

# **Choosing our Future**

*A Community-wide Call to Action*

**Proposal to Transform Fresno Unified School District**

**Executive Summary**

**Prepared by**  
**FUSD Superintendent's Advisory Task Group**

December 9, 2004

# *Choosing our Future*

## **Executive Summary**

*This document is a condensed version of the complete preliminary report presented to the Fresno Unified Board of Trustees on December 9, 2004 by the Superintendent's Advisory Task Force. The complete report is available on the FUSD web site, [www.fresno.k12.ca.us](http://www.fresno.k12.ca.us). A hard copy can also be obtained by contacting the Superintendent's office.*

“Broke and Broken” was the headline of a special section in the Fresno Bee last year. The headline portrayed the region’s entrenched unemployment, but it might well have portrayed the condition of the Fresno Unified School District. As painful as it is, as unfair as that portrayal might be to some schools within the District which are performing admirably, the fact is that, academically and financially, FUSD is broken. We must face up to the truth in order to work together to create a new truth.

In July 2004, shortly after being appointed Interim Superintendent for the District, Dr. Walt Buster asked a group of citizens to conduct an independent assessment of the District. It was Dr. Buster’s perception that a high level of mistrust had developed between different stakeholders in the District and the community who were all crucial to building a successful future for FUSD, and that restoration of trust might be facilitated by an independent evaluation of the District, carried out by a group of civic leaders with a passion for education and a track record of collaborative problem-solving. The resultant Supervisor’s Advisory Task Force (Task Force) committed to perform its work in the framework of the Fresno Region Community Values.

Shortly after the formation of the Task Force, Dr. Buster concluded that the District’s budget was out of balance and could not be balanced without serious jeopardy to the children of the District. This, in turn, resulted in assignment by the County Superintendent of Education of a Fiscal Management Crisis Assistance Team (FCMAT) as a Fiscal Advisor to help develop a District budget in compliance with the standards and criteria of the State Board of Education.

The Task Force might have chosen to await the results of the FCMAT report before conducting its work, but concluded instead that producing a balanced budget was only

part of the solution to the problems of the District. In fact, the Task Force concluded that the shape of a sound, balanced budget required that the community first reach consensus on the academic performance goals of the District.

Task Force members undertook the following activities in order to prepare this preliminary report:

- ✍ A historical review of FUSD's academic performance and finances;
- ✍ Benchmarking of the District's academic and financial performance with that of other districts of comparable size and demographics;
- ✍ Visits to high-achieving districts in California, identified through the benchmarking process;
- ✍ Research of published information;
- ✍ Consultation with the FCMAT team;
- ✍ Consultation with Board members, outgoing Interim Superintendent Walt Buster, incoming Interim Superintendent Chuck McCully, union leaders, principals, teachers, staff managers, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and other stakeholders; and,
- ✍ Consultation with education organizations, including the *Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC)*, *School Services* and *Just for Kids*.

The Task Force saw plenty of evidence during the course of its work that the overwhelming majority of employees of the District -- teachers, support staff and administrators -- are dedicated and hard-working. Indeed, we have seen many instances of heroic dedication on the part of teachers, classified workers and administrators. It is, however, much harder to guide a boat when not everyone is rowing in the same direction. At the end of the day, everyone is exhausted, but the boat hasn't gone anywhere, which doesn't do much for morale. What has been lacking has been alignment behind an agreed set of goals and strategies.

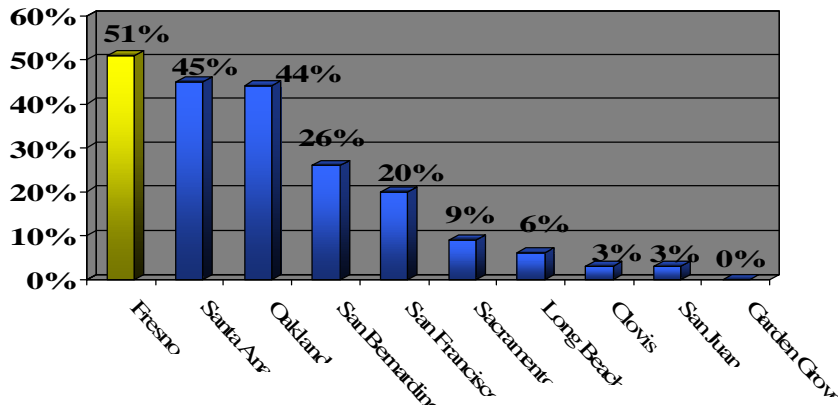
The Task Force compared FUSD to eight districts with similar size and demographics (plus, for information purposes only, its nearest neighbor, Clovis), and found the following:

