue our work with the chef consultant to improve quality, consistency, and variety of menu offerings.

Provide professional growth opportunities for department staff through workshops offered outside of the workday and site level skills training.

Continue our collaboration with the Downey Foundation for Educational Opportunities (DFEO) and YMCA after-school programs to best support students.

Continue to upgrade cooking equipment and facilities across the district to support freshly prepared meals and improve access to meals for students.

Continue focused efforts in onboarding and training to improve staff retention and attendance.

## **MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

### **John Shook, Director**

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation Departments are composed of a dedicated team of over 150 employees, including bus drivers, custodians, groundskeepers, floor crew, maintenance, operations and skilled trades personnel. Together, we manage and maintain 23 sites across the district, including the Gallegos Administration Center.

Throughout the year, our departments have focused on strengthening communication with individual sites and among teams to ensure that all needs and service requests are addressed promptly and efficiently. The Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation offices remain committed to upholding compliance with city, county, and state regulations. Annual Williams Law inspections are conducted at all school sites to ensure facility standards are met, as validated by the recent ratings by LACOE of 100% at Doty Middle School and 99.67% at Gallatin Elementary School. Underground fuel storage permits continue to be issued due to our consistent and safe usage practices. Hazardous materials reporting is completed annually and has been reliably verified and accepted by the City of Downey Fire Department. These efforts, along with other required reporting, reflect our ongoing dedication to safety, accountability, and operational excellence.

#### **PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

##### **Maintenance**

- District wide – closure of 6,539 work orders
- District wide - continued installation of SALTO entry systems for all upgraded and remodeled school sites
- District wide - provide tables, chairs, stages, risers, carnival booths, etc., for district events at all 23 sites-year around
- District wide – set up of stages and chairs for district events-including: awards ceremonies, promotion ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, pin ceremonies, district appreciation breakfast and lunches
- District wide – handling of all surplus furniture items from each site, including the distribution of surplus items from the Alameda Warehouse as needed at each site year round
- District wide – patching and repair of asphalt, concrete and roof leaks
- District wide – classroom, furniture and teacher relocations
- District wide – repair of wrought iron, chain link fencing and automated gate systems
- District wide - hung banners and signs up at each site, both in the interior and exterior of school site buildings
- District wide – installation of Novaerus NV900 air purifiers in various locations
- District wide – provided support to Facilities for the CalShape surveys
- District wide – transported all lighting and sound equipment and play props for plays district wide for Jeff Toussing

- Remodeled both lounges at the district office
- Remodeled both restrooms near DHS baseball field
- Installed new discus cages at the high schools
- Painted the Alameda cafeteria
- Installed new control wires for the HVAC units ahead of the Rio Hondo remodel
- Installed new control wires for HVAC units ahead of the Imperial/ Garcia remodel
- Installed new air filters in the special needs classrooms throughout the district.
- Installed Salto locks throughout the Pace Education complex
- Built and installed new case work for the Alameda library
- Painted the GYM at CHS/DHS
- Replaced all the lighting in the Ward office building (changed from T-8 to LED)
- Retro fitted the lighting in the ORS cafeteria to LED and replaced all the missing lenses
- Performed planned maintenance on all kitchen equipment in the district
- Installed the power and compressed air needed for the new car lift in the DHS D building
- Removed the wrap, prepped and painted the office hallway at GMS
- Installed new flooring in the DAS main office lounge
- Prepped and painted the massage therapy classroom at DAS
- Prepped and painted the welding shop at CHS
- Prepped and painted a computer lab at CHS /DAS
- Removed the old laminate and installed new on the Dais in the district office

## **Operations**

### **General Operations**

- Gym floor recoats for all Middle Schools and High Schools
- Power washed both high school stadiums
- Power washed all roofs at Stauffer and most of the campus at Griffiths, Doty and Downey High – still pressure washing at Warren/Downey

### **Custodial**

- Custodians and utility workers continue to work diligently keeping our campuses clean, safe, and secure
- Work with site administration and district office personnel to complete work orders, special requests, and other activities throughout the school year (Back-to-School Night, promotions, open house, graduations, and others)
- Custodians and Utility Workers completed ASCIP trainings on Asbestos Awareness, Bloodborne Pathogens, Fire Safety, Heat Stress, Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and Ladder Safety
- Thorough summer cleaning took place at all school campuses and the district office and was completed on 8/9/25
- Custodians thoroughly inspected classrooms, restrooms, and administration offices to comply with Williams Legislation



## **Pest Control**

- Hired a second Chemical Applications Specialist (Jesus Jacquet)
- Spray Specialist actively addressed the various pest-related issues and ensures the newest methods are used, complying with all regulatory agencies
- The Integrated Pest Management Program has increased the use of organic or green pesticides that contain natural oils
- The Integrated Pest Management Program has adopted the use of steam machines for chemical-free weed control, and the Spray Specialist is trained and experienced with this method

## **Irrigation**

- Completed the following safety trainings - Heat Stress, IIPP, PPE and Ladder Safety
- Installed new irrigation and a French drain at Old River Elementary
- Ongoing inspection of landscape irrigation at new construction sites to observe and learn the modern systems and ensure district standards are being met
- Repaired damage to irrigation systems caused by construction projects throughout the district

## **Grounds**

- Completed field renovation at Old River Elementary and Stauffer during summer.
- Leveled and reseeded large lawn area near the 70's wing at Sussman.
- Leveled, seeded and fertilized Warren baseball field.
- Completed the following ASCIP trainings: Pesticide Handler Training, Heat Stress, IIPP, PPE and Ladder Safety.
- Filled in playgrounds with new wood chips at Gallatin Elementary, Rio San Gabriel Elementary and Ward Elementary.
- Continually servicing all district sites by mowing grass, weed whipping, and clean-ups.
- Maintaining landscape, overgrowth trimming, cleaning up debris, planting new greenery and flowering plants to showcase the cleanliness and modern look of all school sites.
- Continued to complete work orders with special requests, such as preparation for graduations, promotions, open house, back to school night, and many others throughout the year.

