



THE FOUNDATION  
FOR FRESNO UNIFIED STUDENTS



2024-2025

# Community Impact Report







THE FOUNDATION  
FOR FRESNO UNIFIED STUDENTS



Each year, The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students grows—not just in programs or numbers, but in purpose.

This year, that purpose came into sharp focus. Our new cornerstone, “Champion,” reflects what our team, our partners, and our students are doing every day: speaking up, showing up, and standing firm in the belief that every student deserves opportunity.

You’ll see that theme throughout this year’s report. It’s in the record-breaking 991 scholarship applications submitted—a 68% increase in just two years. It’s in the blazers and dresses donated during our third annual Suit Drive, and in the 351 students who walked away from the Suited for Success event with not just professional attire, but confidence. It’s in the \$1.2 million in scholarships awarded in the past three years of being facilitated by The Foundation. It’s in the hard questions asked at our Student Mental Health Town Hall, and in the bold answers our students are helping to shape.

You’ll also see how The Foundation has matured as an organization—investing in strategic planning, expanding our Board of Directors, and launching our first-ever Foundation-led grant to bring Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library to underserved ZIP codes in Fresno. With insight from landscape analyses on technology education and student mental health, we are increasingly shaping not just how we respond, but how we lead.

And none of this would be possible without you.

This past year, your generosity helped us raise over \$440,000 for scholarships, fulfill over 90 Adopt-A-School requests, and grow our donor base fivefold. You packed out event halls, rallied colleagues to give, and answered calls to mentor and volunteer. You helped us grow—thoughtfully, intentionally, and with the future always in mind. As you read this report, I hope you see the ripple effect of your support. Because what’s happening here isn’t small. It’s not temporary. It’s momentum. And it’s moving us toward a stronger, more equitable future for every student in Fresno Unified. With gratitude and resolve,



*Wendy McCulley*

Wendy McCulley  
President & CEO  
The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students