- ✍ FUSD has more students per school, on average, than all districts except Long Beach Unified;
- ✍ It has comparable ethnic diversity, except for Clovis and San Juan, although the mix of ethnic groups varies significantly;
- ✍ It has a higher poverty level (as measured by the percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch) than all other districts, except Santa Ana;
- ✍ An average number of English Language Learners (ELL), although considerably lower than Santa Ana and Garden Grove;
- ✍ The fourth lowest class size and pupil/teacher ratio; and
- ✍ The fourth highest total revenue per ADA, after Oakland, San Francisco and San Juan

Comparing FUSD to the eight benchmark districts in regard to student achievement shows the following:

- ✍ As shown in the graph below, FUSD has the highest percentage of schools in the bottom decile (the lowest 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the State);
- ✍ The lowest percentage of schools in the 6-10 decile range (the top 50% of the State), after San Bernardino;
- ✍ The third highest number of schools in “AYP Program Improvement” levels one through four; and,
- ✍ An Academic Performance Index (API) that ranks second from the bottom.

### Percentage of District Schools with 2002-03 API in Decile 1



Source: CDE Dataquest

The Task Force found that two districts stood out among the others: Garden Grove Unified School District and Long Beach Unified School District. Statistical comparisons between FUSD and these “best practices” school districts follow:

#### Demographic Comparisons Table No. 1

	<b><u>FUSD</u></b>	<b><u>LBUSD</u></b>	<b><u>GGUSD</u></b>
Enrollment	81,222	97,212	50,066
# Schools	101	89	67
% Minority	81.6	82.9	82.3
Largest Ethnic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic
% English Learner	32.3	32.8	52.7
% Free Lunch	76.3	65.2	60.1
Average Class Size	27.3	29.0	28.2

**School Funding  
Table No. 2**

	<b><u>FUSD</u></b>	<b><u>LBUSD</u></b>	<b><u>GGUSD</u></b>
Revenue Limit per ADA	5,037	4,808	4,790
Federal Revenue per ADA	1,019	690	447
Other State Revenue per ADA	1,795	1,596	1,519
Other Revenue	<u>323</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>258</u>
Total General Fund Revenue per ADA	8,132	7,278	7,014
% Revenue Unrestricted	69	72	75
Unrestricted GF Revenue per ADA	5,624	5,269	5,251

**Academic Performance  
Table No. 3**

	<b><u>FUSD</u></b>	<b><u>LBUSD</u></b>	<b><u>GGUSD</u></b>
% Ranking in API Deciles 6 to 10	18%	44%	68
% Ranking in API Deciles 1	51%	6%	0
% in AYP Program Improvement L1	21%	7%	5
% in AYP Program Improvement L2	14%	1%	0
% in AYP Program Improvement L3	6%	1%	0
% in AYP Program Improvement L4	<u>19%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>0</u>
Total % in Program Improvement	59%	13%	5%

**Expulsions and Drop-Outs  
2002-03  
Table No. 5**

	<b><u>FUSD</u></b>	<b><u>LBUSD</u></b>	<b><u>GGUSD</u></b>
Expulsion Rate per 1,000 students	59	15	4
1 Year Drop Out Rate	6.2	3.1	0.8
Total Drop Out Rate*	23.1%	12.8%	3.5%

*\*4 Year Derived Rate (9-12)*

To summarize, Garden Grove and Long Beach have:

- ✍ Very comparable demographics to Fresno;
- ✍ Larger class sizes;
- ✍ Receive less funding per ADA;
- ✍ Yet they have far lower drop out rates and are producing dramatically better academic performance than Fresno Unified.