## **Transportation**

- Our current fleet consists of 40 buses, 23 of which are CNG buses, 4 electric buses, and the remaining are a combination of gasoline and diesel
- A total of 182,009 miles were traveled by a CNG bus out of a grand total of 258,573 from the start of 7/1/2024 to 6/30/2025
- An average of 618 students were transported on a school bus every day – this count includes special needs students with transportation requests in their IEPs. An average of 102 students were transported daily for different athletic teams.

- The Transportation Department applied for the School Bus Grant, ZESBI (Zero Emission School Bus Infrastructure Project) to replace up to 4 of our older school bus models in the fleet. We are waiting for final assessment and plans from SoCal Edison to add the new electric chargers for those new ZESBI buses.

## **MOT Department**

### *Contracted Works:*

- Downey High School track replacement
- Downey High School dance room floor replacement
- Warren High School fire science program renovation
- Warren High School baseball/softball field protective netting installation
- Columbus High School L restroom renovation
- Downey Adult School C and G restrooms renovation
- Doty Middle School room 47 and 65 VCT flooring install
- Griffiths Middle School concrete/drainage repair
- Stauffer Middle School turf installation at the front of the school
- Sussman Middle School asphalt pad in the 6th grade quad
- Alameda Elementary School wrought iron fencing at the front of the school
- Gallatin Elementary School concrete north of the cafeteria
- Carpenter Elementary School office build-out in the innovation lab
- Lewis Elementary School roof replacement and coating
- Old River Elementary School playground swing addition
- Pace Elementary School sensory gym installation and sod replacement
- Rio San Gabriel Elementary School bungalow paint and ramp repair
- Unsworth Elementary School carpet replacement in rooms U1 through U6
- Ward Elementary School turf installation at the front of the school
- District Wide addition of mulch to all fronts of school and various interior locations

## **White Fleet Acquisitions**

- 2025 Ford Ranger (Facilities)

## **Personnel**

- Retirees:
  - Jorge Negrete – Custodian
  - Edwin Morales - Custodian
- Promotions
  - Maintenance
    - Larry Herrington, Maintenance Supervisor – Replacing Craig Karli
    - Gabriel Olivarez, Lead Electrical Worker – Replacing Larry Herrington
    - Richard Fernandez, Skilled Trades Assistant - Replacing Christopher Jefferson
    - Guillermo Chavez, General Maintenance Worker– Replacing David Silva

- Operations
  - Hector Castillo, Grounds Equipment Operator – Replacing James Walton
  - Andre Rios, Groundskeeper – Replacing Hector Castillo
  - Joe Taracena, Utility Worker – Replacing Richard Fernandez
  - Kevin Romo, Utility Worker – Replacing Benjamin Valdez
  - Alma Garcia, Custodian – Replacing Kevin Romo
  - Luis Brito, Utility Worker
  - Robert Carter, Floor Maintenance Worker – Replacing Joe Taracena
  - Manuel Alamillo Alamillo, Utility Worker – Replacing Jesse Lozano
  - Alejandra Morales, Utility Worker – Replacing Jose Ramirez Rosales
  - Jesus Jacquet, Chemical Application Specialist
- Filled/New Positions
  - Operations
    - Operations Utility Workers (2)
    - Grounds workers (2)
    - B Shift Custodians (19)
    - Bus Drivers (1)
  - Transportation
    - Bus Driver Celeste Barajas to replace Eric Noel
    - Equipment Mechanics Roberto Martinez and Erik Leon to replace Aurelio Arevalo and Pedro Cruz

## **FUTURE PLANNING**

The Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation Services Department remains dedicated to delivering high-quality service in the most efficient and timely manner possible. We continue to prioritize open communication with all educational partners to ensure that issues are resolved quickly and effectively. Our partnership with energy conservation experts is helping us reduce overall energy consumption, and we are actively pursuing opportunities to lower our carbon footprint through external funding and grant programs that benefit the District. In addition, we maintain close collaboration with the Facilities Department on all upcoming school renovation and modernization efforts. Our goal is to ensure that every school receives the repairs and upgrades it deserves, fostering a modern, safe, and comfortable learning environment for all Downey Unified students.

## **PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE**

### **Erica C. Bonilla, Director**

#### **General Overview**

The Purchasing and Warehouse Department experienced several transitions during the 2024–25 fiscal year. Ms. Portia Mina, retired on July 5, 2024, at the start of the fiscal year. To support the department during the leadership transition, Darren Purseglove came out of retirement to serve as interim Director while the District conducted a search for a permanent replacement.

