



Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

2025-26 Annual Report



From the County Superintendent of Schools



As I reflect on the 2025-26 year, I am filled with pride because of what our amazing staff continues to accomplish and the high level of service they provide. This year I had the honor to serve as the president elect of the California County Superintendents organization. I was therefore called to participate and interact more on state-level issues related to education. I would often brag about the TCOE staff to state

elected officials and their staff, giving examples of what we do to identify community needs, support our districts, and create meaningful

opportunities for students.

This annual report includes many stories about the new and continuing activities and support TCOE provides the districts and students of Tulare County. We continue to expand and advance learning experiences for students and educators through grants, partnerships, innovative thinking, and hard work — all with a focus on creating positive outcomes. In support of this priority, I would call your attention to our finances. TCOE spends approximately 85% of

its budget on new and continuing programs that directly impact our students — programs that are above and beyond what is required of a county office. This is nothing new. It is part of our organization's DNA. For decades, TCOE has envisioned and created programs where needs existed in areas such as early childhood education, students with learning difficulties, school safety, experiential learning and educator development. These are just a few examples of the staff's deep commitment to supporting our students and those who serve them.

As we look ahead, TCOE will be adding new facilities in an effort to improve the learning environment for students directly served by our organization and to increase efficiency in our operations. Classrooms, office space, a student operated cafe, and a state of the art library/media center with an esports arena will be constructed during the next 12-18 months. These new facilities align with our vision and commitment to provide the best service to the students of Tulare County.

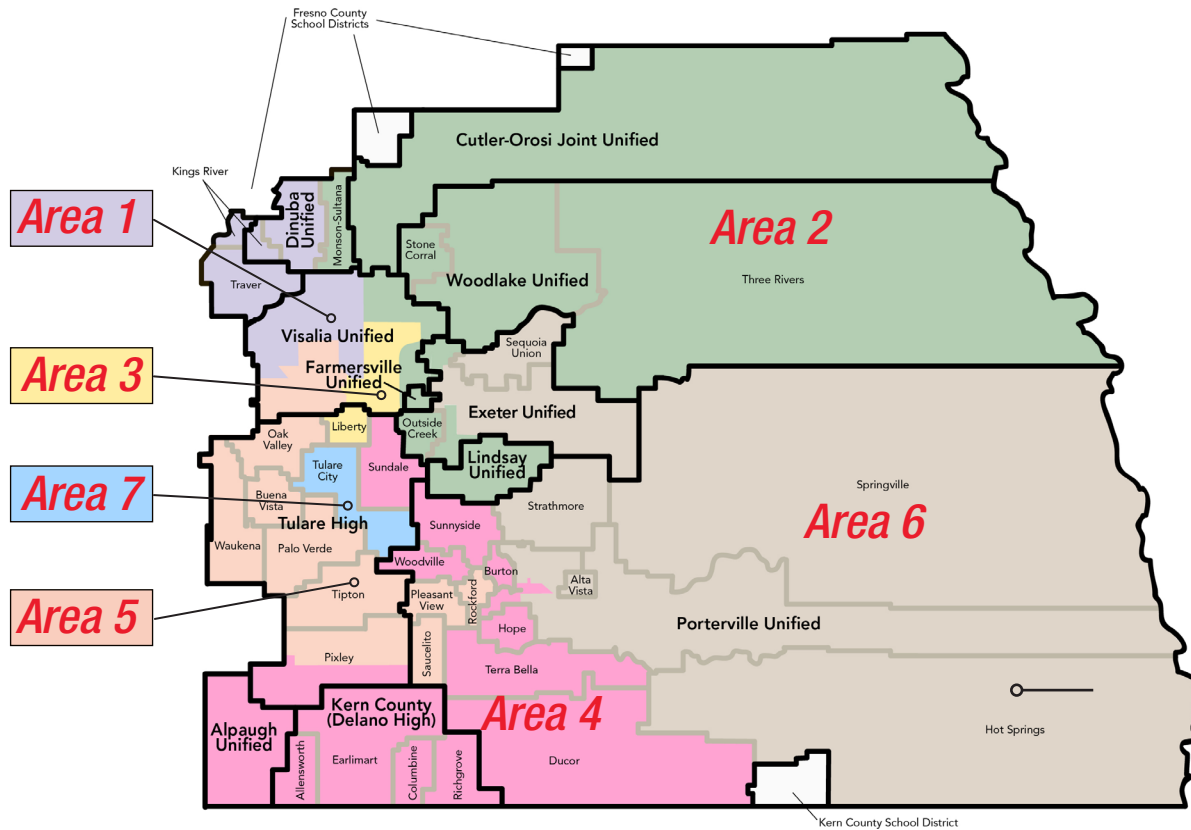
I hope you enjoy this year's annual report and feel a similar sense of pride for the accomplishments of our staff and students.

Tim A. Hire
Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

For decades, TCOE has envisioned and created programs where needs existed in areas such as early childhood education, students with learning difficulties, school safety, experiential learning and educator development.

Tulare County Board of Education

The Tulare County Board of Education is comprised of seven elected trustees, each elected to four-year terms. The board meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Tulare County Office of Education's Jim Vidak Education Center on Mooney Boulevard in Visalia. For a schedule of meetings and to learn more about our trustees, visit tcoe.org/Board.



Trustee Area 1
Felipe Martinez



Trustee Area 2
Ruben Macareno



Trustee Area 3
Tom Link



Trustee Area 4
Judy Coble



Trustee Area 5
Mike Waters
Vice President



Trustee Area 6
Chris Reed



Trustee Area 7
Tony Rodriguez
President

Organizational responsibilities

As part of California's three-level public education system, the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) is the intermediate level between the California Department of Education and Tulare County school districts. Led by the elected Tulare County Superintendent of Schools, Tim A. Hire, TCOE provides the following support to the local districts and public charter schools.



Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

Acts as the primary “implementation arm” of the California Department of Education and directs the work of the Tulare County Office of Education, including

- Monitoring and overseeing fiscal stability/solvency of districts
- Reviewing school district Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs)
- Providing support and services to Tulare County school districts, not governance
- Providing academic and technical assistance to districts and their schools, including direct services for small districts and regional support on projects with partners outside the county
- Assisting with academic performance initiatives
- Serving the county's most vulnerable students (expelled, incarcerated/on probation, homeless/foster youth, students with special needs, and early learners)
- Offering additional support through student events/competitions, enrichment activities, and outdoor education programs

Tulare County Board of Education

- Approving the salary of the county superintendent
- Reviewing and approve the county office of education's budget
- Reviewing and approve the county office of education's LCAPs
- Establishing and overseeing county charter schools
- Hearing interdistrict transfer and expulsion appeals
- Serving as the governing body for Court and Community Schools

Delivery of services to support student success

The County Office of Education serves Tulare County's 43 school districts through six divisions — Administration, Business Services, District Support Services, Human Resources, Special Services, and Student Support Services. Through these divisions, students, schools, and families receive services from TCOE.

The Administration Division is home to the County Superintendent's office, Communications, CHARACTER COUNTS!, the California Friday Night Live Partnership, the Planetarium, and the Theatre Company.

Business Services collects, processes, and disseminates all fiscal and budgetary information

and reports for all school districts within the county. Human Resources manages internal personnel functions, and is responsible for registering and monitoring credentials for every certificated educator in the county.

Instructional support for educators and students is delivered through District Support Services and Student Support Services. These two divisions are home to 15 programs, including SCICON, School Safety, and Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Special Services is the office's largest division with nearly 950 employees who work primarily inside schools and communities to provide services to students with special needs.

Support for students

Throughout the county, TCOE is making a large impact on Tulare County students directly, with supplemental services, and through a variety of extracurricular programs as noted below.

