



Whole-Child Success  
Across the Central Valley  
May 2026

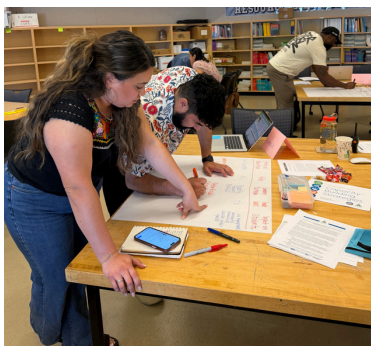
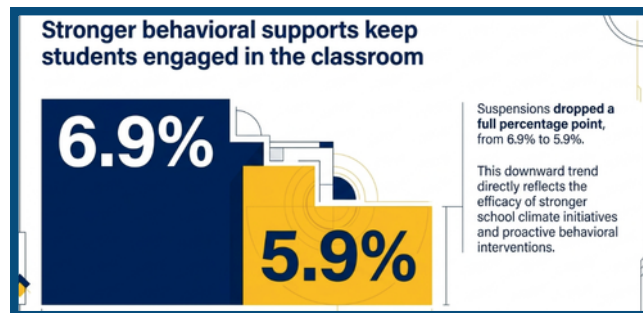


FUSD Community Schools Leadership Team and Coordinators

## Rooted in Readiness: Fresno Unified’s Community Schools Journey

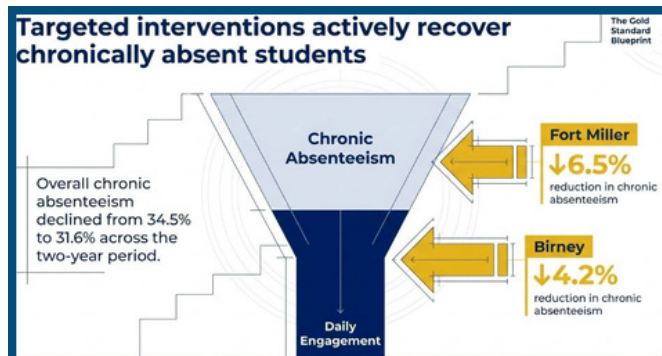
Fresno Unified School District’s (FUSD) Community Schools journey reflects a deliberate, systemwide commitment to building something sustainable, not just scalable. Rather than expanding quickly, the district prioritized readiness by ensuring strong leadership support and ownership from teachers and staff, often through formal votes and collaboration with union partners. This upfront investment established shared ownership and reinforced a core belief that caring for the community is central to the work, not a compliance task. In FUSD, becoming a Community School signals a deeper cultural shift that reimagines how schools operate, make decisions, and build relationships with students and families.

Today, the district has grown to 29 sites, each supported by a dedicated coordinator who connects students, families, staff, and community partners. This work shows up in practical ways such as family resource centers that address basic needs, engagement events that strengthen belonging, expanded volunteer involvement, wellness opportunities for families, and student supports like clothing closets.



Schools integrate community based learning into instruction and partner with organizations to bring services on to campuses. These efforts are integrated supports designed to remove barriers and strengthen the school community. While coordinators are based at sites, FUSD is also using a regional approach to increase impact. In areas like Sunnyside, coordinators collaborate across schools to organize shared efforts such as health fairs, food distributions, and family engagement events. This model extends resources beyond campuses and strengthens neighborhood support through shared partnerships.

At the district level, a strong governance structure supports continuous improvement. A District Steering Committee of parents, students, educators, administrators, and community partners guides the work through shared decision making and data review, while site based committees ensure local responsiveness and cross functional teams focus on priorities such as sustainability, student supports, and family engagement.



Early results show improved attendance and reduced suspensions, along with a growing culture where data informs action. Fresno Unified’s approach reflects a shift toward stronger partnerships, aligned resources, and schools where students and families feel connected and supported.

# TURNING IDEAS INTO IMPACT WITH IMPROVEMENT SCIENCE



District teams from **Coalinga-Huron Unified, Mendota Unified, Washington Unified School District, Violet Heintz Education Academy (VHEA), and Riverdale Unified** participated in an improvement cohort grounded in a shared aim: create a sustainable system that improves student outcomes beyond the life of the Community Schools grant. While this overarching goal unified the work, each district identified a localized focus, along with its own aim, primary drivers, and change ideas.

## Mendota Unified

### English Learner Growth Snapshot

Positive Indicators for McCabe & MES

*Focused on growth, progress, and early wins*

#### 1 ELPI Growth



**38.4%**

progressed by at least one ELPI level

Students showing measurable progress in ELPI growth

#### 2 Growth Goals and Progress



Increase McCabe ELPI percentage by 2% annually



Applicable to both McCabe & MES



Target **40.5%** for McCabe

#### 3 Tutoring and Progress Monitoring



After initial PDSA cycles, we now have a proper assessment to track student progress from attending tutoring sessions.



Writing Domain:  
6/13 students passed



Listening Domain:  
11/13 students passed



Reading Domain:  
9/13 students passed

#### 4 Student Support Snapshot



102 LTELs at McCabe



41 Level 3 students identified for support



13 students attended ELPAC tutoring with Mr. Gonzales



**Bright spot:** Tutoring data now gives us a clear way to monitor student growth and identify where students are succeeding.



The cohort brought together community school teams, district leaders, and specialized staff to directly address problems of practice impacting student success. Coalinga-Huron Unified focused on building parent knowledge and confidence in supporting literacy at home. Mendota Unified concentrated on improving outcomes for its 22 sixth-grade Long-Term English Learners, with a goal of increasing performance on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California. Riverdale Unified addressed student behavior, targeting sixth-grade students exhibiting at-risk behaviors. VHEA prioritized reducing chronic absenteeism, while Washington Unified School District focused on chronic absenteeism among students with disabilities. The structure of the cohort was deliberate. Using a train-the-trainer model, participants developed both the content knowledge and facilitation skills needed to lead this work within their own systems. The learning unfolded across three in-person sessions, with virtual team huddles and action steps embedded between sessions.

A central component of the work was building a strong foundation in improvement science. Participants engaged deeply with the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle as a method for inquiry and continuous improvement, testing small, targeted strategies, studying the results, and refining their approach. Clarity emerged as a key outcome. Groups were pushed to move beyond broad concerns and define the specific issue they were trying to improve. This required analyzing data, surfacing root causes, and aligning around a shared understanding of the problem. Equally important was the shift from discussion to action. There was clear growth in the willingness to try new approaches, gather evidence, and adjust. By the end of the cohort, each district left with a clear direction, a defined improvement aim, and the tools to sustain the work. The experience built both confidence and capacity, ensuring that efforts to improve student and community outcomes will continue well beyond the initial investment.











**Keep Your Team Connected!**  
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