Erica Bonilla began her role as Director of the Purchasing & Warehouse Department on December 16, 2025. Darren remained through the end of January 2025 to help ensure a smooth handoff and facilitate Erica's transition to the role. During this time, he and the team provided invaluable support as the new director became familiar with the staff, departments, site personnel, and the District's requisition and PO processes in the BEST system.

Danny Jimenez was promoted to Senior Buyer on December 17, 2025. Florence Shih, Buyer and Adriana Garcia, Senior Secretary, continued in their roles and were incredible resources through the transitions.

To fill the Buyer position vacated by Danny, Jorge Vargas, who joined the team from Little Lake City School District, where he served as the sole buyer. Jorge brought with him more than 15 years of procurement experience and deep expertise in the BEST system, which he helped test and implement during its early rollout. Jorge started on March 17, 2025, and quickly integrated into the team, helping train Erica further in the BEST.

The Purchasing staff is a dedicated, knowledgeable, and efficient team that is committed to processing requisitions in a timely manner and resolving procurement challenges as they arise. Their professionalism and focus help ensure the smooth operation of the Purchasing and Warehouse Departments, while upholding the highest standards of procurement ethics and integrity in service to the District's students and staff.

#### **Purchasing:**

During the 2024–25 fiscal year, the Purchasing Department processed a total of 6,107 purchase orders, representing \$230,109,105.12 in procurement activity. The Department successfully developed, advertised, and awarded numerous bids and contracts for a wide range of projects, materials, commodities, equipment, and services. These included, but were not limited to:

- Technology services and equipment
- Classroom renovations and modernizations at Pace Education Center, Garcia (formerly Imperial) Elementary School, and Rio Hondo Elementary School
- Restroom renovations at Gallatin and Columbus schools

- Food service bid renewals for frozen food products, pizza, and food service paper products
- Print and copy services

The District processed 787 agreements of various types including CUPCCAA (Small Project), Service, CMAS Construction, Construction-Related, and Professional Services agreements. Additionally, the Department secured various cooperative, piggyback, and CMAS contracts to continue strategic partnerships with vendors such as AT&T, CDW-G, Apple, Xerox, Protect|Education, SyTech Solutions, and a variety of school and office furniture and technology suppliers.

To improve efficiency, the Department proactively identified frequently used vendors and established master agreements for the upcoming school year. Notable agreements include Stay Arts for various school art programs and events, The Music Center for performing arts programs at many of our sites, and Tacos Don Chente for catering services for school and office events. These agreements streamline procurement and ensure continuity of service throughout the year.

A significant milestone this year was the official launch of the District's new online vendor portal, **PlanetBids**, on February 28, 2025. All vendors were invited to register through the portal, which is prominently featured on the District's Purchasing webpage. As of today, 1,092 vendors have successfully registered. Since the platform's launch, eleven bids have been posted through PlanetBids. The new system has streamlined the processes for bid notification, submission, and the posting of addenda. Bid results remain transparent and publicly accessible, becoming instantly available at the time of bid closing through the portal.

The Department continues to leverage the Amazon Business Prime program to facilitate direct purchases of small, incidental items. This program has been well-received by school sites and departments, offering increased flexibility in ordering and significantly reducing the turnaround time for these types of purchases compared to the traditional requisition process. During the last fiscal year, the District processed over 5,600 orders through its Amazon Business Prime account, with total purchases nearing \$1.5 million. As a result of this increased spend, the District qualified for Amazon's rebate program and received a rebate payment of over \$21,000.00, which was deposited into the General Fund. Under this program, continued growth in spending will further increase the District's rebate rate, resulting in additional future rebate payments.

### **Warehouse:**

Over the past year, the Warehouse also made significant strides in improving the efficiency, accuracy, and safety of its operations, all in support of the District's mission to deliver timely and effective services to students and staff. One of the major investments made was the purchase of a new forklift reach truck, which has greatly enhanced the ability of Warehouse staff to handle materials safely and efficiently within the warehouse. This equipment upgrade not only improves operational productivity but also reduces the physical strain on staff and lowers the risk of workplace injuries.

To further modernize Warehouse operations, we acquired a new postage machine that aligns with current digital postal regulations. This upgrade has helped streamline mail handling procedures, improve postage accuracy, and reduce delays in outgoing mail—an essential component in maintaining clear and timely communication across departments and with outgoing mail.

In response to inventory fluctuations and demand trends, Warehouse staff undertook a comprehensive review and revision of the replenishment processes and minimum on-hand stock requirements. These updates have ensured that critical items remain consistently available to sites and departments, preventing delays caused by stockouts and improving the overall responsiveness of the supply chain.

Warehouse staff also processed a total of 4,920 purchase order receipts over the year, including deliveries of supplies, food, and equipment. This volume reflects the high level of coordination required to manage timely and accurate receiving while ensuring items are distributed to the correct locations without delay.

There is currently a catalog of 570 regularly stocked items, covering a wide range of needs including office supplies, health products, athletic equipment, custodial and maintenance goods, and food service items. This inventory supports all aspects of District operations and ensures continuity of service. Fulfillment operations remained strong, with 5,385 stock orders pulled, packed, and delivered across the District. These orders represented a total value of \$1,240,883.25, underscoring the scale and importance of the Warehouse's role in supporting day-to-day functions at school sites and administrative offices.

In terms of capital inventory, we added 7,846 new items to the capital equipment records, representing a total investment of \$6,482,613.35. These items include a wide array of essential assets, from instructional technology and classroom furnishings to facility and maintenance equipment—each one tracked and recorded to ensure proper asset management and accountability.