“Good practices” Districts have these characteristics in common:

- ✍ Clear and sustained goals and strategies
- ✍ Academic achievement always at the top of the pyramid of goals
- ✍ All decisions at all levels are focused on the best interests of the students
- ✍ Stable leadership
- ✍ Understanding and respect of the roles of each stakeholder, from student and parent to board member
- ✍ Excellent fiscal management
- ✍ A culture of extensive, constructive engagement by all stakeholders
- ✍ Recognition that there are no easy answers – that it takes hard work, every day, to deal with the enormous challenge of bringing the best possible education to our children
- ✍ An unrelenting commitment to continuous improvement.

As with any analysis of the kind presented in this report, many of the issues identified in this report are known to FUSD officials, and a good number of them are being addressed. Credit is due to all those who are working hard to effect the necessary changes. The aim of this report is to bring all components of the picture into a single view in order to create a cohesive and comprehensive path to successful reform and change management.

**The Task Force’s principal findings are as follows:**

### **A. Academic Performance**

1. FUSD’s academic performance lags the eight benchmark districts.
2. “Best Practices” districts have overarching *Academic Goals* that drive all other district decisions.
3. “Best Practices” districts are unrelenting about fixing underperforming schools.
4. Some Fresno Unified schools have done remarkably well in the midst of systemic dysfunction. The District should learn from these internal “best practices” schools.

### **B. Instructional & Operational Strategies**

1. “Best Practices” districts have “core” academic strategies that are more consistently and rigorously applied throughout the district than is the case at FUSD.
2. Not all student achievement is about test scores.

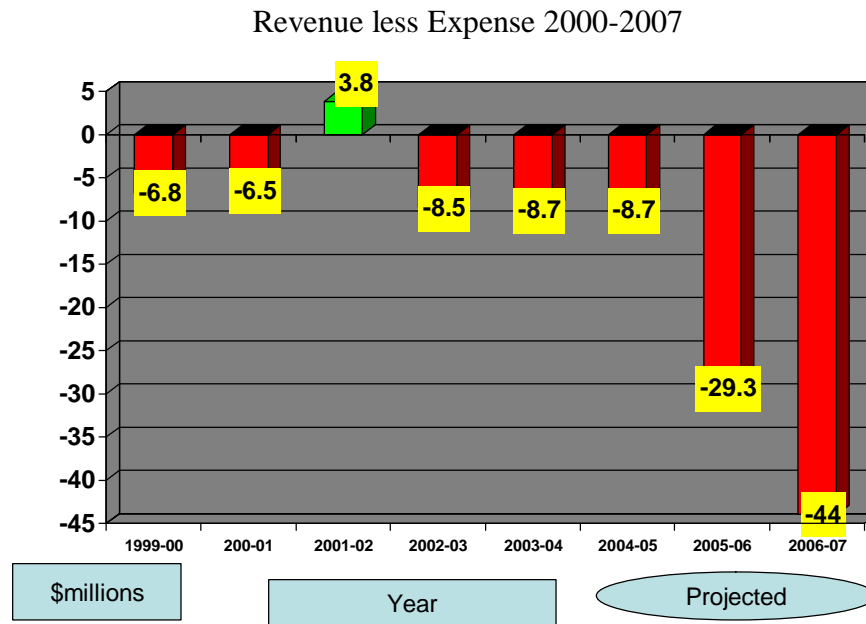
3. “Best Practices” schools are intensely data-driven, they practice differentiated instruction, and are increasingly moving towards real-time intervention strategies.
4. “Best Practices” schools provide extensive and consistent professional development to teachers and administrative staff.
5. “Best practices” districts place high priority on creating school environments that are safe, motivate learning and are intolerant of disruption. They have strong character education programs and clear and consistently enforced student conduct policies.
6. Special needs children, who can best be served by Special Education or by Alternative Education programs, have borne the brunt of a confusing array of legal requirements, of well-meaning but inadequately implemented strategies such as inclusion in “regular” classroom, and of out-and-out defaults of recognizing their needs and providing appropriate services.
7. “Best practices” districts create a tight nexus between Student Support Services and “Academic Goals.”
8. Well-maintained facilities are a given at “best practices” districts.