Direct Instruction
2,449

Students who receive direct instruction in AcCEL classrooms, or at ECE Child Development Centers, La Sierra Military Academy, or University Preparatory High School

Supplemental Instruction
147,926

Students who receive supplemental instruction through many programs, including Mild/Moderate Programs, Behavioral Health Services, Speech and Language Services, Psychological Services, Intervention Resource Classrooms, Migrant Education, CHOICES After School Program and Prevention/Intervention Education Programs, SCICON, and Theatre Company

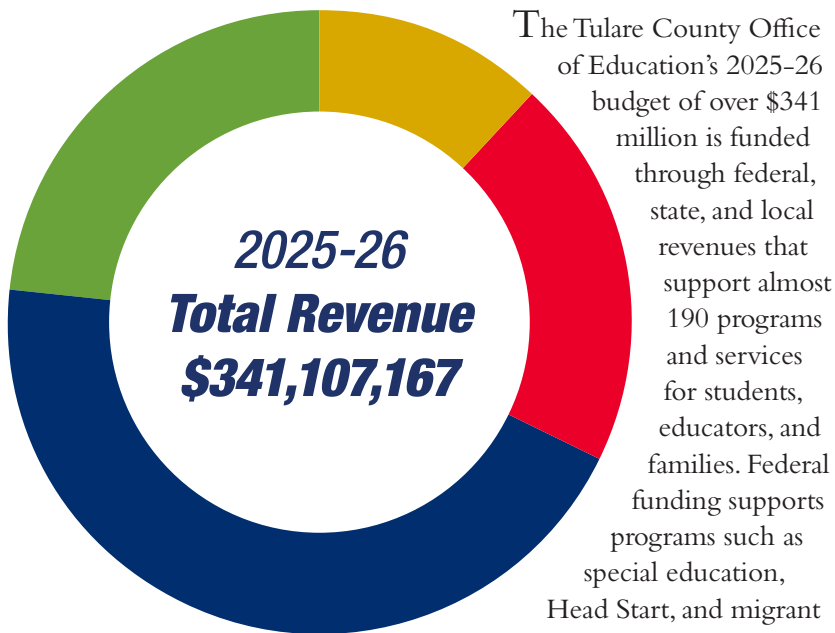
Extracurricular Activities
16,358

Students who participate in extracurricular activities through programs that include Theatre Company productions, summer camp and classes, and numerous student events

Library Services
36,800

Students in Tulare and Kings counties who receive library services from TCOE's Library Media Center

Resources applied to support students, districts



The Tulare County Office of Education's 2025-26 budget of over \$341 million is funded through federal, state, and local revenues that support almost 190 programs and services for students, educators, and families. Federal funding supports programs such as special education, Head Start, and migrant

education. State funding also supports preschool and special education programs. Additional state funding through California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is based on countywide Average Daily Attendance. LCFF provides supplemental funding for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth.

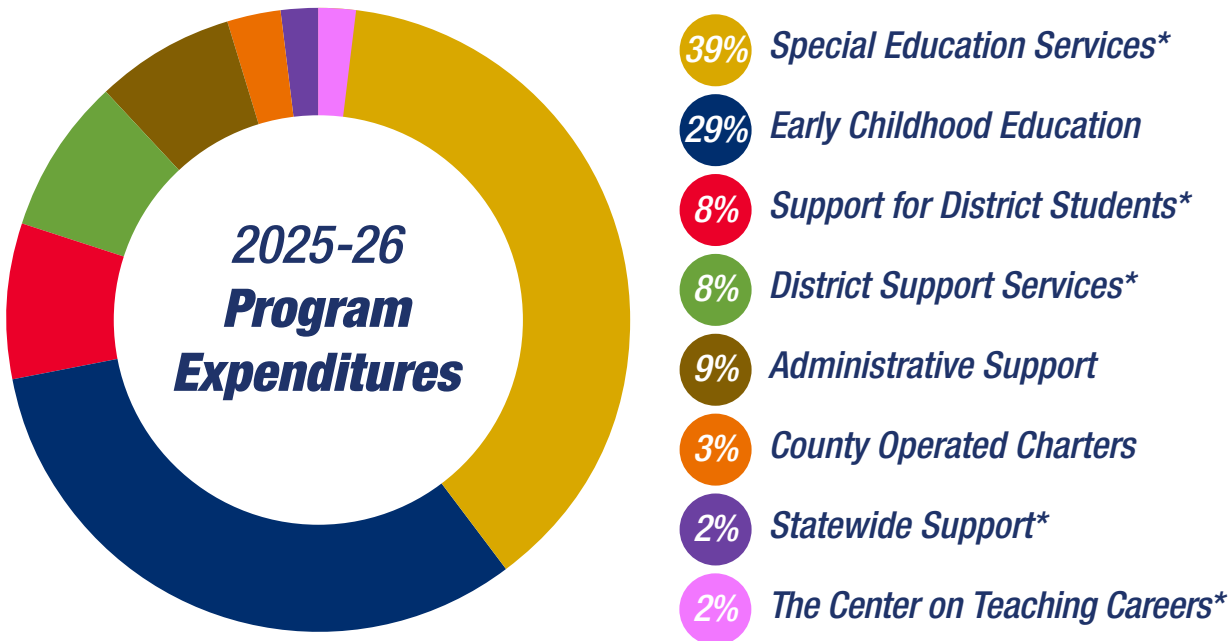
Local revenue comes from property taxes and fee-based services provided to school districts. These services include Intervention Resource Classrooms, the Alternative Achievement Program, instructional coaching, library media services, psychological services, SCICON, after-school programs, the Theatre Company, business services, and technology services.

A hallmark of TCOE is its commitment to identifying community needs and securing resources to address them. Approximately 85% of TCOE's revenue from federal, state, and local funding sources supports programs beyond the core services county offices of education are required to provide. One example is Head Start, which TCOE began operating 60 years ago. Today, this program serves thousands of children and helps connect families with early learning opportunities throughout the county.

Additional programs developed to meet local needs include La Sierra and University Preparatory High School charter schools, which serve more than 430 students; residency programs that prepare future teachers, counselors, and social workers; and the Bright Start Parent/Infant Program, which supports children ages 0-3 who may be at risk of developing disabilities. TCOE also coordinates after-school programs at 30 school sites, operates a behavioral health clinic, supports students' social-emotional wellbeing, and provides services for foster and homeless youth.

68% of TCOE's annual revenue directly benefits the county's youngest learners and those with special needs

County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire has prioritized ensuring every student has access to extracurricular opportunities. As a result, TCOE offers a wide range of student events that engage students in the arts, history, literature, mathematics, science, and technology.



* **Special Education Services** includes instruction for students with special needs, the Bright Start Parent/Infant Program, mental health-related services, and Court/Community Schools. **Support for District Students** includes after school programming, CHARACTER COUNTS!, the Planetarium, School Health, School Safety, SCICON, student events, and the Theatre Company. **District Support Services** includes the instructional support provided by College and Career Readiness,

Educational Resource Services and its library media center, Leadership Support Services, and Migrant Education. **Statewide Support** represents the work of the California Friday Night Live Partnership throughout the state. **The Center on Teaching Careers** operates a variety of residency programs for teachers, counselors, and social workers to earn advanced degrees and/or credentials.

Guiding principles underpin all that we do

Mission Statement

The mission of the Tulare County Office of Education is to provide quality service and support to the students and school districts of Tulare County. This is achieved by promoting life-long learning opportunities that will help individuals lead healthy and productive lives. We are dedicated to work in a collaborative manner with students, parents, school districts, public agencies, and communities to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Core Values

The Core Values are a set of organization-wide, shared beliefs that guide our every interaction — both internally and in interactions with parents, school district personnel, and community members.

Build Trusting Relationships

We value individual perspectives, honesty, respect, and honoring our commitments.

Grow and Empower

We value continuous learning, monitoring outcomes, celebrating success, and empowering one another.

Communicate with Care

We value mutual, clear communication, active listening, and the contribution of others.

Commit to Serve

We value empathy, collaboration, responsiveness, and innovation to meet the needs of our team members and those we serve.

Districts we serve include over 200 schools

Tulare County is home to 43 school districts and numerous public charter schools. Tulare County school districts range from single school districts, such as Hot Springs Elementary with 13 students, to the Visalia Unified School District with nearly 29,000 students. In California, only Kern and Los Angeles counties serve more districts than Tulare County. Of the county's districts, over 75% are considered small districts with less than 2,500 students. Tulare County has more small school districts than any county in the state.

