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### FUSD shares its plan to improve student performance. Part 2

by Monty Torres

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So, how does Fresno Unified School District plan to reach the high goals it has now set for itself and its students in its new "Goals and Guardrails" program?

I asked FUSD Superintendent Misty Her that question.

She, along with Interim Chief Academic Officer Dr. Carlos Castillo and Instructional Superintendent Dr. Marie Williams agreed to outline the plans they are hoping will lead to the district's success, starting with district-wide training.

"We all decided that our district needed to go in a different, more transformative direction," Her explained, "So, our board paused and we decided to go through what's called, Student Outcomes Focused Governance training." Something that Her says will now be provided to all FUSD employees at every level.

Created by the **Council of The Great City Schools** and its director, A.J. Crabill, "Student Outcomes Focused Governance" describes itself as a framework that guides school boards, districts and their staff in focusing their efforts solely on student outcomes and in taking personal responsibility for that.

"So it absolutely has to be inclusive of not only the community and the board and the superintendent, not only the senior staff, but also certainly principals, teachers and students," AJ Crabill described, "and so part of this training will make it all the way to where the frontline of where education actually happens, which isn't here in the boardroom, but there in the classroom."

"What this forced us to do was to look at ourselves," Her elaborated. "We're not getting student results because of me. I'm not doing certain things. I'm not taking responsibility and so there's a lot of changing, just putting the mirror to ourselves to say, we are at 30% only at English Language Arts not because of anybody else but because my behavior has contributed to that."

Tracking the progress of students more frequently will also be vital to ensure the district's strategies are working. FUSD's Interim Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Carlos Castillo laid out a calendar showing the every-other-monthly schedule already set for public discussion of student progress toward the district's interim and long-term goals.

"These are the board meetings that we have for the entire year," Castillo pointed out. "The first one, the one on the left, is the board meeting where we're going to present the data. "So, August 13th will be the first one. Even though the main goal is five years out... we have two years for this interim goal. We have the big, 2-year goal and now we have these, which are like in between. It's just a way for us to really be accountable to ourselves about the work."

Instructional Superintendent Dr. Marie Williams also pointed to enhanced teacher training as a major contributor to the student success the district is hoping to see.

"I think the difference would be most notable in the instructional practices and the strategies that the teacher is using," Williams opined, "and so we will, in terms of professional learning, provide resources and supports to help teachers deepen their understanding of the content standards."

"Williams and Castillo also cite ongoing efforts to reduce class sizes and increase available classroom technology as additional strategies for achieving the district's goals.

- Promoting a district-wide program of personal responsibility for student outcomes,
- More frequent tracking of student progress.
- Enhanced teacher training, smaller class sizes and more classroom technology.

Castillo and Williams also say the district is reviewing current and supplemental instructional materials as part of a five-year, \$100 million investment in early literacy.

The goal? To discover which materials are the best at promoting student success.

All are solid strategies for improving student performance if conscientiously, consistently and carefully applied.

We hope to bring you more on the Fresno Unified School District's efforts to meet its high goals, how it's doing that and how well its working as this journey continues.