### **C. Governance, HR Policies & Organizational Philosophy**

1. “Best Practices” districts have significant leadership continuity and generally develop their leaders from within.
2. “Best Practices” districts define governance roles very clearly and respect those roles rigorously.
3. “Best Practices” districts organize themselves around their overarching *Academic Goals* and relentlessly emphasize teamwork. Those with line responsibility for students and teachers drive the train while the role of other staff is to remove the obstacles in the way.
4. “Best Practices” districts understand the value of direct communications and strive to house all administrative personnel in the same physical facility.
5. “Best Practices” districts know what to centralize and what to decentralize.
6. The Human Resources policies of “Best Practices” districts are aligned to the *Academic Goals* of the district.
7. “Best Practices” districts have excellent union-management relationships, focused on a shared agenda of providing the best possible education to the children.
8. “Best Practices” districts have engrained practices of stakeholder engagement.
9. “Best Practices” schools have a culture of continuous improvement.
10. “Best Practices” districts “walk the talk” on accountability.

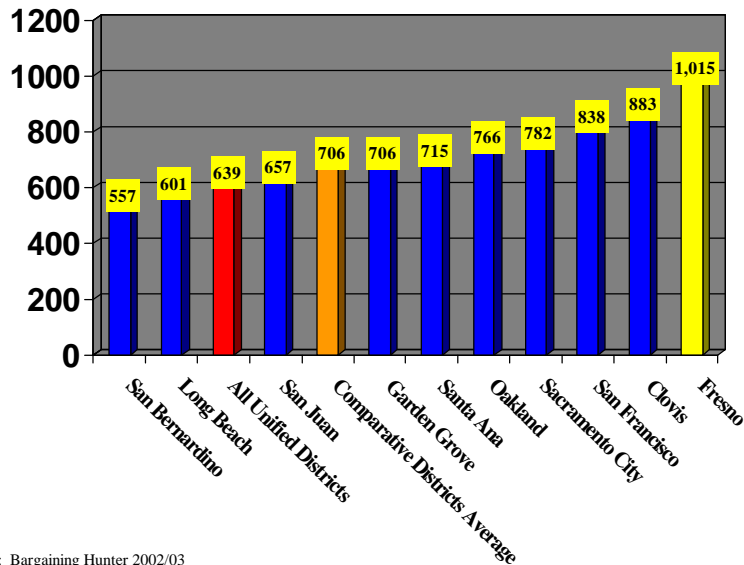
## D. Fiscal Matters and their Nexus to Academic Goals

1. The threat of a State take-over is real, imminent, and potentially devastating. The District has incurred deficit spending in four of the last 5 years (see graph below) and the FCMAT projections show an anticipated *cumulative* deficit of \$36 million in 2005-06 and \$80 million in 2006-07.



2. FUSD has more instructional personnel (teachers and other instruction-related staff) as a percent of enrollment than all other benchmark districts except Long Beach, and correspondingly higher Instructional Administrative Expenses.
3. FUSD has fewer Central District level administrators per student than all but one of the benchmark districts.
4. FUSD has more school level administrators than all but two of the benchmark districts.
5. FUSD District administration expenses per ADA (General Fund) are slightly below the median of the comparative districts.
6. Average FUSD teacher salaries are higher than the State average, which is in turn higher than the National average.
7. FUSD has by far the highest cost of employee health & welfare benefits of any of the benchmark districts.