Inventory accuracy remains a top priority for the department. During our annual physical inventory audit, we achieved an accuracy rate of over 99%, reflecting our team's diligence in maintaining precise inventory records and ensuring that District assets are reliably tracked.

The Warehouse team also plays a crucial role in managing District mail operations. Over the year, we picked up, sorted, and delivered more than 60,000 pieces of intradistrict and incoming mail, supporting seamless communication between schools, departments, and external agencies. In addition, we metered over 170,000 pieces of outgoing mail, ensuring timely delivery of important documents, notices, and communications across all levels of the organization.

These accomplishments represent the collective efforts of the Warehouse team to modernize operations, safeguard District assets, and support the ongoing needs of schools and departments with reliability, efficiency, and professionalism.



**2024-25 Solicitations:**

<b>Bid No.</b>	<b>Bid Name/Description</b>
24/25-01	Food Service Dairy
24/25-02	Food Service Paper
24/25-03	Model Classrooms at Carpenter and RSG Elementary Schools
24/25-04	iPad Repair Services
24/25-05	Imperial Elementary School Interim Housing (Subcontractors Prequal/Bid)
24/25-06	Fresh Produce
24/25-07	Pace Education Center Portable Relocation
24/25-08	Pace Education Center Asphalt for Portables and Parking Lot Expansion
24/25-09	Pace Education Center Kitchen Renovation
24/25-10	Workers' Compensation Claims Administration Managed Care Services
24/25-11	Sale of Real Property 11525 Brookshire Avenue and 11500 Dolan Street
24/25-12	Beverage Vending Machines, Product and Service
24/25-13	Middle School Gymnasiums HVAC Project
24/25-14	Lewis ES and Warren HS Roof Replacement and Restoration Project
24/25-15	Pace Education Center Asphalt & Site Work Project
24/25-16	Pace Education Center Painting & Clean Project
24/25-17	Pace Education Center Fencing Project
24/25-18	Pace Education Center Plumbing Project
24/25-19	Elementary School EPIC Paging and Audio Enhancement Installation Project
24/25-20	OPCI Playground Equipment & Rubber Surfacing
24/25-21	Pace Education Center Kitchen Reno (remainder of work)
24/25-22	Rack Mount Lithium Ion UPS
24/25-23	General Contractors for Lease-Leaseback (RFQ)
24/25-24	Wi-Fi Hotspots for Off-Premises Use
24/25-25	Pace Education Center - Room Renovations
24/25-26	District-wide Scanning Services
24/25-27	As-Needed Printing Services
24/25-28	Pace Education Center Playground Equipment
24/25-29	LLB Services - Modernization/New Construction - Rio San Gabriel
24/25-30	Restroom Renovations/Modernization at Columbus High School & Gallatin Elementary School

**Recap of 2024-25 PO Activity:**

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Fund Code</b>	<b>Amount</b>
General Fund	01.0	\$ 82,948,657.34
SELPA Administrative Unit Fund	01.1	\$ 290,538.66
SELPA Programs Fund	01.2	\$ 3,975,373.72
Adult Education Fund	11.0	\$ 1,162,178.38
Cafeteria Fund	13.0	\$ 13,250,273.66
Deferred Maintenance Fund	14.0	\$ 8,350,796.40
Bond Fund	21.0	\$ 105,935,609.50

Capital Facilities Fund	25.0	\$ 1,854,568.05
County School Facilities Fund	35.0	\$ 5,428,876.10
Special Reserve for Capital Outlay Fund	40.0	\$ 691,410.80
Special Reserve – Technology Fund	40.2	\$ 4,211,477.53
Workers’ Comp./Self-Ins. Fund	67.0-5	\$ 2,009,344.98
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 230,109,105.12</b>

#### **Annual Recap of PO Activity since 2013-14:**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b># of POs</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2013-14	5,221	\$ 47,209,855.38
2014-15	5,806	\$ 52,467,907.55
2015-16	6,742	\$ 67,531,524.51
2016-17	6,765	\$ 69,167,649.86
2017-18	6,688	\$ 97,541,604.86
2018-19	6,292	\$ 112,152,764.91
2019-20	5,748	\$ 102,021,140.54
2020-21	2,652	\$ 217,906,948.70
2021-22	6,697	\$ 195,506,394.03
2022-23	7,384	\$ 191,719,158.90
2023-24	6,559	\$ 107,465,301.27
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>6,107</b>	<b>\$ 230,109,105.12</b>

#### **Goals:**

- Collaborate with M.O.T. Department on preparing for summer DFM projects, and bid as necessary, starting in Spring so that contracts can be in place when summer begins
- Improve communication with sites to ensure smooth requisition and PO processing
- Identify commonly used vendors and establish master agreements when/where necessary
- Streamline processes where applicable
- Expand use of cooperative purchasing agreements to reduce procurement timelines and leverage volume discounts
- Work on developing a purchasing calendar aligned with the academic year to anticipate high-volume purchasing periods and ensure timely procurement.

**CERTIFICATED HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**Alyda R. Mir, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent**  
**Darryl Browning, Director**

**General Overview**

In the 2024-25 school year, we hired a total of 71 certificated employees, which included general education, IB, Dual Language, special education, clinical school therapists, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, and elementary VAPA itinerant teachers, as well as administrators and deans.