School districts

Schools Enrollment

Allensworth	1	109
Alpaugh Unified	2*	1,330
Alta Vista	2*	1,871
Buena Vista	1	188
Burton	7*	4,829
Columbine	1	185
Cutler-Orosi Jt. Unified	8	3,791
Dinuba Unified	10	6,175
Ducor Union	1	134
Earlimart	3	1,330
Exeter Unified	7	2,658
Farmersville Unified	7	2,346
Hope	1	231
Hot Springs	1	13
Kings River Union	1	392
Liberty	1	888
Lindsay Unified	10*	3,860
Monson-Sultana Jt. Union	1	440
Oak Valley Union	1	563
Outside Creek	1	127
Palo Verde Union	1	485
Pixley Union	2	806
Pleasant View	2	439
Porterville Unified	22*	13,470
Richgrove	1	494
Rockford	1	319
Saucelito	1	80
Sequoia Union	2*	359
Springville Union	1	321
Stone Corral	2*	937
Strathmore Union	3	682
Sundale Union	1	849
Sunnyside Union	1	296
Terra Bella Union	2	706
Three Rivers Union	1	101
Tipton	1	460
Traver Joint Union	1	225
Tulare City	18	9,221
Tulare Co. Office of Ed.	9*	3,833
Tulare Jt. Union High	7	5,652
Visalia Unified	41*	28,448
Waukena Joint Union	1	235
Woodlake Unified	7	2,105
Woodville Union	1	382

* Includes authorized charter schools

44 school districts and
TCOE

102,267 students
served

208 public schools

*TCOE leads the state in serving the largest
number of small school districts*

Public charter schools

*Tulare County is home to 20 public charter
schools with a total enrollment of 10,716.*

Data obtained from California Department of Education, DataQuest 2025-2026 (August 19, 2026)

Enrollment by student group

20,662

English
Learners

4,079

Migrant Education
Students

769

Foster Youth

12,221

Students with Disabilities

2,526

Homeless
Youth

77,774

Socioeconomically
Disadvantaged

UPHS named California Distinguished School

Tulare County had the honor of having six high schools recognized as California Distinguished Schools this year. Among them was TCOE's University Preparatory High School (UPHS), located on the College of the Sequoias (COS) campus in Visalia.



UPHS was recognized in the Exemplary High Achievers category. This distinction was particularly significant as UPHS students complete a rigorous high school program while also participating in an Early College partnership with COS. Students at UPHS work not only toward a high school diploma but also learn how to navigate college courses, advocate for themselves, and begin imagining what is possible for their lives after high school.

“The award belongs to our entire Panda community,” said UPHS principal Helen Milliorn-Feller, Ed.D. “It recognizes our teachers who continually find ways to challenge and support students, our staff members who make sure students feel connected to their school, our families who trust us with their children, TCOE and COS for their continued partnership, and most importantly, our students. They are the ones doing the work every day.”

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, UPHS focused on strengthening the entire student experience. The school also worked intentionally on school culture and what it means to be a

Panda by expanding opportunities for students, including developing a pep band and jazz band.

“Another important accomplishment was completing our WASC accreditation process and earning a six-year accreditation through 2032,” Milliorn-Feller said. “Receiving both the Distinguished School recognition and a six-year WASC accreditation during the same school year provided two very different external validations of the work happening at UPHS.”

Established in 2009, UPHS received its first two California Distinguished School awards in 2019 and 2021.

For UPHS, the recognition is a meaningful piece of the school's story of the past school year. The award complements a year where students participated in theater, mentored younger students, engaged in civic and community service, developed leadership skills, overcame academic challenges, and discovered new possibilities for themselves.

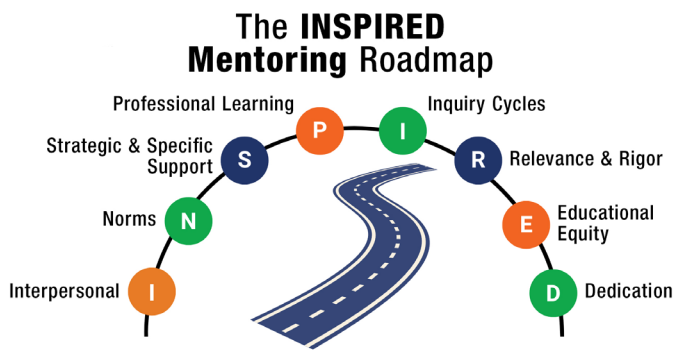
“Ultimately, awards are wonderful because they give us an opportunity to stop for a moment and recognize how far we have come. But the most important measure of UPHS will always be what happens to our students,” said Milliorn-Feller. “When a student walks across our graduation stage believing they are capable of succeeding in college, serving their community, becoming a leader, and creating a future they may not have imagined when they entered ninth grade — that is what success looks like to us.”

Tulare County's 2026 California Distinguished Schools

Exeter Union High School
(Exeter Unified School District)
El Diamante High School
(Visalia Unified School District)
Harmony Magnet Academy
(Porterville Unified School District)
Lindsay High School
(Lindsay Unified School District)
Porterville Military Academy
(Porterville Unified School District)
University Preparatory High School
(Tulare County Office of Education)

NTLD helps districts strengthen teacher mentors

This year, TCOE's New Teacher & Leadership Development (NTLD) launched the INSPIRED Mentoring (IM) System, a teacher leadership development program to help Tulare County school districts develop their mentors' ability to support novice teachers in meeting the demands of the teaching profession. The program begins with a one-day symposium to establish a foundation for mentoring excellence. Mentors then participate



in six IM communities of practice (COP) workshops centered around the eight core components of the IM Roadmap. In its inaugural year, 112 district mentors completed the one-day symposium and 175 completed one or more COP workshops.

IM was developed by Michelle French, NTLD program manager, and Joy Soares, systems strategist with the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES). “We created the IM System to elevate mentors’ efficacy in guiding their districts’ teacher candidates from preliminary and clear credential programs into fully credentialed, confident classroom practitioners,” French said.

During the symposium, program participants are engaged with a panel featuring experienced mentors and their mentees. The panel shares valuable insights into effective mentoring practices and the impact of supportive teacher preparation programs. The symposium

culminates in reflective and collaborative practices. Mentors craft personal Mentoring Dedication Statements that articulate their commitment to the profession and to their mentees.

The IM Roadmap’s core components emphasize the importance of building strong interpersonal relationships and deeply understanding each mentee’s background, strengths, and areas for growth. Applying the core components, mentors help novice teachers recognize their responsibility to foster their students’ social-emotional development, academic achievement, as well as college and workplace readiness skills.

A distinguishing feature of the IM System is its clear differentiation between Just-in-Time Support and Long-Term Growth and Development. Mentors are equipped to provide immediate, practical guidance that helps candidates navigate district systems while also engaging them in deeper cycles of inquiry and action research that promote sustained professional growth.

Through the IM System, TCOE is building the capacity of mentors, which then creates the conditions for candidates to become empowered educators. By strengthening mentorship, the system ultimately enhances the educational experiences of students, ensuring they are prepared to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Current mentors, practicum supervisors, and coaches who are affiliated with NTLD-enrolled participants are invited to participate in the IM symposium and the COP at no additional cost. Looking forward, NTLD is partnering with the University of La Verne’s La Fetra College of Education to offer a microcredential in mentorship when mentors have completed the IM symposium and six COP workshops. (For more information on participating in the IM System, contact Michelle French at michelle.french@tcoe.org.)

NTLD participants in 2025-26

This year, nearly 700 educators completed a program from New Teacher & Leadership Development, earning their Frameworks for Teaching, teaching or administrative credential, or were enrolled in the Teacher Induction Program.

