



FRESNO METRO MINISTRY

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Excerpts and Summary of the 48th Community Hunger and Nutrition Forum

Wednesday, October 6, 2004 12:00PM –1:30PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Fresno

Sponsored by Fresno Metro Ministry

Supported by

USDA, Community Food Project

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

California Food Policy Advocates

**Focus: *Vision for Healthy Fresno Schools
Candidates for Fresno Unified School District***

The following is a summary of the reports made at the forum compiled by Edie Jessup and Carey Berend.

Edie Jessup, Fresno Metro Ministry, Hunger & Nutrition Project: Welcome to this 48th Community Hunger & Nutrition Forum, This particular forum may be a little different than some other forums because we are concentrating on **the impact of nutrition and physical activity on our children.** Welcome to the **Fresno Unified School District Board of Trustee Candidates.**

I'd like to note that there are five candidates who were unable to be here today: John Santoya, Sylvia Salcedo, David Wright, and Bill Brewster, and Norman Pimentel. Three of those folks are actually teaching school today. We're glad they're on duty there but we will miss them here. Two of the candidates that are not here have submitted written answers to the questions which are in your packet, and I commend those to you. (Their comments are added to the transcript of this Forum as responses to the questions.) Please notice information in your Packets.

PROCESS FOR CANDIDATES RESPONSES: Each of the candidates has received three questions from Fresno Metro Ministry's task groups. Each Candidate will have two minutes to make their statement about why they are running for FUSD School Board and why it matters that they are running for election. After that we will present each of the questions and each candidate will have a chance to respond for one minute. Jeremy will time the candidates. He has two wonderful placards that say '30 seconds' and 'time's up'. At the end of our three questions and responses we will take questions from the audience. There are note cards on your table. If you would please write your question on the note card and raise your hand Phoua will get those cards and bring them up to the podium. At the end the candidates will answer as many of those questions as we possibly can, with one-minute answers.

We will begin with the opening statement from each candidate. Let's start with Janet down at the very end.

Janet Ryan, District 6: Thank you. My name is Janet Ryan. I have a website which gives lots of information about my positions, my background, and the people who are endorsing me so I'm not going to go through a whole lot of them. It's votejanetryan.com. It's very simple. I would like to mention that I have the endorsement of both Congressman Cal Dooley and Mayor Alan Autry and I'm very proud of both of those. I have four grandchildren who are currently in the Fresno Unified School system. I am a substitute teacher with Fresno Unified as well. I've been here for 25 years, been married for 44 years, and have children who have graduated from Fresno Unified myself. For some reason people think all those things are very important so I just wanted to get those out. I work with the Concord Coalition with Congressman Cal Dooley and with unsustainable Social Security and Medicare problems. Fresno Unified is also facing some longterm promises that they made in the healthcare system for employees, and that also is unsustainable. We're going to have to deal with

that. We're going to have to start charging for some (health) premiums for retirees. I hope that if we're going to ask more from our employees we can at least offer them better working conditions through a superintendent who will be a leader in the future through empowering school sites and encouraging more trust and confidence in the system.

Karin Robinson, District 6: Hi. My name is Karen Robinson and I am doing this for the children. I'm doing this for your children and I'm doing this for my two children who are in the Hoover High School. I'm a native of Fresno for 42 years and also I have attended Fresno Unified School District. I've been married 23 years and we have our own company. It's called Robinson Pools and we've been serving this valley for 23 years. I'm the vice president of it. Also, my two children, I have one that can run the school district. He scores about 99% on his STAR test and I have another one who is a 504 student who does not know how to navigate his way through the district, so it's been hard for us as a family. I'm also the administrator at the Rock Church. What I do is oversee all the operations, the accounting, the human resources. I've conducted audits and everything to do with policy, procedures, budgets. I've also worked with Cornerstone Church for over six years and oversaw their budget of \$2.25 to \$2.5 million and it was a wonderful time with them. My specialty is nonprofits so I know fund accounting and grants, just everything that goes with that. I also worked with three police officers. Officer **Mike Manzey** has a defensive driving school that helps teenagers to drive safely. Also I am a volunteer in the community for 28 years. I volunteer for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and I've run six marathons. I'm an athlete.

Sean Radbill, District 6: Hi. My name is Sean Radbill. I think it's important to start this by saying that I'm a proud product of Fresno Unified in this community. I've attended Fresno schools all my life, McCardle Elementary, Computech Middle, Edison High, and I graduated from Fresno State. Furthermore, I just completed a Kauffman Social Entrepreneur Internship where we focused on building bridges within the special education community within Fresno Unified. So I'm well versed on the issues. Also, I'm bilingual and I learned English as a second language so I embody and I embrace the challenges that this district faces. In Fresno Unified there are over 74 languages and 32.3% English language learners. Those numbers are tossed around loosely but to me it's not a number because I'm one of those people. My youth has been brought up as a political liability so I think it's important that I address it off the bat here. I'm young, I can't deny that, but I believe that my youth is an asset. It enables me to be a contemporary candidate and if you think about it it's only been four years since I graduated from high school so I understand the issues that affect students today. These issues are: to ensure budget stability and accountability through a forensic audit, shift funding priorities from administration to the classroom, identify and eradicate operational inefficiencies, bring music and librarians back to the schools, look for qualified leadership within the district before we look outside, and to establish a dialogue with all parties interested in student progress- such as through town hall forums. I'm confident that my unique background and working knowledge of the district will allow me to inject a fresh view into the Board. I'm not a politician and so I don't come with strings attached. I don't seek campaign checks, I seek issues. My special interest group is the students and I will listen and work to make change. I have been endorsed by California Teens for Democracy. Thank you.