**Ongoing Developments**

1. Facilitated, in partnership with over 30 different universities. This includes making sure that all Memorandums of Understanding with the universities are in place, communicating with the principals/assistant principals to find and confirm the placements, informing the university advisor of the placement confirmation/information and the invoicing, Board reporting, and tracking of all master teachers' stipends from the university.
2. Completed numerous Public Records Requests along with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, LACOE, Bureau of Labor Statistics, School Services J-90 and Department of Defense reports/surveys.
3. Received 14 Early Retirement Insurance Petitions and 19 Insurance Continuance Petition requests from retired certificated employees.
4. 13 resignations for a variety of reasons such as relocation, childcare, promotions in other districts, and changing professions.
5. Completed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title II, Part A: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals audit.
6. Completed the Equitable Distribution Monitoring System Data Collection report.
7. Completed the annual J-90 Report.
8. Updated the Annual Notification Employee Handbook and Substitute Handbook.
9. Updated and implemented certificated evaluations through the Informed K12 online platform.
10. Updated board policy and administrative regulations.
11. Created a new process to collect and maintain TB records for all staff.
12. Developing weekly meetings with the DEA President to ensure collaboration and open communication.

**Meetings and Workshops Attended**

1. DUSD Personnel Commission and Board of Education meetings.
2. May Revise workshop, Governor's Budget Workshop.
3. Facilitated DUSD's Employee Benefits Committee (EBC) meetings.
4. Trained and implemented the new certificated staff evaluations and met with all site and district administrators to facilitate using the new evaluation system through Informed K12.
5. Instructional Cabinet, Extended Cabinet, and all administrator meetings and activities.
6. End-of-the-year graduations, promotions, and award ceremonies for DHS, WHS, and CHS.

7. Attend DWK monthly Educational Law collaborative meetings.
8. Attend ACSA Region 14 HR personnel meetings.
9. The Credentials Technician and Personnel Technician attended the Credential Counselors and Analysts of California (CCAC) training in Sacramento.
10. Attend the ACSA Region 14 Women's Leadership Breakfast.
11. Supported and trained the Director of HR and created a dual Director position to cover both HR and Instructional Programs for Mr. Browning for the 2024-25 school year.
12. Creating an extensive plan to build out CliftonStrengths throughout both certificated and classified.
13. Broaden the opportunity for more employees to learn about fringe benefits- Wellness, Financial, and Mental.
14. Mentoring Mr. Browning through his doctoral program. He is waiting on news about his dissertation proposal. Graduation ETA Spring of 2026.

### **Substitutes**

1. Filled 8,780 teacher absences, which was a decrease of 195 absences from the previous year.
2. Recruited and processed 140 new substitutes to add to the District's substitute pool and maintained the daily rate of \$200/day and \$230/long-term rate. Maintaining the rate attracted and retained more substitutes.
3. Processed 400 reassurance letters (Day-to-Day Substitute Contracts) for returning substitute teachers.

### **Employment Opportunities**

1. Successfully filled all vacant positions with high-qualified candidates.
2. Provided training to all certificated substitutes.
3. Processed Summer School Credit Recover/Extended School Year teaching applications and site administrators for all summer school sites. STEAMworks and ESY were offered at 5 Elementary sites including a Dual Immersion site at Ward Elementary. Secondary summer schools offered credit recovery, enrichment, and ESY at all secondary sites, at two middle schools and all three high schools.
4. Facilitated a partnership between Cerritos College and Elite Academy.
5. Partnered with Claremont Graduate University to receive a Teacher Residency Grant from the California Teacher Commission to provide a living wage (\$37,000 per year) for select student teachers in special education classrooms as they work on obtaining their preliminary credential. DUSD will benefit from an increased pool of effective special education teacher candidates to fill future open positions.

### **Other Human Resources Projects**

1. Facilitated the necessary paperwork for certificated employees to receive their required TB vaccination through the Wellness Clinic to satisfy the California Education Code Section 49406 and Health and Safety Code Sections 121525-121555.
2. TOSA Strengths Coach, Anna Beth Fishman, trained certificated, classified, and supervisors on the beginning level Strengths. All new staff were trained prior to the

school year beginning. Two Strengths Champion level cohorts were offered throughout the year, as well as Anna Beth provided CliftonStrengths activities at SSAC, Combined Principal Meetings, and Leadership Meetings for all administrators and Leadership Academy participants.

3. Completed all onboarding documents on Informed K-12 for certificated personnel.
4. Completed all temporary and probationary contracts on Informed K12.
5. Offered two progressive discipline trainings with DWK for all management staff.
6. Proceed with electronic document storage and retrieval to reduce paper storage of employee personnel files.
7. Create and design a new work area for the human resource wing.
8. Added two new positions Risk Manager and Benefits Technician.
9. Wellness TOSA, Jim Mogan, held Wellness Roadshows at all school sites and the district office for all classified and certificated to discuss Mental, Physical and Financial Wellness opportunities to all certificated and classified staff.
10. Benefits Technician and Risk Manager attended all Wellness Roadshows this past school year.

### **Risk Management**

1. Received 120 workers' compensation claims and closed 88 claims for the 2024-2025 school year.
2. Hosted a workshop and trained directors, supervisors and office managers to provide an overview of the Workers' Compensation process and updated claim forms.
3. Transitioned to a new Workers' Compensation Third Party Administrator, Athens.
4. Transitioned staff to a new training platform with ASCIP for Mandated Annual Trainings.