75

Frameworks for Teaching completers in three cohorts

35

IMPACT Multiple Subject Credential completers in two cohorts

52

IMPACT Single Subject Credential completers in two cohorts

10

iLead Preliminary Administrative Services Credential completers in two cohorts

33

iLead Clear Administrative Services Credential completers in four cohorts

27

Career Technical Education Credential completers in two cohorts

70

Education Specialist Instruction Credential completers with concentrations in Early Childhood Special Education, Mild/Moderate Support Needs, or Extensive Support Needs

383

Teacher Induction Program participants

ERS offers instructional support to small schools

Throughout this past academic year, Educational Resource Services' mathematics department conducted a professional learning collaborative for educators across 10 small Tulare County schools, including eight rural school districts. Participating schools included Alpaugh Unified, Buena Vista School (Tulare), Monson-Sultana Joint Union School (Sultana), Palo Verde Union School (Tulare), Saucelito School (Terra Bella), Tipton School, Waukena Joint Union School (Tulare), and Cherry Avenue Middle School and Live Oak Middle School in Tulare. Generous hosting and logistical support were provided by Palo Verde and Oak Valley schools.

Designed to maximize instructional impact, the initiative gathered teachers within four grade-level bands (K-1, grades 2-3, grades 4-5, and grades 6-8) for three sessions structured around an innovative lesson lab model. This hands-on approach allowed participants to explore instructional practices and immediately implement them with students in classrooms on the same day, enabling real-time refinement through peer collaboration and constructive feedback.

To ensure these practices were effectively sustained beyond the workshop, instructional coaches provided regularly structured check-ins and targeted observations.

The collaborative proved exceptionally impactful for educators navigating the unique challenges of small campuses. One participating teacher noted that because many participants are the sole instructors for their grade levels at their respective schools, the opportunity to collaborate, share insights, and revisit critical concepts was incredibly beneficial.

Ultimately, this model has proven to be an effective vehicle for reaching small schools, driving meaningful professional growth for educators, and directly enhancing student learning outcomes.



CHARACTER COUNTS! celebrates 30 Years

When CHARACTER COUNTS! (CC!) was introduced to TCOE's Court School programs in 1994, no one could have predicted its impact on Tulare County's youth. Under lead teacher



John Forenti, the program was so successful with students on probation that then-Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak committed his office to making it available to all school districts, service agencies, and other facets of the community.

CC! became the primary source for character education at no cost to participants. The initiative aims to uphold the standard that the Six Pillars of Character — Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship — provide as the common ground necessary to teach and model good character in a democratic society. Building character requires a lifelong personal and countywide effort.

“The core vision for CC! remains to have an active CHARACTER COUNTS! presence in every single school across Tulare County,” said Zoty Briceño, TCOE’s CC! coordinator. “Whether through student recognition programs, direct school involvement, site visits, or hands-on character education, the goal is to ensure every student in the county feels the impact of character-building initiatives.”

One of the largest recognitions of students’ character in Tulare County is celebrated every third full week of October with National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week. This year, CC! celebrated a monumental 30th year of CC! Week, where over 5,300 students from 173 schools were honored. This was the largest number of schools to participate in Tulare County’s CC! Week history.

Over the years, sharing the incredible character of the county’s students has grown from CC! Week to daily newspaper features, a regular TV series, scholarships, and much more.

For nearly three decades, the Visalia Times-Delta Daily Student of Character feature has celebrated local Tulare County youth who embody exceptional values. In 2015, the mission to advocate for exceptional youth reached a new milestone — television — and the CC! office partnered with KSEE24 to launch the weekly educational franchise, “Your Character Matters.”

Partnerships have been integral to CC! and have helped grow the program and its impact in the community. CC!’s deep community impact in



Tulare County is closely tied to the generosity and vision of longtime local advocates, the late Tony Salierno and his wife, Mary. Back in the 1990s, the Saliernos learned that TCOE was searching for the perfect monument to symbolize the region's commitment to character education. Recognizing a unique opportunity to help, Tony and Mary stepped forward to provide the foundational physical pillars that now comprise the Pillar Square monument at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia.

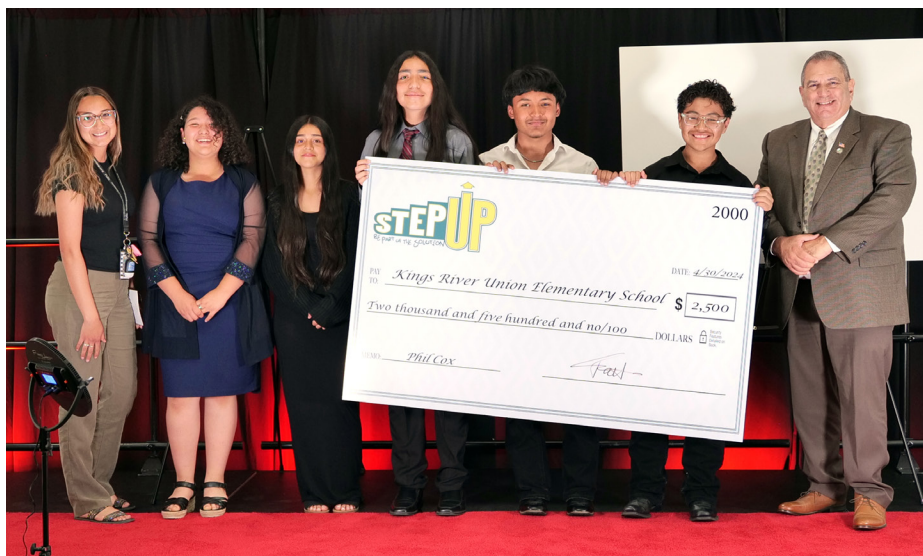
"This initial act of generosity sparked a lifelong partnership with the CHARACTER COUNTS! Office," said Kelley Petty, former CC! coordinator for 20 years. "For the past 14 years, their family foundation has provided crucial financial scholarships and monetary awards to celebrate regional youth during CHARACTER COUNTS! Week. Following the recent passing of Tony Salierno, the Tulare County Office of Education remains deeply humbled and profoundly grateful to see this beautiful legacy of giving stay steadfast and strong through Mary and her family."

One of the scholarships the Salierno family supports is the annual Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) Scholarship for senior student-athletes. PVWH came to Tulare County in 2001, when TCOE hosted a PVWH training series that sparked an intentional, long-term effort to provide vital sportsmanship resources to Central Valley coaches. Since its inception, PVWH in the county has expanded from trainings to seasonal and yearly recognitions of athletes with high character and an active youth council that created annual middle and high school student-athlete conferences.

After 30 years, CC!'s goal remains to provide training and support to schools that want to build a character education foundation aligned with their campus culture. Throughout the county, schools are taking on that initiative themselves. For example, Tipton Elementary School recognizes Kids of Character during board meetings and hosts monthly Family Character Night.

"Over the past couple of years, CHARACTER COUNTS! has significantly expanded its direct reach and focus," said Briceño. "In addition to visiting individual school sites and giving direct presentations in student classrooms, CC! has shifted toward empowering student leader groups across Tulare County."

A major highlight of this growth is the Step Up Youth Challenge. The program has seen massive momentum over the last two years, expanding rapidly to an expected 30 plus student teams participating this year, marking one of the largest cohorts in program history.



Now more than ever, character education continues to be an important focus for the Tulare County Office of Education as students face complex social environments, mental health challenges, and digital distractions that make character education essential.

"Teaching core values like trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship provides young people with a clear moral compass," said Briceño. "Beyond individual behavior, character education fosters safe, inclusive, and empathetic school environments where students feel supported, ultimately laying the foundation for stronger leaders, healthier school cultures, and vibrant communities."

Special Services supports nearly 8,000 students



One of the primary duties of California county offices of education is to serve vulnerable students, including those who have been expelled, incarcerated or are on probation, foster and homeless youth, and those with severe disabilities.

In Tulare County, TCOE's Special Services Division meets the needs of students with a wide range of disabilities. The division also provides support to foster and homeless youth, and educational services to at-risk students who attend the Mid-County Community School and those incarcerated at the Juvenile Detention Facility.

Special Services supports approximately 8,000 students with special needs, from birth to 22 years of age. Students receive services in Tulare County's 43 school districts and in four centers operated by the division.

