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REINSTATE TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION AND REASONS FOR STUDY

The 2005-2006 Education Committee of the Fresno County Grand Jury continued to look at the status of technical-vocational education in the Fresno County schools. We recognize that schools are challenged to have students do well on state mandated tests. High schools must provide college preparatory classes for all students, but it is equally important for them to provide the technical-vocational classes to meet the needs of students who will get jobs after high school or seek specialized training at the college level. The business community needs trained workers in skilled jobs that pay well. The county superintendent stated, "We're not just in competition for jobs with other parts of California and other states, we're in competition globally." The California governor has included \$50 million in his budget to expand technical-vocational education from middle school through community college and to help them coordinate their programs. "Career tech is a first-class ticket to a great career in the California economy," said the governor. With the high level of poverty in the Fresno area, it is imperative that public schools offer technical-vocational classes so students can obtain the job skills they need.

Technical-vocational classes also provide other benefits. Students participate in projects that reinforce the skills taught in math, reading, and English and receive hands-on learning experiences that are meaningful to them. Students need to know about the kinds of jobs available in the area, their qualifications, work environment, and job-pay. A field trip would be valuable to at least one job site such as a medical center, business, or auto shop. Learning how to handle a variety of tools would be worthwhile for all students, and for some it might lead to a future job or hobby.

PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTATION

I. We met and talked with:

- High school principals and teachers
- Present and former students
- People in business and industry
- The Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce
- Fresno Unified School District officials
- Several Fresno Unified School District trustees
- Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- Administrators in the Fresno Regional Occupational Program
- Instructors from Fresno City College and California State University at Fresno

- II. The committee studied "Prepared For Fresno Grand Jury" dated February 2006, provided by the Fresno County Office of Education. Some of the topics that we utilized in our report are listed below:
- Technical-Vocational Training in the Fresno County High Schools 2004-2005
 - Required Education and Training for Employment
 - Fresno County Industry Trends and Outlook
 - High Demand Occupations for Fresno County
 - Occupations with Greatest Job Growth
- III. We read and collected newspaper articles from The Fresno Bee on technical-vocational education.
- IV. We studied material in:
- "The New Valley Times - 2006 Community Report," February 28, 2006
 - "The 2003-2004 Report Card" from the Fresno Regional Occupational Program
 - Fresno County Office of Education
 - "Fresno Compact - Champion for Schools," Special Section of The Fresno Bee, March 1, 2006
 - "The Power of Professional Preparation" by Elizabeth Boone, Marlene Hartzman, and Dianne Mero, project analysts for the Breakthrough High Schools Project at the National Association of Secondary School Principals (www.principals.org/breakthrough)

FINDINGS

- F1. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected that less than 22% of the jobs in the next decade will need a college degree. Only *8 of the 50* fastest growing jobs in California will need a four-year college degree.
- F2. The State Employment Development Department reports that in Fresno County the average hourly wages for construction electricians is \$19.50, for carpenters \$20.75, and for plumbers \$18.52.
- F3. The following Fresno County Industry Trends and Outlook, 2001-2008, dated February, 2006, were provided by the Fresno County Office of Education:
- The Employment Development Department projects Fresno County non-farm wage and salary employment to grow from 276,600 in 2001 to 318,700 jobs in 2008, an increase of 42,100 jobs or 15.2%.
 - Services, the largest non-farm industry, will add 15,000 jobs, primarily in health services (up 5,600 jobs), business services (up 3,600 jobs), and other services (up 6,600 jobs).

- Government, the second largest non-farm industry, will add 9,600 jobs reaching 77,000 jobs by 2008 with gains in: local government (up 7,100 jobs, 6,600 of those in local education), state government (up 1,400 jobs), and federal government (up 1,100 jobs).
 - Trade will grow by 8,000 jobs (1,000 in wholesale trade and 7,000 in retail trade) to reach 74,400 jobs. Retail growth will occur primarily in eating and drinking establishments, other retail trade, food stores, and general merchandise.
- F4. The State Department of Finance reported that the central San Joaquin Valley remained one of the fastest growing areas of the state and that Fresno County retains its position as the 10th most populace county. (The Fresno Bee, March 4, 2006)
- F5. The Regional Jobs Initiative is working to create 25,000 to 30,000 new jobs in the Central Valley for an educated populace, but in 2000 more than 85% of those filing unemployment claims in Fresno County did not have a high school or a General Education Diploma (GED). (The New Valley Times, Feb. 28, 2006)
- F6. Governor Schwarzenegger spoke to students at Duncan Polytechnical High School in Fresno about his 2006-07 budget and the Strategic Growth Plan Education Bond, both of which make considerable investments in Career Technical-Vocational Education. (The Fresno Bee, March 25, 2006)
- F7. Designated a “Breakthrough High School” by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Duncan Polytechnical High School qualified for the honor by having 90% of its students graduating from high school and 90% going on to some type of college. (Boone, Hartzman, Mero, “The Power of Professional Preparation,” p. 46)
- F8. More than 45% of first-time students at Fresno City College fail to complete their courses. (The Fresno Bee, March 21, 2006)
- F9. Material from the Fresno County Office of Education indicates that there is a great difference in the number and variety of technical-vocational classes that are offered at the various high schools in Fresno County.
- F10. A Fresno State University instructor reported that there are only *two* students in the credentialing program for teaching technical-vocational education in secondary schools.
- F11. The Fresno Regional Occupational Program receives some state funds to provide technical-vocational classes at 28 sites on Fresno County high school campuses.