# Student Impact, Voice & Innovation



300+

Stakeholders engaged through surveys, focus groups, and interviews



2

Districtwide landscape analyses completed

Mental Health + Tech Education



2

Convenings hosted

40+ Attendees  
Technology  
Education  
Convening

70+ Attendees  
Student  
Mental Health  
Town Hall



\$440,000+

Scholarships awarded

\$1.2M+ awarded since 2021



991

Scholarship applications received

Up 16% from last year, 68% from two years ago

351

Students served through

**Suited for Success**

117% increase from 2024

7,000+

Items of professional clothing donated



98

Adopt-A-School wishes fulfilled

Across 58 schools, totaling \$81,805+ in direct impact



22

Foundation Ambassadors activated across school sites



## Events & Engagement



**\$230,000**

**Raised at The Noir Event**

Over 1,500 attendees—students  
and families invited for free



**\$18,921**

**Raised during Peak  
Potential Giving Day**

127% of goal



**3,000+**

**eNews readers  
(up from 600 in 2023)**

5x growth in Donor Digest readership



**48+**

**Corporate sponsors  
engaged this year**



## Organizational Growth



**First strategic alignment to District's Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) model**

**1**

**New cornerstone  
launched:  
Champion**

**3**

**New board  
members  
appointed**



**1**

**Board-approved  
grant awarded  
(Imagination Library)**

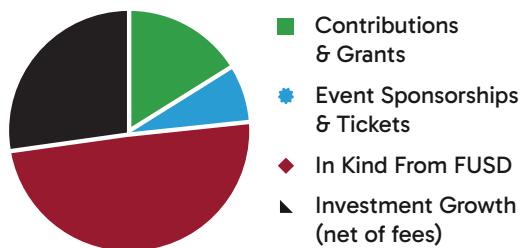
## Statement of Activities



### Revenue

2024

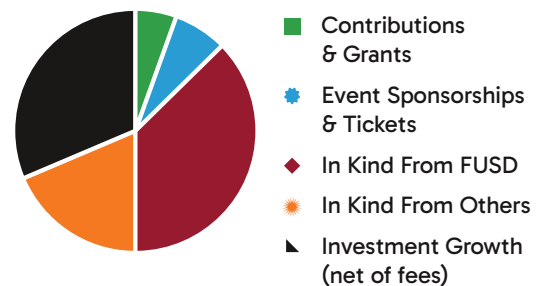
**\$3,911,991**



Revenue less expenses **\$931,162**  
Total assets **\$22,209,528**

2025

**\$4,741,192**

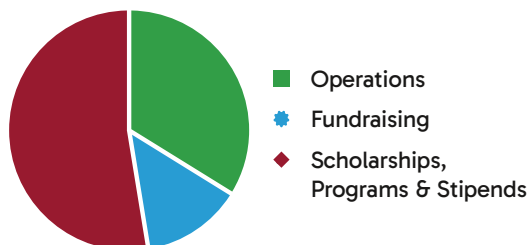


Revenue less expenses **\$750,512**  
Total assets **\$22,907,908**

### Expenses

2024

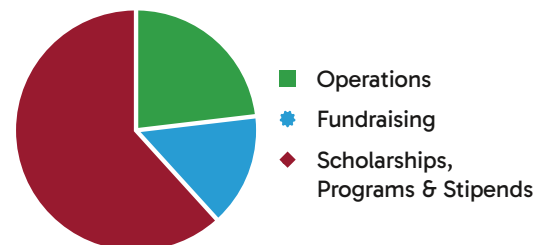
**\$2,980,829**



Total liabilities **\$506,000**  
Net assets/fund balance **\$21,703,528**

2025

**\$3,990,680**



Total liabilities **\$454,026**  
Net assets/fund balance **\$22,453,882**

# Metrics



**\$1 : \$3.11**



**ROPI (Return on Philanthropic Investment)**

(Total revenue divided by operations and fundraising expenses)

**\$447,200**

**In scholarships awards**



**58%**



**Fundraising Growth Rate**

(24/25 contributions, grants & events revenue divided by 23/24)

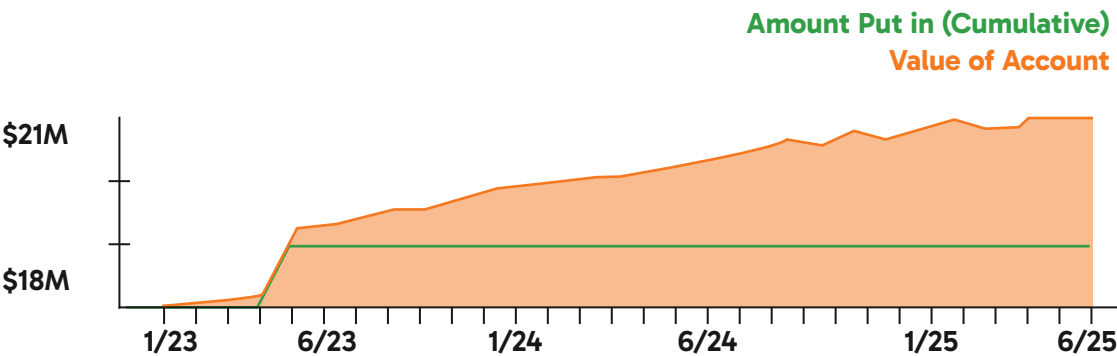
**\$1 : \$2.45**

**Events ROPI**

(Total event revenue divided by revenue expenses)



# Investment Growth





RETURN





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# Cornerstone: Learn

Elevating Learning Environments. Supporting Student Success.

**“I received my books from Petunia’s Place! Thank you greatly for this tremendous gift for my students. They’ve been enjoying reading all the new books!”**

— Kim Merchen, Teacher, FUSD

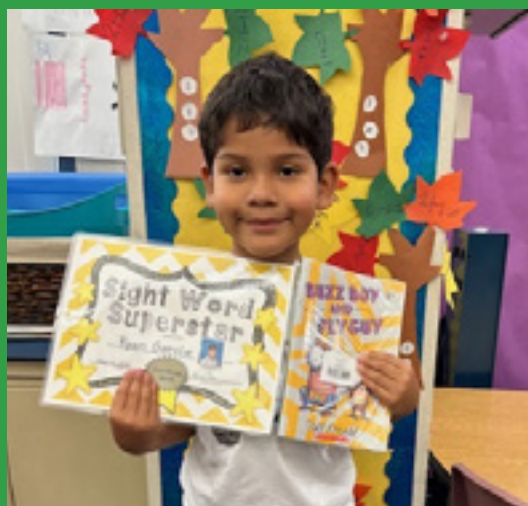
## Our Vision for ‘Learn’

This year, The Foundation amplified learning by filling critical gaps in classrooms, campuses, and homes. From early literacy to graduation celebrations, we supported programs that complemented the district’s academic mission while ensuring no school—and no student—was left behind.