### **Recommendations for Future Planning**

- Seniority list updated and revised to establish an up-to-date list.
- Work collaboratively with the Classified HR and Finance Department to implement HCM/BEST.
- Work with SIS and Chris Nezzar to create a more efficient system for all certificated staff to be embedded in the Q Student Information System to facilitate an online teacher interface to maintain seniority and teacher records more accurately and efficiently. Working to eliminate PAPI, transition to PORT, created by SIS.
- Provide additional progressive discipline training for all new management employees.
- Provide evaluation and hiring training for all certificated management teams.
- Continue the implementation of StrengthsFinder through multiple training opportunities in partnership with DEA, including:
  - Leadership Team Meetings
  - Certificated and Classified Employees
  - DEA E-Board and site representatives
  - CSEA Unit I and II negotiation teams
  - Categorical Resource Teachers
  - Classified Departments such as HR, Food Services, and Technology
- Continue training on the new Strengths-Based Evaluations to incorporate Strengths into the evaluation forms.

- Work with administrators and staff to inform them of the MSP program and assist administrators seeking assistance with MSP coaches, as well as introduce the process of working with the MSP TOSAs Chris Bowen and Vonnie Casalegno.
- Work with the Employee Benefits Committee in finding ways to provide high-quality health care that is financially beneficial to employees and the district.
- Roadshow to all school sites and departments with the Benefits Technician and the TOSA of Staff Wellness, Jim Mogan, to boost the use of the DUSD Wellness Clinic and provide physical, emotional, and financial awareness to all staff.
- Provide more STRS and PERS informational sessions.
- Find more services and opportunities to provide to our employees regarding health and welfare benefits, especially by incorporating activities and events through the Wellness Clinic.
- Continue training and establishing an investigation team for UPC and Title IX complaints.
- Ensure collaboration and communication continue amongst the unions to provide a productive and collaborative negotiation atmosphere.
- Decorate the HR wing to feel inviting and welcoming to all staff.
- Provide wellness incentives for all employees to “Know their Numbers” and increase the utilization of the Wellness Clinic.
- Successfully negotiate with all three units to provide fair compensation.
- Update CBA with new board policy numbers.
- Revise/update the Injury Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP)
- Establish centralized Safety Committee at the District office

### **Wellness Clinic Data and Usage**

The DUSD Wellness Clinic, located at 11480 Brookshire Avenue, Suite 301, provided services to 1,771 patients between August 2024 and July 2025. This reflects a 5% increase in utilization compared to the same period in 2023–24 and a 24% increase compared to 2022–23. A detailed monthly utilization breakdown is presented in the chart below:

#### ***DUSD Wellness Clinic Utilization***

<b>Month</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Aug	125	92	113
Sept	79	117	114
Oct	113	154	166
Nov	140	139	121
Dec	157	152	155
<b>Month</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Jan	67	150	152
Feb	109	163	141
March	110	122	110
April	99	122	116
May	151	215	280



June	121	180	201
July	87	113	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,358</b>	<b>1,692</b>	<b>1,771</b>

**CLASSIFIED HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**Prepared by Ceylida Lopez, Secretary to the Personnel Commission and**  
**Director, Classified Human Resources**

This is the 59<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Personnel Commission to the Board of Education, covering the period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, in conformance with Education Code Section 45266, which states in part:

“The personnel director shall be responsible to the commission for carrying out all procedures in the administration of the classified personnel in conformity with this article and the rules of the commission . . . He or she shall also act as secretary of the commission and shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an annual report which shall be sent by the commission to the governing board. . .”

**MERIT SYSTEM AND PERSONNEL COMMISSION**

As one of approximately 95 merit system districts in California, encompassing approximately 60% of all classified employees, Downey Unified School District is committed to the goal of fair and equitable employment practices in the administration of the classified personnel program. An effective merit system operation ensures fairness and equality in school district employee selection processes. The members of the Downey Unified School District Personnel Commission serve as an oversight board over the mandated functions outlined in the California Education Code. Each of the three members is appointed to the Commission by a different method. Ms. Angelita Rademaker is the appointee of the classified bargaining unit with the greatest number of represented employees, which is C.S.E.A. Chapter 248 (Unit I). Ms. Rademaker has been serving on the Personnel Commission since December 2013. Mr. John Kennedy is the appointee of the Governing Board. Mr. Kennedy has been with the Personnel Commission since December 2008. Ms. Dianne Lumsdaine is the joint appointee of the other two Personnel Commissioners. Ms. Lumsdaine has been serving on the Personnel Commission since May 1994. Ms. Lumsdaine serves as Chair, and Mr. Kennedy serves as Vice-Chair. The Commission held a total of 12 meetings this year.

The five principles of the merit system are 1) employment and promotion on the basis of merit as shown by competitive examination; 2) encouragement of career service in the classified service; 3) ensuring like pay for like service; 4) prohibition of discrimination in employment; and 5) impartial hearing of appeals from disciplinary actions.

## **MISSION, BELIEFS AND ETHICS**

The Personnel Commission has formally articulated the mission, beliefs and ethics of the classified human resources activities of the District, in support of the educational mission of the District.

### **Mission Statement**

“The Mission of the Personnel Commission of the Downey Unified School District is to ensure that, in support of the excellent education of the students of this District and through an effective and efficient merit system of employment, employees in the classified service are well-qualified, properly classified and paid, treated fairly, and are hired through processes that are objective and free from favoritism in compliance with federal and state laws.”