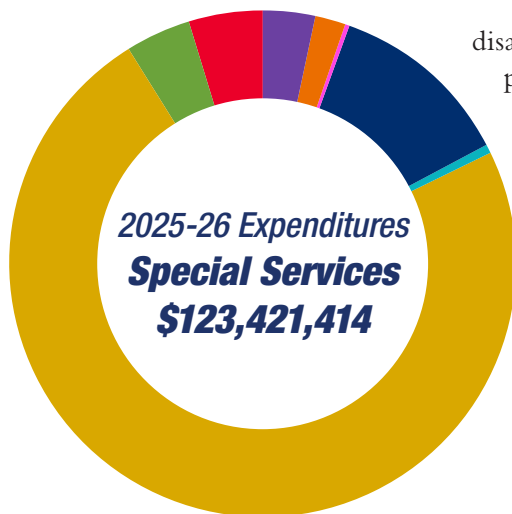
Special Services has nearly 950 full- and part-time staff members and a budget of over \$123 million in federal, state, and local revenues, making it TCOE's largest division. Special Services also has some of TCOE's longest-serving employees with careers spanning 35, 40, and even 50 years.

Special Services' AcCEL (Academic Collaborative for Exceptional Learners) Program is the division's largest program. AcCEL begins its support of Tulare County children at birth. Children ages 0-3 who have, or are at risk of having, disabilities are referred to Special Services' Bright Start Parent/Infant Program by the Central Valley Regional Center. This year, Bright Start specialists served 850 children in their homes, helping parents support their child with appropriate therapies. Of this number, the Bright Start FACES team also supported 162 children with intensive behavioral interventions — children at-risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Services may continue once students enter elementary school in general education settings, as well as Special Day Classes (SDC) for those requiring a modified curriculum. Beyond high school, AcCEL students can enter the Community Based Instruction (CBI) program to 22 years of age. In CBI classrooms, students learn life and job skills to help them live more independently as adults. When appropriate, AcCEL instruction may also be provided to students with orthopedic impairments in a home or hospital setting, or through residential, nonpublic placements.

Additionally, Special Services provides a wide variety of supplemental services, including psychological, behavioral, vision, hearing, physical and occupational therapy, and support for students with mild to moderate disabilities. In Tulare County's 34 small school districts, Special Services provides the specialists and aides to support students with mild disabilities.

In Tulare County, all 43 school districts are part of the Tulare County/District Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), making it one of the largest SELPAs in the state. TCOE houses the SELPA office and acts as its administrative unit. Governance of the SELPA and its budget is vested in the Superintendent's Governance Committee, which is comprised of representatives from 18 districts, the SELPA director, and the County Superintendent of Schools.



- 72%** *Special Education Services*
- 12%** *Bright Start Program*
- 6%** *Behav. Health Services Clinic*
- 4%** *Court/Community Schools*
- 3%** *SELPA Administration*
- 2%** *Related Services*
(See profile on page 15)
- .5%** *Preschool Program*
- .5%** *Program Specialists*

Related Services expanding speech services, events

Related Services is a department within Special Services that provides a wide variety of services for students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan. The Related Services specialists provide services directly to students or may work collaboratively with the general or special education teacher to support the IEP goals. Related Services range from adapted physical education, assistive technology, and audiological services to deaf and hard of hearing services, occupational and physical therapy, and visually impaired services.

To address the increasing need for speech and language services among young students, Related Services hired three new speech and language training specialists to serve as lead trainers and mentors to staff in AcCEL programs and the county's small school districts. In their first year, the specialists played a critical role in team building among TCOE's speech and language staff, conducting professional development training while also coaching classroom teachers and aides on communication strategies. They also assisted speech and language pathologists working under waivers as they complete their speech and language credentials.

Related Services also conducted a number of special events, including a regional Adapted Physical Education conference in May. Additionally, Related Services organized its inaugural Deaf Day on May 19 at McDermott X in Lindsay. More than 30 students, ranging from preschool through high school, attended the event alongside interpreters, teachers, and administrators. The day provided students with opportunities to connect, build friendships, and enjoy a variety of engaging activities, including laser tag, rock wall climbing, and arcade games.

On May 5, the Tulare County SELPA organized a field trip to the California School for the Blind in Fremont. Five students, accompanied by their parents, toured the campus and learned about the educational programs, services, and resources available to students with visual impairments. Throughout the day, participants explored the



(upper photo) Ryan Valdez takes a picture of Alyssa Harlow (l) for the "friends" section of his augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device. Harlow, together with Linda Pena (c), and Dina Correia (r), make up the speech and language training team. (middle photo) The inaugural Deaf Day was held for Tulare County students in May. (lower photo) Also in May, several students were able to visit the California School for the Blind.

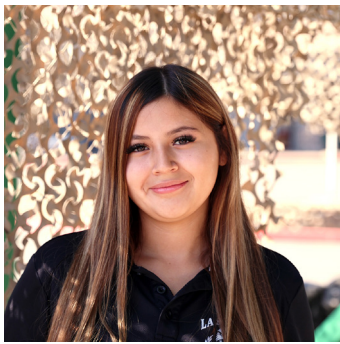
student dormitories, participated in a music class, and visited the student store. The highlight of the visit was an interactive presentation featuring service dogs, which provided students and families with a memorable firsthand learning experience.

La Sierra launches new Forestry Pathway



After graduation, Martinez plans to attend a year-long California Conservation Corps program in San Luis Obispo to advance her training, with the hope of pursuing a career with the US Forest Service. In the meantime, she plans to complete Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training locally.

Morales, a Reedley City Fire captain and Reedley College instructor, taught the academy using National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) courses — the same nationally-recognized wildland firefighter training used by fire service agencies across the country. Students learned about fire behavior, and using hand tools, portable pumps, and hose lays in the field. Those that completed the academy will receive Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards), allowing them to apply for entry level positions with agencies such as CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service.



This spring, 17 La Sierra Military Academy cadets graduated from the school's new Forestry Pathway. "From the beginning, our goal wasn't just to introduce students to wildland firefighting," instructor Fabian Morales said. "It was to make them as employable as possible after graduation. We're also helping them figure out if this career is right for them before they graduate high school."

"I've spent over 20 years in the fire service, working both urban and wildland fires, and one thing I've learned is that experience matters," Morales said. "Throughout the academy, we talked about the job beyond the textbook... decision-making, crew dynamics, mistakes to avoid, and the little things you only pick up after years on the line. When La Sierra students walk into an interview, they're not hearing those lessons for the first time."

(upper photo) Members of the Forestry Pathway used the Kaweah Oaks Preserve to practice their skills in fighting wildland fires. (lower photo) Cassandra Martinez's experience in the pathway helped her decide she wants to pursue a career in fire fighting after high school.

For Cassandra Martinez, an incoming junior, she discovered that firefighting is a good career for her. "I didn't have a career path in mind before the academy," she said. "When I saw the opportunity to apply, I did it and I really enjoyed it."

Martinez shared that the academy included many good moments. For her, hiking outdoors and participating in the physical aspects of the job were rewarding. She said she enjoyed leading a crew to create fire lines for fire containment. Fire lines are made

with a Pulaski — a tool that is both an axe and a hoe used to remove the timber and brush that serves as fire fuel. "The Pulaski is my favorite tool!" Martinez said. Was there anything she didn't like? "I struggled with the chainsaw at first but tried and tried until I got it."

The partnership between La Sierra and Reedley College is unique in Tulare County. "We had a chance to build something from the ground up, and that's something I'm really proud to have been a part of," Morales said. "It took people who were willing to work together — especially Principal Dr. Jose Bedolla — and try something new because they believed these students deserved the same opportunities as anyone else."

This fall, Martinez will serve as Morales' teacher assistant for the Forestry Pathway, spreading her enthusiasm for firefighting to a new cohort of students. "We learned to trust each other and have each other's backs; we became a family," she said.