## Literacy & Early Learning

### Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

In a milestone moment, The Foundation awarded its first-ever internal grant to help launch a Fresno-based affiliate of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. As a Literacy Advocate Partner, we’re delivering free books directly to families in underserved ZIP codes—including Burroughs, Manchester GATE, King, Bakman, and Figarden.



**Thousands of books, delivered monthly at no cost to families.**

## Meeting Immediate Needs

From art supplies to classroom furniture, Fresno Unified educators submitted 66 school “wish lists” totaling over 139 unique requests. With your support:

Example projects funded:

- Garden beds for STEM integration
- ⚙️ Hygiene kits for school counseling centers
- ◆ Dramatic play stations for early education classrooms



# 98

wishes were fully funded

Every division—elementary, middle, high, and specialty—benefited



# \$81,805

(and counting) has been distributed in direct school support



“We have so many people who are willing to give, but just don’t know how. I hope I can help in whatever way I can.”

— Elia Padron, Foundation Ambassador, Edison



## ADOPT A SCHOOL

A Program of the Foundation for Fresno Unified Students

## Learning Milestones Worth Celebrating



In 2025, we proudly supported:

- The Latinx Graduation Ceremony, with crowdfunding tools and in-kind support
- ⚙️ The African American and Native American graduation celebrations
- ◆ Senior celebrations through Adopt-A-Project campaigns—supporting Robotics, Journalism, Soccer, and more
- ☀️ School spirit and basic needs, including:

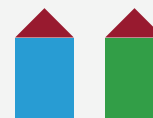


# \$25,000



PG&E grant to provide  
new sweatshirts to 1,750  
students at 25 schools

Campus  
beautification  
and inclusive  
learning materials  
at multiple  
secondary sites



“Thank you so much for  
helping us to recognize our  
students’ hard work.”

— Margaret Riedinger,  
Office Manager, Wawona







# Cornerstone: Innovate

Student-Centered Systems. Future-Facing Solutions.

**“I’m a big believer in youth-led, peer-led approaches and centering kids’ voices. Getting adults in space with kids in a circle—it equalizes everyone’s voice.”**

— FUSD Restorative  
Practices Professional

## Our Vision for ‘Innovate’

At The Foundation, innovation isn’t just about new technology—it’s about new thinking. It’s about building systems that center student voices, remove barriers, and create opportunities for all. In 2024–25, we invested in the future by launching two major research initiatives, growing student-led solutions, and helping educators and partners reimagine what’s possible in K–12 education.

## Student Mental Health Ecosystem Analysis

In partnership with DoSomething Strategic and the Student Advisory Committee, we led a districtwide examination of what students are really experiencing when it comes to wellness, counseling access, and support systems.



- 70+ attendees at our inaugural Student Mental Health Town Hall
- Student-led focus groups and direct testimony shaped the findings
- ◆ Result: A bold, actionable Opportunity Brief now used by district leaders and funders alike

**“[We need to be] making sure that our students currently furthest from success stand at the forefront of efforts to achieve digital skill development.”**

— Anonymous Tech  
Convening Participant

## Technology Education Landscape Analysis

In a rapidly digitizing world, tech access alone isn't equity. With research led by DARO and supported by more than 300 stakeholders (students, teachers, employers), we mapped the current digital skills ecosystem across Fresno Unified.

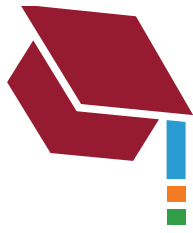
- 40+ leaders attended our January Technology Convening.
- ⚙️ Findings are now guiding policy, program design, and investment strategy.
- ◆ Result: an “Innovate Tech” roadmap to ensure every student—not just those in elite programs—can thrive in the digital workforce.