### **Beliefs Statement**

“We, the Personnel Commissioners and staff of the Personnel Commission of the Downey Unified School District shall honor and support the goals of the Board of Education;

We will enrich the educational program of this District by recruiting and providing to the District the most qualified classified employees possible;

We will strive to ensure diversity in the candidates available for selection, recognizing that equal employment opportunity is a keystone of the merit system principles, and a diverse workplace is important in fostering strong relationships among people of different cultures; and

We will fulfill our responsibility to the constituencies we serve (students, parents, community, District) to provide the best possible, caring service.”

### **Ethics Statement**

“We will implement the merit system with a blind eye to any particular group, reinforcing the principle that favoritism shall not enter into any decisions made by staff or the Personnel Commission;

We will safeguard the public confidence in the integrity of the merit system and public service by making all decisions impartially, free from prejudice or conflicts of interest, and use our positions to advance public interest, not for personal gain;

We will ensure the efficiency of the classified service through well-defined, impartial processes in recruiting, testing, selecting, promoting, and retaining qualified employees:

We will conduct all business openly so the public can make informed judgments and hold commissioners and staff accountable;

We will honor and respect democratic principles; observe the letter and spirit of the law, carry out in good faith all rules and regulations of the Personnel Commission and policies and administrative regulations of the Board of Education in the mutual interest of the employees, students, and the community we serve; and

We will treat all persons fairly, with respect and dignity; we will honor our responsibilities by behaving in a trustworthy and responsible manner; and we will conduct ourselves ethically and, in a manner, befitting public officials, and public employees at all times.”

## **PERSONNEL COMMISSION STAFF AND ACTIVITIES**

All functions related to administering the personnel program for classified employees are performed in the Personnel Commission/Classified Human Resources office. Serving the classified staff human resources needs of the District are Ceylida J. Lopez, Director; Maria Carbajal, Assistant Director, Classified Human Resources; Senior Personnel Technicians: Alison Arroyave, Lesley Bojorquez, Joshua Castellanos, Jasmin Fornelli, and Andrea Romero Zardeneta. The team has continued to be innovative during the examination process to ensure the quantity and quality of the eligibility lists. Staff continues their dedication to meeting the needs of the District and providing excellent customer service.

### **Classification of Positions**

During this reporting period, the Board of Education established 181 new positions. The Personnel Commission "classified" these positions, which included:

Assistant Director, Classified Human Resources (1)  
Assistant to Superintendent/Board of Education - Biliterate (1)  
Buyer (1)  
Communications Specialist (2)  
Early Learning Assistant (3)  
Early Learning Instructor (1)  
Elementary Campus Assistant (7)  
FACE Liaison (9)  
Food Service Assistant (39)  
Food Service Assistant I (7)  
Intermediate Clerical Assistant (1)  
Lead Occupational Therapist (1)  
Personnel Technician (1)  
School Office Manager (1)  
Senior Accounting Assistant (1)  
Senior Buyer (1)  
Special Education Data & Compliance Specialist (1)  
Speech Language Pathology Assistant (3)  
Senior Instructional Assistant (4)  
Senior Instructional Assistant – Behavior (24)  
Senior Instructional Assistant – Medical (5)  
Senior Instructional Assistant – Sign Language (1)  
Utility Worker (3)

**Six classification descriptions were revised:**

College Career Technician  
Communications Specialist  
Equipment Mechanic  
Elementary Campus Assistant  
Food Service Assistant I  
Instructional Media Technician

**Seven new classifications were established:**

Assistant Director, Classified Human Resources  
Director, Communications and Engagement  
Family and Community Engagement Liaison  
Food Service Assistant  
Lead Occupational Therapist  
Personnel Technician  
Senior Buyer

**Reclassifications:**

Two positions were reclassified:

- In the Special Education Department, the Occupational Therapist position was reclassified to Lead Occupational Therapist.
- In the Communications Department, the Public Information Officer position was reclassified to Director, Communications and Engagement

**Title Changes:**

One classification had a title change from Food Service Assistant to Food Service Assistant I.

**Recruitment & Testing**

Classified Human Resources is committed to supporting the District's goal of hiring the best staff. One of Downey's Shared Values is "Best Staff and High Standards," and the department has worked to demonstrate this value. The goal of continuously providing highly qualified candidates for the eligibility list remains complex.

This year we implemented streamlined screening tools and expanded testing schedules. We continue to explore innovative strategies to enhance candidate experience, maintain compliance, and efficiently fill positions.

The current workforce landscape remains consistent with last year; however, we continue to see a growing demand for positions requiring specialized skills. Increased competition across industries has led to higher compensation expectations and greater turnover—particularly in key areas such as Food Services, Maintenance and Operations, and Special Education. Despite these challenges, we continue to see strong interest in other classifications, resulting in robust candidate pools and increased competition among applicants in those areas.