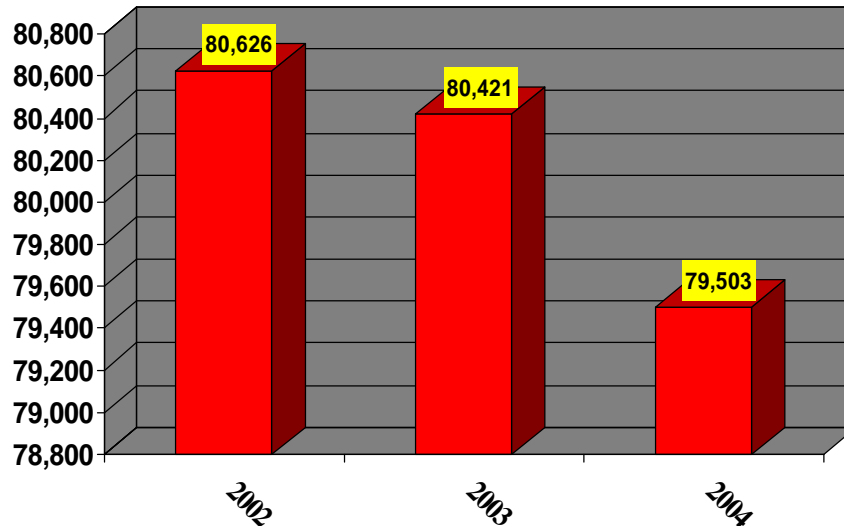
2002/03 Health Benefits for all Employees per ADA General Fund



Source: Bargaining Hunter 2002/03

8. Over the last three years, escalating health benefits costs have overwhelmed all other expense categories at FUSD.
9. The District has a huge unfunded liability for its lifetime benefits program -- approximately \$1.1 billion.
10. FUSD has a \$41 million unfunded liability for Worker's Compensation Claims.
11. FUSD collects more categorical funds per ADA than all but one other District. "Best Practices" districts seek a much tighter connection between academic goals and use of categorical funds. They also employ categorical funds more creatively. It's noteworthy that while the general fund has seen persistent deficits, categorical funding has been running sizeable surpluses. While the two funds cannot be interchanged, more efficient use of categoricals might create some relief for the general fund.
12. FUSD is less targeted in its pursuit of grant funding than "Best Practices" districts. The latter eschew activities that detract from their single focus on student achievement.
13. FUSD can achieve greater operating efficiencies through more efficient use of technology.
14. FUSD has opportunities to increase operating efficiencies.
15. "Best Practices" districts have fiscally prudent financial reserves.
16. FUSD has relied on one-year solutions to its budget woes, relying on grant funds with no view of how to replace them when the grants expire; failing to maintain facilities, as noted under "Operational Strategies"; and otherwise relying on short-term strategies with potentially disastrous long-term results.
17. The District has been passive about its declining enrollment.

K-12 Enrollment



Source: CBEDS State Report

## E. Stakeholder Engagement

1. “Best Practices” districts foster a high-trust environment by communicating incessantly and operating in a high transparency mode.
2. Patterns of parental engagement in FUSD schools are mixed.
3. FUSD has not taken full advantage of the other educational institutions that reside in the community.
4. The opportunities for District collaboration with business and civic organizations have not been fully exploited.

The Task Force found these myths about FUSD to be without foundation:

- ✍ That the demographics of the District preordain poor academic performance. Other schools with similar demographics are excelling academically.
- ✍ That the Central District Administration is top-heavy. The administration has, in fact, been so decimated by cuts that it does not have the wherewithal to provide stable direction.
- ✍ That the District’s fiscal crisis is not real. If the District were a business, the banks would already be discussing foreclosure.
- ✍ That a State take-over would solve the District’s problems. A State take-over occurs when a District cannot survive without a loan from the State. That loan must be paid back. A State take-over does nothing but postpone the time when local leadership must step up to its responsibilities; it postpones progress on

academic achievement; causes a drop in the district's credit rating; discourages employers from locating in the area; and, all of this is exacerbated by the loss of school funding that typically occurs when a district in State take-over suffers enrollment declines.

The Task Force presents a lengthy list of recommendations, based on two fundamental and inter-linked priorities:

- ✍ **Define the District's overarching goals and policies.**
- ✍ **Balance the budget in a way that is consistent with the District's goals and policies.**

The initial 36 recommendations made by the Task Force reflect the complexity of the problems facing FUSD and the need for a comprehensive approach. There is no silver bullet, nor is there time for sequential implementation of the recommendations. The Task Force proposes that the recommendations be implemented concurrently, with the support of "Implementation Task Forces", each charged with making progress on components of the total reform agenda.