**“Oh...we loved this! This was a true meeting with and of purpose. Happy to be technology and education partners and knowing that Fresno is doing and wants the best for Fresno students and the community partners, like us, who support the same mission.”**

— Quiq Labs (Community Partner)





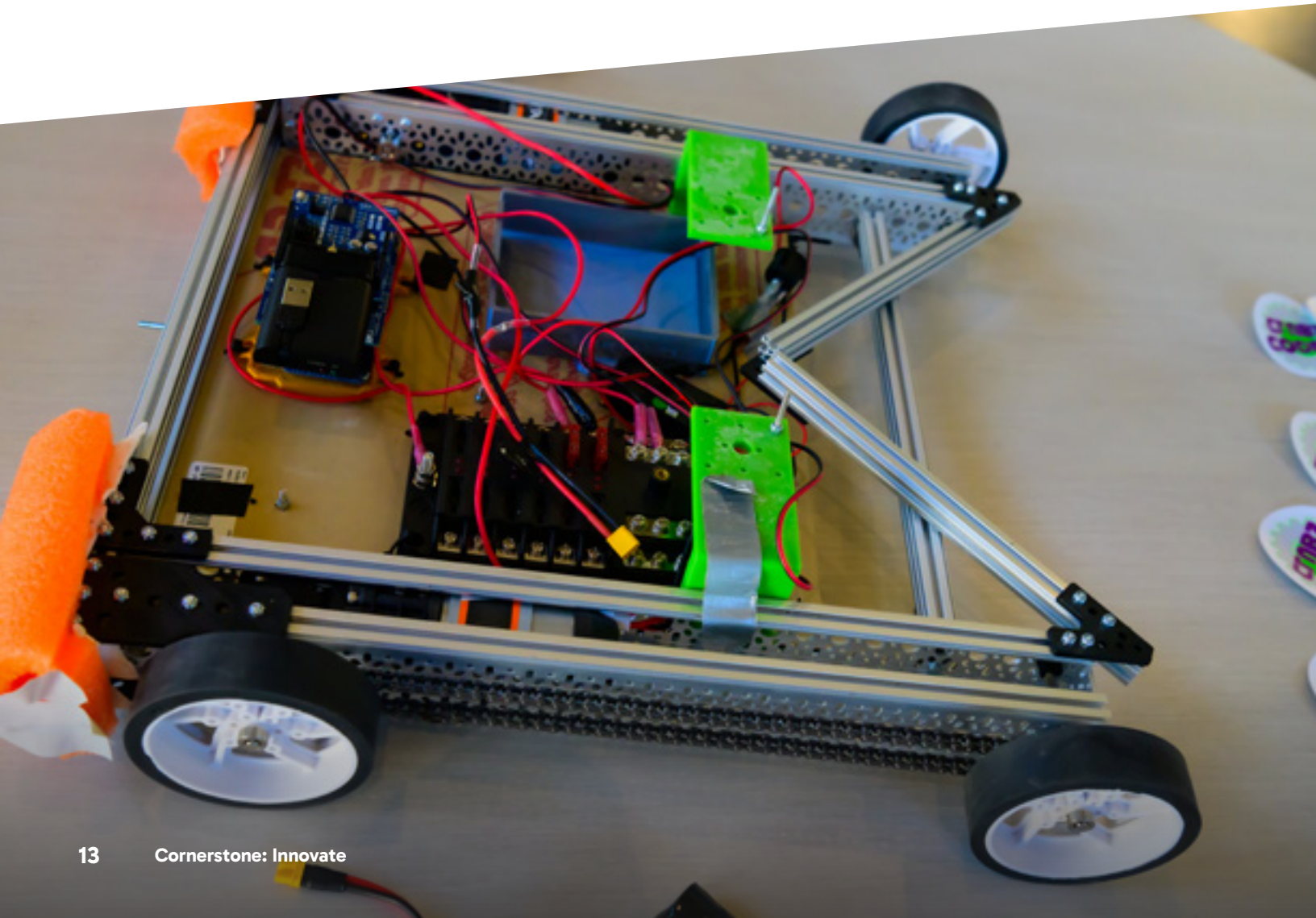
## ADOPT A PROJECT

A Program of the Foundation  
for Fresno Unified Students

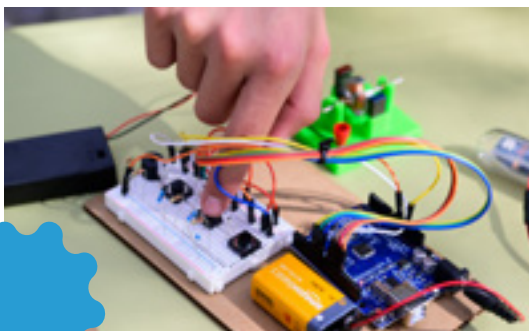


### Student Innovation in Action

- Adopt-A-Project campaigns now enable students to directly fundraise for campus needs—like Grad Night, Cheer, and Robotics—without platform fees.
- ⚙️ Students helped refine scholarship applications, review program ideas, and lead public convenings.
- ◆ With tools like Parsec's REAL survey platform and focus groups, we gather authentic student voice through ongoing feedback loops.