## **Eligibility Lists Established & Certified**

This year we received approximately 7029 applications for our recruitments. This resulted in 88 eligibility lists and 773 candidates eligible for employment. The eligibility lists were for:

Adult School Registrar  
Benefits Technician  
Bus Driver (2)  
Buyer  
Campus Security Assistant (2)  
College and Career Technician  
Communications Specialist  
Custodian  
Director, Purchasing & Warehouse (2)  
Early Learning Assistant  
Early Learning Instructor  
Elementary Campus Assistant (5)  
Equipment Mechanic (2)  
Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Liaison (2)  
Floor Maintenance Worker  
Food Service Assistant (9)  
Food Service Assistant I (4)  
Food Service Assistant II  
Food Service Supervisor I  
Food Service Supervisor II  
General Maintenance Worker  
Grounds Equipment Operator  
Groundskeeper  
Instructional Assistant – Computer  
Instructional Assistant - Dental  
Instructional Media Technician (2)  
Lead Electrical Worker  
Lead Food Service Assistant  
Maintenance Electrician  
Maintenance Supervisor  
Network Specialist  
Payroll Technician  
Personnel Technician  
Risk Manager  
School Office Manager (2)  
Senior Accounting Assistant  
Senior Accounting Technician  
Senior Buyer  
Senior Clerical Assistant  
Senior Instructional Assistant  
Senior Instructional Assistant – Behavior (15)  
Senior Instructional Assistant - Medical (4)  
Senior Instructional Assistant-Sign Language

Skilled Trades Assistant  
Special Education Data & Compliance Specialist  
Speech-Language Pathology Assistant  
Strength and Conditioning Coach  
Utility Worker (2)

### **Assignment Transactions**

The Commission staff is tasked to ensure that assignment transactions of all classified and unclassified staff are in compliance with Education Code provisions, Personnel Commission Rules and Regulations, collective bargaining agreements, and District policies and procedures. In total, there were 2,271 assignment transactions completed by staff in the 2024-25 school year.

### **HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Classified Human Resources is dedicated to supporting the District's objective of hiring the best staff. To ensure our recruitment and selection processes are fair and effective, we have conducted a comprehensive review of our current testing tools. This review aimed to assess the validity and relevance of the tools for the specific job classifications for which they are used. We evaluated the content to ensure it aligns with job requirements and determined whether the tools accurately reflect the skills and competencies needed for success in the job roles. Based on our findings, we are currently revamping the tests by updating the content, improving fairness and inclusivity, and incorporating new technologies where appropriate. Our goal is to enhance the effectiveness of our selection tools in collaboration with hiring managers and subject matter experts. We are confident that these improvements will result in a more robust and effective recruitment process, ensuring we select the most highly qualified candidates for our District.

- Our staff actively participated in several recruitment events, including Open House events at our elementary and middle schools. These events provided valuable opportunities to connect with families, share information about job openings within the District, and strengthen our engagement with the community. In addition, staff represented the District at the Cypress College Career Fair, with a focus on recruiting for Senior Instructional Assistant and Food Service Assistant positions. This event allowed us to connect with prospective candidates and highlight the rewarding career opportunities available in our schools.
- Our Service Pin and Retirement Ceremony was held on May 21, 2025, at Doty Middle School. It was a heartfelt celebration of the dedication and hard work of our current employees and retiring staff. The event was made possible by all who contributed their time, resources, and support.

We honored eleven retirees who have collectively dedicated 250 years of service to our District. Retirees present received a certificate of appreciation recognizing their invaluable contributions to our District and students. In addition, 179 employees were recognized for their years of service, ranging from 5-35 years, equaling a combined total of 2,145 years of service to our students and community.



- The Professional Growth Saturday Workshop was held on April 5, 2025, at the PACE Training Center. This year, participants were invited to read *Who Moved My Cheese?*—a simple yet powerful parable about change and how individuals respond to it. The story follows four characters—Sniff, Scurry, Hem, and Haw—who live in a maze and search for “cheese,” a metaphor for what we seek in life, such as a job, success, relationships, or security.

We were thrilled to welcome 63 attendees, making the event a fantastic success! Anna Beth Fishman, along with all the participants, led a thoughtful and engaging discussion on change management. This year’s focus was on encouraging employees to reflect on their personal responses to change—whether it’s adapting to new leadership, updating processes, or taking on shifting responsibilities—and to explore how being more flexible, proactive, and open-minded can lead to greater resilience and job satisfaction.

The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. We gained valuable insights into how employees are navigating change and how we, as a district, can continue to support their growth through transitions.

The success of the event was made possible by the hard work and commitment of the committee members, who include Rosie Abrego (Senior School Office Manager), Ashley Cook (Senior Instructional Assistant), Jose Belmonte (Lead Computer/Network Support Technician), Karla Flores (Food Service Supervisor II), Jonathan Madrid (Maintenance Painter), Maria Carbajal (Supervising Personnel Analyst), and Darryl Browning (Director, Innovative Ed. Programs).

## 2025-26 GOALS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMISSION AND CLASSIFIED HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

1. Continue our work within the guidelines of the California Education Code, Board Policies and Administrative Regulations, and Personnel Commission Rules and Regulations of the Classified Service and state and federal laws, and review and streamline classified human resources internal and external processes to maximize efficiencies to best serve the stakeholders of the Downey Unified School District Personnel Commission and Classified Human Resources.
2. Work collaboratively with school administrators, staff, employees and applicants in recruitment, classification, salary recommendations and employee relations.
3. Continue to work with stakeholders to recognize and appreciate the work of classified employees.
4. Develop and improve recruitment and selection processes to hire the most qualified candidates for the District.
5. Develop new hire onboarding and orientation programs.
6. Continue developing training and preparation workshops for classified employees to work towards promotion.