The Task Force is less committed to the specificity of its recommendations than it is to the idea that a comprehensive plan must be put in place to reform FUSD, and that it be done in a timely manner, so as to bring benefit to the children of the District at the earliest possible date. The recommendations should be viewed, therefore, as a starting point for public input. A schedule of public meetings will be held in December and January, at which time input will be welcomed from all. A final report will then be prepared and made available. In an ideal world, the period for public input into the final report would be more extensive than the real world allows. However, the timeline is driven by the need for the Board to agree on the overarching goals that will drive all District decisions before a balanced budget can be prepared for school year 2005-06.

The Task Force recommendations follow:

## A. Academic Performance

### 1. Primary District Goals

#### FUSD District Goals

1. Students in the District five years or longer will meet grade-level proficiency in core academic subjects as measured by the California Standards Test (CST).
2. All English Learners will advance one level per year in English language proficiency until they are “English Proficient” as measured by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).
3. The District drop-out rate will be decreased by 20% per year until it reaches the State average, and then maintained at or below the State average.
4. Every School will provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. To be measured by annual surveys of students, teachers and parents, and by other tools.

### 2. District “Intervention Teams” should be formed for all Performance Improvement (P.I.) Schools

## B. Instructional & Operational Strategies

3. The District should select “core” curriculum, textbooks, intervention programs and English Language Development programs to be uniformly adopted by all schools in the District.
4. The District should implement a uniform professional development program, to be funded by set-asides from “categorical” funds, to provide comprehensive ongoing staff development in all “core” curriculum, intervention and ELL programs as well as instructional “best practices” and “data-driven decision-making.”

5. The Educational Philosophy of the District should be to emphasize “basics”, “opportunity” and “balance” – the three tools that serve to prepare a student for lifelong learning; to provide them the necessary skills and competencies to enable them to maximize their potential; and to offer opportunities for development of teamwork and other social skills that are indispensable to the students’ future success.
6. The District should implement a comprehensive leadership development program, to be funded by set-asides from “categorical” funds, to enhance skills of incumbent principals and staff managers as well as candidates for future promotion to these positions.
7. A uniform, District-wide K-12 character education program should be implemented within the purview of a newly-established Office of Student Character and Conduct.
8. Student Support Services should be reconfigured on the District’s organizational chart in order to provide ongoing linkage to other District functions.
9. The Superintendent should insist that all divisions across the District consider themselves responsible for using data as a tool to analyze information, to make and advocate for recommendations, and to implement changes.
10. The Superintendent should create a culture in which recommendations lead to decisions.
11. An analysis should be conducted to evaluate the feasibility of consolidating all administrative functions in one building.
12. A plan should be developed and implemented to maximize enrollment in the District.
13. A plan should be developed and implemented to improve District attendance.
14. A plan should be developed and implemented to enhance alternative educational programs and services. Organizational responsibility for this will be closely connected to the primary Instruction Division officials.
15. A citizen-led Facilities and Maintenance Committee should be formed to advocate for responsible stewardship of the public’s investment in facilities. It should work with the “Operational Strategies Task Force” to develop a facilities maintenance plan and monitor its implementation.

## C. Governance, HR Policies & Organizational Philosophy

16. The Board should at all times act as a governance board, not as a management board.

17. The Board should establish the following standing task force which should in turn establish short and long term project plans and accountability, measurement :

- ✍ Academic Performance
- ✍ Operational Strategies
- ✍ Human Resources/Labor Relations
- ✍ Finance & Capital projects
- ✍ Community Relations
- ✍ Best Practices

18. The Board should conduct three two-day workshops per year, principally to discuss progress toward meeting established District goals and long-term direction.

19. The District organization will be made flatter, with three associate superintendents, one each for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools, reporting directly to the superintendent and creating the “line” organization. Six additional associate or assistant superintendents should report to the superintendent, each with designated “staff” responsibilities as defined below. The three line managers and the six staff managers will work in a “matrix” relationship.