# Cornerstone: Amplify

Celebrating Excellence. Elevating Voice. Fueling Potential.

“Thank you again for believing in me and investing in my future. I am committed to working hard and making the most of this opportunity.”

— Suriyah Lynn Jones, FUSD  
Scholarship Recipient

## Our Vision for ‘Amplify’

In 2024–25, we leaned into celebration—not just as a feel-good moment, but as a strategy for equity and engagement. We recognized the potential in students, honored the impact of educators, and expanded programs that open doors for the next generation.

Through scholarships, communications, and campus-based campaigns, we elevated voices that too often go unheard—and helped them carry further.

## Record-Breaking Scholarship Season

- 991 students applied for FUSD scholarships (Up 16% from 2024 and 68% from 2023)
- \$440,000+ awarded across general, named, and community scholarships



- ◆ Introduced a three-phase blind review process for increased fairness and equity
- ✦ More outreach, clearer materials, and simpler processes led to historic reach

## Data-Driven Scholarship Impact

Our partnership with Hanover Research began this year with a single goal: define and measure the return on investment of scholarships from a student perspective. Phase one of our mixed-methods study is underway, setting a national precedent for evidence-based philanthropic giving.

“The scholarship process is meant to let every student tell their story, and with almost 1,000 applications, students trust us to help tell their story and help them achieve their goals.”

Dr. Andrew Scherrer, Executive  
Officer, The Foundation for  
Fresno Unified Students



## The Grateful Teacher Program



Mentors Matter gives alumni, families, and students a chance to honor FUSD staff with personalized recognition and direct school support.

- Pins awarded to honorees for gifts \$100+
- ⚙️ Certificates sent for all gifts \$30+
- ◆ Donors remain anonymous; the spotlight stays on the educator
- ☀️ All funds raised went directly back to schools.







## The Professional Thrift Market

- 351 students shopped for free professional wear (117% increase over last year)
- ⚙ Over 7,000 donated items sorted, steamed, and styled by volunteers
- ◆ Featured music, stylists, Dutch Bros, and taco trucks at Hoover HS
- ☀ Sponsored by PNC Bank and powered by student voices



## Amplifying Voices, On & Off the Stage

- Spill the Tea 2025 sold out with 200+ attendees. (Featured high school student panelists and leaders from education and industry)
- ⚙ Donor Digest eNews grew its audience by five times, from 600 to 3,000.
- ◆ 334 scholarship recipients submitted video messages to thank the teachers who shaped their journey.
- ☀ Staff and Ambassadors promoted scholarship applications across campuses, newsletters, and social feeds.







“Suited for Success was such a great event! It had something for everyone, and the students really felt seen and supported. It was awesome working with The Foundation to make it happen. The kids especially loved having a say in the process and took real pride in helping shape the experience. The whole day had such a positive energy. Suited for Success was fun, well-organized, and truly memorable.”

— Cal LaFlam, Campus Culture Director  
and Teacher, Hoover High School

# Cornerstone: Champion

Advocating for Equity. Protecting Potential.

**“We are finally set up and the kids have really enjoyed our ‘Take What You Need’ corner. With the very generous donation, I have been able to provide toothbrushes and floss, as well as facial wipes and shampoo so that my inclusion kiddos who are learning to take pride in their looks/smells are able to use as needed.”**

— Samantha Flores, FHS Autism Inclusion Teacher and Foundation Ambassador

## Our Vision for ‘Champion’



In 2024–25, The Foundation didn’t just support what existed—we challenged what was missing. As needs around mental health, digital access, and student opportunity deepened, we took bold steps to elevate critical issues and lead systemic change.

Whether addressing the invisible barriers in scholarship access or advocating for more inclusive campus cultures, we worked with a simple belief: students shouldn’t have to succeed in spite of the system—they should be able to succeed because of it.