Court School expands onsite and virtual learning

The curving blue seating looks like it was lifted directly from a college lounge. The dark blue walls and natural light make the room feel relaxing — ideal for reading.

Utilizing a vacant room at the Juvenile Detention Center (JDF), Court/Community School Principal Joe Andrade is creating a new school library where students can read, research, and access online college classes. Andrade shared that he and the late Joe Boss, an intervention teacher, visited the Fresno County Juvenile Detention Center last fall to learn how the department supported their students. From that visit, a vision for a Tulare County JDF library was born.

The school is building its collection thanks to donations from Friends of the Tulare County Library. Additionally, the JDF library will have access to TCOE's Educational Resource Services (ERS) library media collection, which offers a wide variety of streamed content. ERS will also deliver library books and media materials to JDF.

The new library was one of three programs created this year to support students. “As much as possible, we strive to create a normal school experience for the students we serve,” Andrade said. “When our students are released back into society, having that familiarity with accessing information, completing college classes, or applying a learned CTE skill in a new career is important to keep these young adults on course to leading healthy lives.”

Another new program at JDF is a partnership with Porterville College that allows students access to online courses. The program has been primarily utilized by students, ages 18 to 25, who previously earned their diplomas or received them while at JDF. Yajaira Oseguera, a teacher and college course facilitator, works with the students to enroll at Porterville College, communicate with instructors, and access financial aid. Following a student's release, Ryan McNulty, a student transition specialist, works with Oseguera and graduates to continue at Porterville College or to transfer to another college or university.



During the past school year, 20 students were enrolled in virtual college classes through Porterville College with one planning to transfer to Fresno State upon his release.

Building on the school's successful career technical education (CTE) program, two new welding machines were purchased for students to gain experience in the trade. Those who complete the welding course are poised to further their training in a well-paying, in-demand industry. In addition to welding, students can complete CTE units in electrical, plumbing, framing, and concrete.

Andrade reports that during the 2026–27 school year, students will be building raised and irrigated garden beds with concrete blocks — applying many of their skills to a project that will serve the facility for years to come.



(upper photo)
Substitute teacher Mindy Polk discusses the growing JDF library collection with Principal Joe Andrade. (lower photo) Two portable welding machines were added to the CTE program this year.

TCOE unites schools with esports league

Illuminated by blue and orange lights and the graphics on the screens around them, students from across the area participated in the first-ever Tulare County Esports League Championships this year. The inaugural season included not only championships and new trophies, but also an



Union School (Strathmore) won the winter championship after forming its first esports team four months earlier.

“One of the biggest benefits of having an esports team is that it gives all students an opportunity to showcase their skills and abilities through gaming,” said Sunnyside coach Vicente Soto.

Sunnyside e-athlete Brett Hulse added, “I like gaming and having esports at school. It has made me like school a lot more, and it is the reason why I am doing better.”

In the spring Brawlhalla 2v2 double-elimination tournament, it was Palo Verde Union School (Tulare) who claimed the spring championship. The team also started its esports program after the county announced its esports league.

“We’re always looking for a way to improve attendance and motivation for kids,” said Palo Verde coach Anthony Nguyen. “Having esports as an option for them to get engaged is great.”

While esports are not new to Tulare County, a league where county schools play each other is. Douglas Cairns of Educational Resource Services and Paula Terrill of Student *Future Ready* Events saw the need and potential for the league as a way to support schools, bring them together, and create a technology-based educational opportunity for students.

“We strive to offer a diverse range of events that appeal to different student interests and support the county’s goal of having every student participate in at least one student event or extracurricular event each year,” Terrill said.

Cairns helped bring MinecraftEDU to the county in 2014 and has researched game theory and its application in education for several years. Through his research, he’s learned about the benefits of esports in education.



opportunity to increase student engagement on campuses.

During the winter, teams played Rocket League in a 3v3 single-elimination format. Sunnyside

“The research I reviewed all pointed to better student success,” Cairns said. “I feel that learning should be fun, and we need to meet our students where they are. I recognized that most students have played video games and recent studies have confirmed my thinking. Video games allow all students to compete, not just those who are physically capable.”

In the inaugural season, 22 middle schools and over 100 students participated in the esports league. Even more middle schools are expected to participate in the 2026–27 season and in the future with the building of the TCOE Esports Arena.

In May, TCOE broke ground on the Tim A. Hire Education Campus in Visalia, where a 2,860-square-foot Esports Arena will be part of the new Library Media Center. The arena will include a teacher station, two Nintendo Switch stations, and five-person team setups for up to 50 students. An additional media arts room is also being created that can support podcasting and shoutcasting — live commentary for esports.

“This is an opportunity for growth,” said Terrill. “Right now, we are able to invite middle school students to participate in the gaming at the esports tournaments. When the arena is built, we will have access to gaming PCs, which will allow us to bring in high school participants. Additionally, the arena will act as a space for competition, but it will also be a teaching space.”

Along with building out the competition side of esports, Cairns has also started an Esports Community of Practice that brings the county’s educators together to learn about and discuss the future of esports on their campuses. For some, that means integrating esports not only into

their athletic departments but also into their career pathways.

Esports offerings at TCOE will continue to expand, with a shoutcasting competition coming to the league championships in spring 2027. This competition will be one of the first ways for high school students to participate in esports at TCOE. The winner of the competition will



be recognized at the spring tournament, where they will also be the shoutcaster for the event.

“We are especially excited about growing the event to highlight the many different aspects of esports,” Terrill said. “While competitive gaming is what most people think of when they hear esports, the industry offers a wide range of opportunities, including shoutcasting, event production, cybersecurity, content creation, marketing, and technology. Showcasing these additional pathways helps students see the broader educational and career possibilities that esports can provide.”

(photos, opposite page) The TCOE Esports League held its first championship tournament in December 2025 with students from Sunnyside Union School capturing first place. (photo above) An architectural rendering depicts the new TCOE Esports Arena, which is scheduled to be completed by Fall 2027.

Three new student events added this year

Along with the introduction of esports, TCOE introduced three more events to the county this school year — bringing the total number of TCOE Student *Future Ready* Events to a whopping 43. These events support many of the career interests of the county's students, while also introducing them to new opportunities to showcase their talents.



CCR cooks up tasty competition for culinary students

Every year, TCOE's College & Career Readiness (CCR) hosts college and career focused events related to industries such as engineering, agriculture, and healthcare. In February, CCR spiced up their lineup of events with a delicious idea — the Taste of Tulare-Kings, in partnership with Tulare-Kings College + Career Collaborative (TKCCC). For years, CCR has used different high schools to provide desserts and food for their events, so creating a competition for culinary students was a mostly smooth transition.

“The challenge was finding an authentic audience to evaluate and judge the food,” said Bill Davis, CCR administrator. “So we took advantage of the TCOE Foundation donor appreciation dinner and partnered with the

Foundation to have the students provide the appetizers prior to the event.”

Eight high school teams from Tulare and Kings counties participated, serving up their best hot and cold hors d'oeuvres for guests to vote on. There were three awards with Farmersville winning Best Hot Appetizer for their “Smoked Pork Belly Burnt Ends”, Best Cold Appetizer for their “Fiesta Corn Dip”, and Best Overall. Permian Heat of Mt. Whitney (Visalia) took home Best Overall Presentation with their Texas-inspired display. All teams were provided with mini grants to help pay for food and supplies.

Davis said the attendees enjoyed the competition, and that the appetizers were delicious and creative. He added that the students went beyond expectations by involving others with their presentations.

“It was impressive that each team utilized other academies and pathways at their schools to really enhance their displays,” Davis said. “This included their graphic design teams for signage, (arts, media, entertainment programs) for photography and video, and business pathways for creating swag such as stickers. The participants all enjoyed the experience and are looking forward to the next event! We're excited to see what they bring now that they have the knowledge of the first year under their belt.”

Power the Valley reaches students across the region

In April, CCR, TKCCC, and the Central Valley Mother Lode brought a new conference to the region — Power the Valley. The event was



hosted by the Southern California Edison Energy Education Center in Tulare and brought together over 130 students from 13 schools to explore careers in energy, environment, and utilities. The event featured experts from Southern California Edison; SEED Network; California State Parks; US Green Building Council; Future Green Leaders Summit; Bakersfield College; and College of the Sequoias.