- ✍ Curriculum, Instruction, Professional development
- ✍ Research Planning & Evaluation
- ✍ Special Education & Student Services
- ✍ Educational Services (Categorical Programs)
- ✍ Human Resources/Labor Relations
- ✍ Chief Business & Financial Officer

20. There should be a realignment of Central District and school site instructional administrative staff, consistent with the District-wide goals and reflecting the proposed shifts toward centralization of some functions that are currently decentralized, and vice-versa.

21. Human Resource policies and collective bargaining agreements should be revisited with a view towards alignment with the District’s academic achievement goals.

- 22. **A clear system of accountability should be designed, communicated and implemented.**
- 23. **The “Best Practices” Task Force should design a process to monitor in-district and out-of-district best practices, promote them within the District, and monitor their implementation.**

## **D. Fiscal Matters and their Nexus to Academic Goals**

- 24. **By March 1, 2005, the administration should submit a balanced budget for 2005-06 and a preliminary balanced budget for 2006-07. These budgets will:**
  - ☒ **Meet the provisions of the State Education Code;**
  - ☒ **Be focused on achievement of the agreed upon District goals;**
  - ☒ **Include restoration of instructional programs dropped or curtailed in recent years (e.g. music and library);**
  - ☒ **Provide for operation of the Child development Fund without Encroachment on the General Fund;**
  - ☒ **Provide a funding stream for amortizing the currently unfunded liability of the District for Post Employment benefits as well as the currently unfunded Workers Compensation liability; and**
  - ☒ **Provide for a fiscally-prudent reserve.**

In order to obtain these balanced budgets, the Task Force proposes implementation of the actions in recommendations #25 through # 27 below.

### **25. Health Benefits**

Because this is the Task Force’s recommendation with the most significant financial impact, and because it addresses an area of great concern to all current and retired employees of the District, a preamble is in order.

The objective of this recommendation is to align the interests of the administration and the employee unions behind a shared agenda:

- ☒ Place funding of the academic achievement objectives of the District as the highest priority;
- ☒ Ensure that the package of health benefits made available to employees is competitive with that of comparable Districts in the State;
- ☒ Create a collaborative approach to management of the benefits program, focused on maximizing the value of employee benefits obtained by the District for every dollar spent on benefits.
- ☒ Over time, eliminate the unfunded liability of the District for Post Employment health benefits.
- ☒ Ensure that the administration and unions are both working to maximize ADA by pursuing policies that will increase enrollment as well as attendance.

With this shared agenda in mind, the task Force recommends the following:

- a. **Establishment of a FUSD Health Benefits Trust Fund, exclusively for FUSD, to be co-managed by the administration and the unions. This Trust Fund, which will have full fiduciary responsibilities, shall be comprised of an equal number of members of the administration and representatives from all bargaining units.**
- b. **Beginning in school year 2005-06, the District will deposit monthly in the FUSD Health Benefits Trust Fund an amount per ADA to be negotiated between the administration and the unions and approved by the Board of Trustees (the “cap” amount).**
  - i. The task Force recommends that the amount per ADA be based on the average per ADA for comparative Districts in California. If, on average, this amount is adequate for other Districts to be able to deliver competitive benefits to their employees, FUSD should be able to achieve the same result.
  - ii. Because there is an information lag as to what comparative Districts are paying for health benefits per ADA, the “cap” amount would need to be based on an analysis of trends as well as a survey of comparable districts.
  - iii. To provide some fiscal stability to the District, the “cap” amount should be negotiated for an initial period of three years beginning in FY 2005-06, then renegotiated during the third year based on experience and trends during the first two years.
  - iv. Basing the “cap” on ADA is recommended because it is the basis on which the District is funded and because it gives the administration and the unions a shared objective of increasing enrollment and attendance.
  - v. In order to enable the Trust Fund to proceed with the formulation of a revised health benefits plan for FY 2005-06, the “cap” amount must be negotiated as early as possible in 2005 (not later than the end of January 2005).
- c. **As a first order of business, the FUSD Health Benefits Trust Fund will formulate a revised health benefits plan for the District that seeks to optimize benefits value to employees by any and all means available, including competitive bidding of health plans; purchase of reinsurance to cap unfunded liabilities on self-insured plans; purchase of Medicare supplemental policies for retirees; negotiated discounts and rebates; retrospective and prospective claims utilization review; and any other alternative that will maximize benefits to employees per dollar expended.**
  - i. This analysis must be completed in time to put a revised health benefits plan in place for the District’s FY 2005-06 fiscal year.