## Centering Student Voice in Policy & Practice



- SOFG Alignment: Staying at the forefront, Foundation strategies were mapped directly to the district’s Student Outcomes Focused Governance goals and guardrails.
- ⚙️ Student Mental Health Town Hall: Students co-led panel discussions with 70+ attendees, including senior district leadership.
- ◆ Focus groups, interviews, and surveys guided programming decisions in real time.

## Systems-Level Advocacy in Action

- Scholarship Equity Improvements:
  - Redesigned application process
  - Improved clarity, access, and review
  - Goal: eliminate disparities by ZIP code, school site, or resources
- ◆ Technology Equity Briefs shared with business leaders, legislators, and workforce partners
- ☀ First-ever Foundation grant awarded to launch Imagination Library: a direct investment in literacy equity

## Governance & Leadership

- Board Retreat launched “Champion” as the fourth cornerstone
- ⚙ New board members appointed:
  - Pastor DJ Criner
  - Babatunde Ilori
  - Laura Schlundt
- ◆ In a historic milestone for Fresno Unified and the country, Misty Her—Vice Chair of The Foundation’s Board—was appointed as the first woman to serve as Superintendent of Fresno Unified, and the first Hmong superintendent in the United States.
- ☀ Her appointment marks a new era of District leadership rooted in representation, community voice, and student-first governance.
- ▴ The Zeck digital governance system was piloted to improve transparency, strategy, and board engagement.



# Events & Campaign Spotlights

From One-Time Moments to Long-Term Momentum

“We are happy to be able to sponsor this event and show our support!”

— High Performance Academy (Sponsor)

## The Noir Event 2024

October 16, 2024 • Warnors Theatre

Our signature benefit event raised a record-breaking \$230,000, thanks to 48+ corporate sponsors and hundreds of individual supporters.

- **Headliner:** Black Violin, joined by the Bullard High School Choir
- ⚙️ **Attendance:** ~1,500 guests, including students and families invited at no cost
- ◆ **Premier Symphony Sponsor:** Scholastic
- ☀️ **New this year:** Strategic donor cultivation, expanded sponsor tiers, and pre/post-event donor stewardship campaign





## Peak Potential Giving Day

August 29, 2024

Our first standalone Giving Day exceeded all expectations—raising \$18,921 to fund campus-specific “wish list” projects across 35 schools.

- Exceeded goal by 127%
- ⚙️ Directly supported requests like guitars, robotics kits, art supplies, and garden tools
- ◆ 21 new requests added immediately after the campaign
- ☀️ Campaign promoted through ambassadors, newsletters, and social media



**“We are truly grateful for your commitment to helping our students stay comfortable and focused during the school day.”**

— Vanessa Criner, Community Schools Coordinator, Calwa Elementary



## Suit Drive & Suited for Success 2025

**Drive: Feb 10–21**

**Event: April 9 at Hoover High School**

Our third annual Suit Drive collected over 7,000 items of professional attire, and the Suited for Success event welcomed 351 students—more than double the prior year.

- Campus-wide busing, personal stylists, music, and food vendors
- ⚙️ Donations included brand-new items and heartfelt personal notes
- ◆ Sponsored by PNC Bank, with support from Neighborhood Industries and Dutch Bros





## Spill the Tea 2025

March 6, 2025 • The Palomino Event Center

Back by popular demand, our high tea celebration of women's leadership, student voice, and advocacy sold out again—welcoming over 200 guests.

- Theme: “Boiling Point: Leading When the Heat is On”
- ⚙️ Featured a student moderator and panel of high-powered women across sectors
- ◆ Full media kit and recap video extended reach
- ☀️ Guests received custom tea tins and letterpress materials as keepsakes

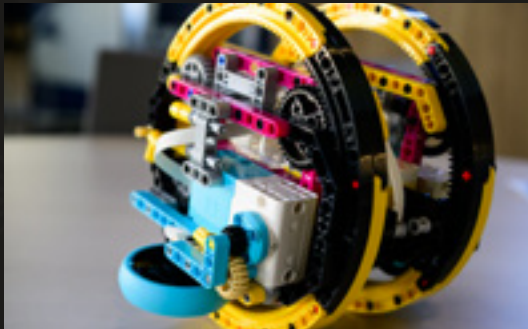




## Additional Highlights



- Estate Planning Seminar was hosted with Fennemore Law.
- ⚙️ Tech Convening & Mental Health Town Hall both served first-of-their-kind policy forums.
- ◆ Staff Retreat introduced Champion cornerstone and began Zeck pilot.