- F12. The Regional Occupational Program offers classes such as agriculture, health, technical and industrial education, home economics, and business. Students in the program receive benefits such as college credit for qualifying courses, industry certification, and internships.
- F13. A press release dated April 27, 2006, stated that the Assembly Education Committee approved AB 2419 that will protect existing facilities used for Career Technical Education classes from being destroyed to make room for conventional classrooms. Mark Wyland, the author of the bill, said, "...Career Technical Education is an important component to reducing our state's large and growing high school dropout population".
- F14. The James Irvine Foundation announced in April, 2006, that it will provide six million dollars to a new statewide center, ConnectEd, which will support high school programs that connect academics with career. (The Fresno Bee, April 17, 2006)
- F15. Education Code §51224. The governing board of any school district maintaining a high school shall prescribe courses of study designed to provide the skills and knowledge required for adult life for pupils attending the schools within its school district. The governing board shall prescribe separate courses of study, including, but not limited to, a course of study to prepare prospective pupils for admission to state colleges and universities and *a course of study for career technical training* (our italics).

CONCLUSIONS

- C1. There are jobs available in Fresno County for high school graduates and those with a GED who have knowledge of tools and have taken some technical-vocational classes.
- C2. High-paying jobs are available and will continue to expand for workers who have obtained sufficient skills.
- C3. The central San Joaquin Valley remains one of the fastest growing areas of the state.
- C4. Only 22% of the jobs in the next decade will need a college degree, but many other jobs will require some short or long-term training following high school graduation.
- C5. There is a general lack of coordination and planning between secondary school counselors, teachers, and site and district administrators and their counterparts in the community colleges.

- C6. Technical-vocational education is of great value in keeping students attending school regularly and graduating from high school.
- C7. There are not enough college students currently enrolled in the teacher-training program for technical-vocational teachers to meet present or future needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Technical-vocational education must be offered in all high schools in Fresno County.
- R2. High schools that already offer some technical-vocational classes must offer a wider variety of classes, and teachers must teach skills for present jobs and for jobs that are just emerging.
- R3. A "Fresno County Forum on Technical-Vocational Education" to be called in 2006-2007 to include representatives from secondary and community college levels of education and the business community, to be headed by a business group that has worked closely with schools.
- R4. If high school principals or school districts are unable to recruit certificated technical-vocational instructors, they must find experienced and qualified people to teach one or more classes on a Designated Subject Credential.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code §933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to recommendation R3, from the following people:

Larry Johanson, Fresno Compact
c/o Johanson Transportation Service
5583 E. Olive Avenue
Fresno, CA 93727

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
1111 Van Ness Avenue
Fresno, CA 93721

Al Smith, CEO
The Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce
2331 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

From the following Boards of Trustees, recommendations R1, R2, R3 and R4:

Board of Trustees
Caruthers Unified School District
No. 1 Tiller Street
Caruthers, CA 93609

Board of Trustees
Central Unified School District
4605 N. Polk Avenue
Fresno, CA 93722

Board of Trustee
Clovis Unified School District
1450 Herndon
Clovis, CA 93611

Board of Trustees
Coalinga-Huron Unified School District
657 Sunset Street
Coalinga, CA 93210

Board of Trustees
Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District
1976 Morris Kyle Drive
Firebaugh, CA 93622

Board of Trustees
Fowler Unified School District
658 East Adams
Fowler, CA 93625

Board of Trustees
Fresno Unified School District
2309 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Board of Trustees
Golden Plains Unified School District
22000 Nevada Street
San Joaquin, CA 93660

Board of Trustees
Kerman Unified School District
151 S. First Street
Kerman, CA 93630

Board of Trustees
Kingsburg Joint School District
1900 18th Avenue
Kingsburg, CA 93631

Board of Trustees
Kings Canyon Unified School District
675 W. Manning Avenue
Reedley, CA 93654

Board of Trustees
Laton Unified School District
P.O. Box 248
Laton, CA 93242

Board of Trustees
Mendota Unified School District
115 McCabe Avenue
Mendota, CA 93640

Board of Trustees
Parlier Unified School District
900 Newmark Avenue
Parlier, CA 93648

Board of Trustees
Riverdale Joint Unified School District
3086 W. Mt. Whitney
Riverdale, CA 93656

Board of Trustees
Sanger Unified School District
1905 7th Street
Sanger, CA 93657

Board of Trustees
Selma Unified School District
30036 Thompson Avenue
Selma, CA 93662

Board of Trustees
Sierra Unified School District
29143 Auberry Road
Prather, CA 93651

Board of Trustees
Washington Union High School District
6041 S. Elm Avenue
Fresno, CA 93706

Please be reminded that the responses from elected officials are due within 60 days of the release of this report and 90 days from the others.

**THE
LAW COMMITTEE**