“Students were excited to learn about different careers within the energy industry and what resources, degrees, and certifications were needed to achieve that career,” Davis said. “It helped them with their planning for the future.”

In the second annual convening, Davis and the CCR team look forward to expanding the career options featured and the opportunity to include more hands-on activities at the event.

Academic Pentathlon comes to Tulare County

For decades, TCOE hosted Tulare County Academic Decathlon for high school students. But this year a new distinction was added for the event — a middle school version that inspires younger students as well as helps to grow the high school event.

Academic Pentathlon is a comprehensive competition that challenges middle school students across multiple subject areas and skill sets. Unlike Academic Decathlon, Pentathlon doesn’t test speech or interview and only has five subject areas compared to Decathlon’s seven. Pentathlon’s five subjects areas are literature, mathematics, science, social science, and fine arts.

Four middle schools, all of whom can feed into high school programs, participated in the inaugural Pentathlon: Central Valley Christian Middle School (CVC), Visalia; Divisadero Middle School, Visalia; La Joya Middle School, Visalia; and Washington Intermediate School, Dinuba.

Themed “The Roaring Twenties”, one of CVC’s teams won the first-ever Tulare County Academic Pentathlon championship while the school’s Lizzy Maatman and Ella Becerra won

Top Honors (3.85–4.00 GPA) and Top Scholastic (3.30–3.84), respectively. La Joya’s Adan Pineda Ramirez was the Top Varsity (3.29 and below) winner and part of the La Joya team that won the Super Quiz competition.

“We hope this experience encouraged students to continue participating in high school,” said Paula Terrill, TCOE’s Student *Future Ready* Events coordinator. “For schools that do not currently offer Academic Decathlon, student interest generated through Pentathlon can help spark the creation of new teams. For the schools with existing programs, it provides advisors with an additional opportunity to recruit and develop future team members.”

Terrill, who serves as the secretary on the Executive Board for California Academic Decathlon, said participating advisors appreciated the new event and seeing their students inspired.



“The feedback I received from schools was great,” said Terrill. “A lot of it centered around bringing students together and seeing their students push themselves. A couple of the advisors mentioned that watching their students compete in Super Quiz, and allowing the parents to be there for that, was their favorite part.”

Mock Trial Champion



Gionna Mclean, a senior from Mission Oak High School, was Tulare County’s first-ever Mock Trial state champion. She won while competing in the California State Mock Trial Courtroom Artist Contest.

Tulare County's honored educators for 2026

To recognize the contributions of outstanding Tulare County educators, each year we present three awards — the Excellence in Education Awards, the Confucius' Birthday/Educators of the Year Awards, and the Brent Rast Award — an award named in honor of the late TCOE special education teacher, Brent Rast. It is given to a teacher of students with profound needs in the AcCEL Program.

2026 Confucius' Birthday/Educators of the Year

Now in its 30th year, the Confucius' Birthday/Educators of the Year Awards is a partnership with the Central California Chinese Cultural Center. This program annually honors one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school teacher in September to celebrate Confucius' birthday. Confucius was one of China's greatest philosophers and an advocate for universal education.



Elementary School Educator of the Year

Guadalupe Acosta

Saucelito School

Guadalupe “Lupe” Acosta is a valued Saucelito School educator with nine years of experience and a strong reputation for care, skill, and instructional excellence. As a first/second-grade combination teacher, she delivers engaging, standards-based lessons and thoughtfully differentiates to meet academic and social-emotional needs. A versatile educator, Acosta has taught multiple combination classes and serves as a trusted leader — supporting summer school, migrant education, and mentoring new teachers through induction and IMPACT programs.



Middle School Educator of the Year

Maria Pacheco

Rockford School

Maria Pacheco is a dedicated sixth/seventh-grade math and history teacher at Rockford School with nine years of experience. She implements a dynamic “thinking classroom” model that promotes collaboration, mathematical discourse, and multiple solution pathways, building students’ confidence and perseverance. Equally passionate about history, Pacheco makes learning relevant and engaging. A strong advocate for English learners, she designs lessons that support language development. Her professionalism, collaboration, and enthusiasm make her a valued school leader.



High School Educator of the Year

Jeromy Blackwell

Harmony Magnet Academy, Porterville Unified School District

Jeromy Blackwell brings 26 years of teaching excellence to Porterville Unified and currently serves at Harmony Magnet Academy, teaching multiple history courses and weight training. As social science department chair, he led the adoption of a modern, critical-thinking-focused curriculum. His students consistently achieve strong academic results, including high AP pass rates. A celebrated varsity football and track coach, he has guided teams to numerous championships while mentoring new teachers and building youth programs.



2026 Excellence in Education Awards

In 1995, Educational Employees Credit Union (EECU) partnered with the Tulare County Office of Education to create the Excellence in Education Awards. This program honors nominees, finalists, and winners in three categories — Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year. Each year, Tulare County school districts submit their top candidates to TCOE for a committee of educators and community leaders to review and score each nominee.



Administrator/Manager of the Year

Josefina Velazquez

Kennedy Elementary School, Dinuba Unified School District

Principal Josefina Velazquez has transformed Kennedy Elementary in two years by rebuilding trust, strengthening systems, and centering student success. Her expertise in MTSS and PBIS has reduced discipline referrals and improved collaboration. She prioritizes staff morale, shared purpose, and strong family partnerships through expanded events and inclusive community traditions. Shaped by her own challenging upbringing, Velazquez leads with high expectations, restorative practices, and a deep belief in every child's potential.



Teacher of the Year

Michael Bedoya

Washington Intermediate School, Dinuba Unified School District

Michael Bedoya enriches his school through inspiring teaching, mentorship, and culture-building. As a seventh/eighth-grade teacher, his project-based approach nurtures collaboration, communication, and resilience. Leading T-Bird TV and major school events, he unites the campus around kindness, pride, and belonging. A committed Dinuba native, he supports students beyond school by coaching and community service. Loved by students and trusted by colleagues, Bedoya leads with heart and creativity.



School Employee of the Year

Placido Flores

Porterville High School, Porterville Unified School District

Placido Flores has spent 22 years as a steady, positive force at Porterville High School and the Partnership Academy of Business and Finance. Through the Live Oak Café and student store, he provides hands-on learning that builds confidence, professionalism, and essential workplace skills. Known for his calm support and mentorship, he motivates students, collaborates across campus, and models joyful service. His purpose-driven dedication has shaped countless student lives.



2026 Brent Rast Award

Ben Gimlin

TCOE Occupational Training Program, Visalia

For nearly 20 years, Ben Gimlin has served students with special needs in TCOE's AcCEL Program. Originally planning a business career, he felt called to special education while working in his father's classroom. Through the MOVE Program, he helps students gain mobility, independence, and dignity, as he leads with compassion and deep commitment.

Looking forward!

The 2026–2027 school year will be a big one in terms of TCOE’s physical and program growth. Take a look at four new projects we’ll be developing this year.

New central kitchen consolidates food preparation

This fall, hundreds of student meals will be prepared each day out of a new kitchen in northwest Visalia. The new kitchen replaces four older kitchens utilized by Early Childhood

Education (ECE) to feed 550 students and 102 staff members in child development centers throughout north and central Tulare County.

Existing kitchens in north Visalia, Cutler, London, and Tulare will be retired. Kitchens in Earlimart and Porterville will continue to operate, serving child development centers in Earlimart, Pixley, Porterville, and Richgrove.

The new Visalia kitchen features 10,600 square feet of space for food preparation, dry storage, refrigerated and freezer storage, offices, and a breakroom. From the new kitchen, four food delivery trucks and one milk truck will take meals and snacks to the centers – sometimes twice each day, covering hundreds of miles weekly for 11 preschools that have 34 classrooms.

In the future, the kitchen will also produce meals or snacks for students at La Sierra Military Academy, University Preparatory High School, and children in ECE Home Base programs.



