
DISTRICT-WIDE PARENT DINNER

Fresno Unified School District

Fresno, California

Fresno Unified School District and its Parent Engagement Center hosted an end-of-year district-wide Parent Dinner to recognize district individuals who most contributed to parent involvement in the district during the year. The event celebrated the entire district's success in developing school, family, and community partnerships and distinguished the contributions of diverse individuals.

Everyone in the district had the opportunity to nominate someone who consistently supported school, family, and community partnerships. Prior to the event, the Parent Engagement Center distributed flyers and posted an announcement on its website requesting nominations for many categories of recognition at both the elementary and secondary school levels. Anyone in the district could nominate a person in the following categories: principal, vice principal/program manager, teacher, site office personnel, other classified personnel (bus driver, office personnel, custodians, and others), parent facilitator/home-school liaison, community member, student of the year, best newsletter, and parent. Individuals wrote essays of up to two pages in length describing how the nominee had made a difference at school and contributed to a better parent involvement program. The Parent Engagement Advisory Committee selected the winners of each category who then received distinctive plaques at the district-wide Parent Dinner.

On May 1, 2002, Fresno parents, families, school board members, the district superintendent and cabinet members, principals, and school staff all gathered at the Duncan High School auditorium for the district-wide Parent Dinner. More than 1,100 participants enjoyed the multi-ethnic presentations reflecting the district's diverse cultures and the speeches and public recognition for the forty Parental Involvement Award Recipients. Delicious complimentary hot dinners were served, and childcare was provided. A representative from a national publisher attended the event with his mascot Curious George to distribute free books to children. A locally well-known Hmong television reporter served as the event's emcee. The Parent Dinner was literally standing room only and food was short, but everyone was elated and energized. The district-wide Parent Dinner incorporated all the right ingredients to make it a success for Fresno: convenient meeting time and day based on survey responses; multi-ethnic and multicultural presentations; delicious food; available childcare; multilingual simultaneous

interpretation; and, most significantly, public recognitions of individuals' contributions to school, family, and community partnerships.

Andrew Vu, Director

(559) 241-7137