## Partnerships in Action

Collaboration That Amplifies Opportunity

“This meant so much to the young men on that team, and I hope that you and your agency are aware of the impact that you had on them by supporting their participation in the Memorial Day tournament.”

— Donald Sherman, Farber Basketball Coach

In 2024–25, The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students was strengthened by a network of dedicated partners who brought resources, expertise, creativity, and care to the table. These collaborators helped us expand programs, reimagine logistics, and deliver student-centered innovation across every corner of our district.

## Strategic Collaborators



These organizations provided expertise, innovation, and leadership that shaped our most high-impact initiatives:

- Archer & Hound—Branding, campaign strategy, visual design, and storytelling support
- ⚙️ Parsec Education—Implementation of the REAL platform to measure student impact through voice and data
- ◆ Neighborhood Industries—Coordinated donation logistics and hosted the Suit Drive kickoff
- ☀️ Scholastic—Book donations, author visits, and strategic support for our literacy initiatives, including the upcoming literacy festival



ARCHER & HOUND



parsec  
education

neighborhood  
INDUSTRIES

Educate. Employ. Empower.

SCHOLASTIC

## Corporate & Community Champions



Our campaigns and convenings were powered by cross-sector partnership:

- PNC Bank—Presenting sponsor for Suited for Success
- ⚙️ PG&E—\$25,000 grant for sweatshirt distribution across 25 school sites
- ◆ Groundswell—\$10,000 to launch a Hmong Dual Language Immersion student exchange
- ☀️ Fairfield Inn & Suites—In-kind donation of supplies for school staff wish lists
- ▲ Dutch Bros & La Imperial Taqueria—Event sponsors for Suited for Success



## Innovation & Research Partners



These collaborators helped us stretch beyond programs and into system-level change:

- DoSomething Strategic—Mental health research, student-led town halls, and report co-authorship
- ⚙️ Hanover Research—Scholarship impact study launched to understand and improve long-term student outcomes
- ◆ DARO—Led the technology education landscape analysis and regional convening





## Media, Venue & Event Partners



- ABC30, KSEE 24, GV Wire, and FOX26 — Coverage of major campaigns and student stories
- ⚙ Warnors Theatre—Venue host for The Noir Event
- ◆ The Palomino—Venue partner for Spill the Tea
- ☀ Junior Achievement—Co-facilitator of workforce-readiness learning space



## Shifting In-Kind Support

In-kind contributions from Fresno Unified and partners remain a key part of our operating model—totaling more than \$2.16 million this year. However, the Foundation is transitioning toward greater internal capacity and reduced reliance on in-kind support beginning in 2025–26.

## Strategic Investment Highlights

- New board-designated funds will expand technology equity and student mental health initiatives across campuses.
- ⚙️ Foundation-endowed funds continued to generate strong earnings, with over \$770,000 in interest and dividends earned year to date.
- ◆ Monthly donors and returning sponsors created a more predictable, diversified revenue base.



# Looking Ahead

## Grounded in Purpose. Growing by Design.

As we move into 2025–26, The Foundation for Fresno Unified Students is more aligned, more strategic, and more ambitious than ever. We're not only expanding programs—we're investing in lasting solutions that reflect the needs and voices of our students.

This year, The Foundation's Board took a bold step by allocating new funds to expand our mental health and technology initiatives. These budgeted investments reflect what we heard through focus groups, surveys, and advisory panels: students need systems that support their wellness and prepare them for the future.

We're moving from insight to infrastructure—and we're doing it together.

### What's Next



- Scholarship ROI Study (Hanover Research)—Results published Spring 2026
- ⚙️ Student Tech & Mental Health Pilots—Launching with board-backed funding
- ◆ Literacy festival—Spring 2026, in partnership with Scholastic
- ☀️ Spill the Tea 2026—March 14, 2026, celebrating voice, leadership and equity

### How You Can Help



- Sponsor an event or campaign
- ⚙️ Adopt-A-School wish list or project
- ◆ Become a monthly donor to sustain student-centered momentum
- ☀️ Join our Student Mental Health and Technology Education initiatives

Visit [foundation4fUSD.org](https://foundation4fUSD.org) or contact us at [foundation@fresnounified.org](mailto:foundation@fresnounified.org) to get involved.







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