Redesign funds awarded to TKCCC



The Tulare Kings College + Career Collaborative (TKCCC) — a consortium of 14 school districts, the Kings and Tulare county offices of education, and four community colleges — was selected as one of 14 awardees to participate in California’s Secondary School Redesign Pilot Program.

Managed by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CEE) and the California Department of Education, the Secondary School Redesign Pilot Program was created to transform traditional middle and high schools away from

outdated, “factory-model” structures into rich, student-centered learning environments.

TKCCC, along with school districts in Corcoran, Cutler-Orosi, Dinuba, Exeter, and Woodlake, were selected based on their success in moving from traditional “one-size-fits-all” high school formats toward expanding hands-on career technical pathways, deepening student mentorship programs, and building personalized support systems tailored to regional workforce needs.

With this project, TKCCC aims to establish a proven blueprint for modern high school education by highlighting innovative strategies developed across these five partner districts that will serve as a model for high schools throughout Tulare County and the broader Central Valley.

Planetarium site to welcome new programs and a new name

Construction has begun on new and renovated facilities on the site of the Planetarium & Science Center, which is located at the southwest corner of South Mooney Boulevard and Avenue 264 in Visalia. Four programs will be relocated to the site, including University Preparatory High School (UPHS), a new Special Education/AcCEL Center, the Educational Resource Services (ERS) Library Media Center, and a new esports arena (profiled on page 18).

At the recommendation of the Tulare County Board of Education, the site will be named the Tim A. Hire Education Campus in honor of the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. “The board and I appreciate the vision and leadership Mr. Hire has shown in finding solutions to the needs of our programs,” said Tony Rodriguez, president of the Tulare County Board of Education. “Four years ago, when we faced the challenge of finding a suitable new location for UPHS and building a facility to better meet the needs of students with orthopedic impairments, he created a plan to do all of that and more on this site.” To accommodate the growth, 30 acres of land surrounding the original 10-acre site was purchased in 2023.

The decision to relocate UPHS to the Hire Education Campus made the most economic sense given that the site already had existing classroom buildings. Since 1867, the site was home to Liberty School until the school moved to their new site in Tulare during the summer of 2013. The Tulare County Office of Education purchased the site shortly thereafter, constructed the planetarium and using the existing building for a variety of Special Services programs.

UPHS will move from its home on the College of the Sequoias campus, where it opened in 2009. The Hire Education Campus site will provide the school with more outdoor space and opportunities for students to serve in the programs also on the site, gaining experience in

the arts, science, technology, special education, and instructional materials. Students will also have access to both Visalia and Tulare COS campuses to continue the school’s tradition of concurrent college enrollment.

The new AcCEL Center will serve students currently attending the Occupational Training Program (OTP), which is adjacent to Golden West High School. TCOE’s AcCEL Program has supported Visalia Unified students at OTP since 1972. The new center will feature a light-filled interior with 10 classrooms, accommodating 80 students. Outdoors, the center will feature a half-court basketball court, a music garden, accessible playground, and solar shade canopy.

The new ERS Library Media Center will feature a large media room, elementary resources room, robotics lab, processing room, three offices, and space for workstations. The current center at TCOE’s Doe Avenue Complex provides library materials and services to over 50 small school districts in Tulare



(upper photo) The existing classrooms on the Hire Education Campus are being renovated for University Preparatory High School in time for the beginning of the 2027-28 school year. (lower photo) A rendering of the new buildings under construction on the west side of the site includes the ERS Library Media Center and Esports Area (left) and the Special Education Center (right).



Story continued on page 26



and Kings counties with 28,000 instructional resources available for checkout. The library will also support students attending University Preparatory High School.

UPHS will move onto the Hire Education Campus prior to the beginning of the 2027-28 school year. The ERS Library Media Center and Special Education Center are scheduled to be completed in July 2027.

(upper photo) The Special Education/ AcCEL Center will include a fully accessible playground and music garden. (lower photo) The Library Media Center will not only serve 50 contracting schools, but students from neighboring UPHS with its study areas, robotics lab, and Esport Arena.



ERS continues literacy work through two new state grants



This spring, Educational Resource Services (ERS) was selected as a co-lead for two statewide literacy grants supporting students from transitional kindergarten through grade 12. The grants build on ERS'

literacy work through the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) program since 2019 under the Readership project.

For grades TK-5, TCOE is a co-lead on the Partnerships Advancing Literacy and Language (PAL²) initiative with Placer and Santa Clara county offices of education. TCOE received \$1.855 million to support professional learning, coaching, sustainable literacy planning, and family engagement, with a focus on increasing third-grade reading proficiency and sustaining gains in later grades.

For grades 6-12, TCOE joins five county offices of education in California's Lead to Literacy (LtL) initiative led by the Napa County Office of Education. The initiative strengthens leadership capacity, evidence-based literacy practices, and district systems to improve adolescent literacy outcomes statewide.

TCOE schools

TCOE charter schools

La Sierra Charter School

1735 E. Houston Ave., Visalia

Grades: 7-12

La Sierra offers a military program where middle and high school cadets focus on military science, physical fitness, and leadership development. The school is a member of the California Cadet Corps. Dual enrollment college classes, an independent studies program, and a Forestry Pathway are also offered.

University Preparatory High School (UPHS)

915 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia

Grades: 9-12

UPHS focuses on providing an early college experience. Students take a variety of college courses through College of the Sequoias, while also participating in core academics designed to prepare them for college. The school also has an award-winning robotics team, and offers a robust arts program with choir, orchestra, hand bells, guitar, and theatre arts opportunities. An independent studies program is planned for the 2026-27 school year.

TCOE authorized independent charters

The Academies Charter Management Organization

Blue Oak Academy

28050 Road 148, Visalia

Grades: K-8

Sycamore Valley Academy

6832 Avenue 280, Visalia

Grades: K-8

The Academies offer an accelerated academic program with project-based learning, gifted education for all, social-emotional learning, and community service opportunities.

Court/Community Schools

TCOE operates Mid-County Community School (Visalia) for students who have been expelled from their home district. The school provides a credit recovery program and a robust career technical education (CTE) program, including building trades, health sciences, and hospitality training. TCOE's Court School provides education for incarcerated youth. This includes traditional educational programming, as well as specialized CTE education and rehabilitative services.

Since 2023, Mid-County students opened the M.C. Café at TCOE's Doe Avenue Complex. Each week during the school year, students make and sell coffee, tea, smoothies, sandwiches, salads, fruit cups, cookies, and more to the employees who work at the Doe Avenue Complex.

Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center (ERCLC)

31191 Road 180, Visalia

Grades: K-12

ERCLC is a free public charter that supports home-schooling families by providing academic resources, extracurricular activities, and instructional support.

Valley Life Charter Schools

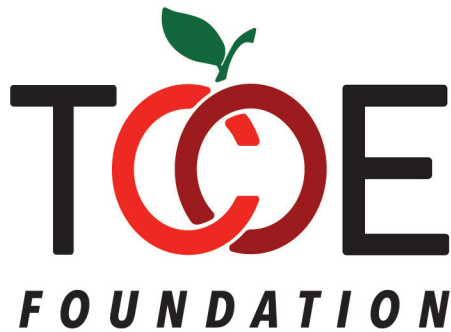
3737 S. Akers St., Visalia

Grades: TK-3

3737 W. Walnut Ave., Visalia

Grades: 4-8

Valley Life Charter focuses on leadership, and the visual and performing arts. They also offer a K-12 independent studies program.



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Foster & Homeless Youth Education Services
Intervention Resource Classrooms (IRCs)
Mild to Moderate Programs
Parent Liaisons
Preschool Program
Program Specialists
Related Services
School Psychologists
SELPA Compliance
Workability Program

Student Support Services

California Community Schools Partnership Program
CHOICES Prevention/Intervention
and After School Programs
Early Childhood Education Program
La Sierra Charter School
Region VII System of Support for Extended Learning
School Health Programs
School Safety Program
SCICON
University Preparatory High School
Universal PreKindergarten