- d. The proposed FUSD Health Benefits Trust Fund will make a determination on the subject of employee lifetime benefits and determine if they should be continued, phased out, discontinued, converted to a two tier system (e.g. a different set of benefits for current employees vs. new employees) or some other alternative or combination of alternatives.

Important Note: Until the analysis made in paragraph “c” and the decisions in paragraph “d” are made, it is not possible to predict a priori the effect these recommendations will have, *if any*, on employee premium contributions, deductibles or co-pays. This can only be determined after a comprehensive analysis is performed and a plan agreed upon. The Task Force is confident, however, that a collaborative approach between the administration and unions will yield a health benefits plan that is competitive with that of comparable districts.

26. Raise class size by one or more students over current year, while allowing school site discretion to reduce class size through use of categorical funds.
27. Fund all professional development out of categorical funds
28. After categorical set-aside provisions are made to fund professional development and agreed upon class-size reduction goals, empower principals to use all other categorical funds to best achieve District/school objectives, taking full advantage of AB 825.
29. Assign responsibility to the “Operational Strategies Task Force” for evaluating the potential for operating efficiencies in such areas as Purchasing, Warehousing and Delivery, Food Services, Transportation and Health Care Services, including consolidation with neighboring school districts when feasible.
30. Establish an “Implementation Task Force” to review the Technology Strategy Plan (see Appendix “J”) with a view toward recommending implementation steps to the Superintendent and leading the actual implementation.
31. A more rigorous set of criteria for grant applications should be established to ensure that grants applied for and received support the achievement of the District’s Overarching objectives and do not cause diversion of attention.
32. The District should fully recognize the unfunded retiree liability in its financial statements and work with the County Office of Education and other pertinent parties on a plan to deal with the liability.

This is **the most important long-term issue affecting the fiscal future of the District**. As stated in the FCMAT report, “Eventually, the District’s net assets could be entirely enveloped by this liability”. A plan must be developed at the earliest possible date to reduce and pre-fund this liability.

- 33. The District should develop a plan in conjunction with the County Office of Education to fully fund its currently-unfunded \$41 million workers compensation liability.**

## **E. Stakeholder Engagement**

- 34. Develop a plan for increasing parental engagement throughout the District**

- 35. Enlist the “Human Investment Task Force” of the Collaborative Regional Initiative to develop strategies to increase and strengthen partnerships between the community and the District and a plan for aligning the resources of public and nonprofit agencies that provide services to families in the District.**

- 36. Create a “K-16 Task Force” designed to bring together the interests of FUSD, Clovis Unified, Central Unified, Fresno State, Fresno Pacific University, and the State Center Community Colleges.**

Town Hall Meetings to receive public sector input on these preliminary recommendations will be held by the Task Force on the dates shown below:

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
Tuesday, December 14	7-9 pm	Hoover High School Cafeteria
Thursday, December 16	7-9 pm	Roosevelt High School Cafeteria
Wednesday, January 5	7-9 pm	Edison High School Cafeteria
Thursday, January 13	7-9 pm	Fresno High School Auditorium

The Task Force has no intention of letting this report sit on a shelf gathering dust. It has included an ambitious implementation plan and timetable, and its members have committed to staying with these tasks for at least three years.

Our region and community deserves no less than our collective very best efforts. We cannot let our community suffer the disgrace of having its school system taken over by the State. We cannot allow our children to have an education so inferior that it places them at a competitive disadvantage in the job market and as productive citizens. We must **choose our future.**