Michael O'Hare, District 6: Good afternoon. My name is Michael O'Hare. First off I want to thank Walt Parry and Metro Ministry for a number of years being a social conscience. Oftentimes in a community you get so wrapped up in doing so many different things that we need someone like Metro Ministry to ask those hard questions that affect all of us here in the community. The Healthy School Environment is definitely an area that we are looking at at the present time. In 1976 when I first came here, I got involved in the food situation with the homeless as a member of the Poverello board. I worked five years on that board as they progressed from serving meals on the curbside, where the biggest expense was a styrofoam cup or a plastic spoon, to now having a facility that addresses the many needs of the homeless. We have a number of children in our community. The valley is a rich area. It feeds the world but it has challenges feeding its own people. We need to provide healthy

food and a healthy environment for all of our students in our schools and in the community. Thank you.

Diane Kallo, District 6: My name is Diane Kallo and I attended Fresno schools and graduated from Bullard High School. Then I graduated from UC Berkeley. My father was a chemistry teacher at Fresno State College and we spent some time growing up reading labels on food packages. My mom was a faculty wife and my sister is a doctor. I have done some substitute teaching and my children have spent a lot of time in the Fresno schools. I volunteered while they were in school and was PTA treasurer one year and I've also gone on a lot of their field trips with them. Now I belong to Peace Fresno, I'm the treasurer, and I belong to California Alumni Association as well as Fresno County Sportsman Club. My idea of improving the situation in schools is to, well, I first focused on my three priorities. They are student health, academics, and the school environment. As far as student health goes I think nutrition is really important. Hygiene I think is also important and P.E., fitness, and proper attire. I guess I'll go on to the school environment. I think there should be no vending machines with sodas and I think the lunches should be nutritious and we should work on that. Other things about the school environment, I'd like to see a non-confrontational, zero-tolerance environment with safety as a priority. Thank you.

Richard Morgan, District 5: Thanks for inviting me here. I'm glad to be here. Thanks Edie. I don't know if you folks have seen your voter's guide pamphlet. Anyway, in your voter's guide pamphlet you've got my campaign statement. This is imperative. The first line of my campaign statement says, "Your vote for Richard Morgan is also a vote for God." I'm telling the Satan lovers they got to vote for somebody besides me, I'm telling them. Now I'm going to address two hot issues in your schools, folks. Your current trustees have set your schools up to go bankrupt. This is critical. You got to quit talking about the fluff. Your schools are going to be bankrupt and the state's taking it over soon. Number one, the health plan is going to tank or bankrupt your schools standing alone if they don't modify it or amend it. Number two, the retirement plan is going to tank your schools. You won't have any schools if you don't get these two programs straightened out. Your trustees are sitting down there picking their nose and not taking care of any business. These current trustees have tanked your schools. They're in the pre-stages of bankruptcy. Folks, if you don't understand that you're not going to have any schools. Remember, your vote for Richard Morgan is also a vote for God. The book of Ecclesiastes addresses your walk under the sun here. Thank you.

John Madrid, District 5: My name is John Madrid and I'm running for Fresno Unified School Board, Area 5. I'm employed at the City of Fresno. I work in the mayor's office as the education liaison from the city. There are a number of challenges, obviously, that are facing the school district and I think a first step towards that would be rebuilding trust in how the community sees how the schools function. There are many things involved with that – the business processes, making sure that things are in place, the idea of increasing community connections, all segments of the community whether it's the government, faith based, nonprofit organizations themselves, finding out what role they play in the youth development of our community. I also believe in increasing the resources for all of our students. There are many wonderful students that will succeed no matter what environment you put them in. I think it's important to make sure that we provide resources to those individuals that are set in their life and the way that they live and the way that their families and everything have difficulties so we need to provide them resources as well. There needs to be accountability on all levels. Ultimately the board is responsible for the direction of where the school district goes and whatever issues are involved, whether it's healthcare, whether it's the food and nutrition, whether it's student achievement. We are in a crisis situation. The idea of a state takeover is not an option that we should even entertain because it is not (an option). As a board member it is about asking the tough questions because we're not going to know everything that we go through there; but we need to make sure that we ask those tough questions and are not afraid to do that as well. Lastly, I've made a commitment to the Community Contract for Kids which is listed on the city's website and that is a kind of common sense approach as to what my intention is to go forward as a school board member. Thank you.

Carol Mills, District 5: Good afternoon. I'm Carol Mills and I am a candidate for seat 5, which is the Fresno High area. I've resided in that area for 16 years. I am the parent of an 8th grader who has gone through the Fresno Unified schools and I'm an attorney and have been since 1979. My primary focus for 17 of those years was with insolvency and financial issues and budgets so I do have familiarity with that aspect of the school district as well. I've also served on quite a few school committees, school site council, and some district-wide committees so I have some understanding of how the district operates. I'm running because I think the current board is lacking in leadership, accountability, and does not have its priorities straight. I think the priorities need to be the students. One of the things that this district needs to focus on is student achievement. The budget is important but so is student achievement and I think we're all here today because we recognize that there are a lot of factors that go into student achievement. One of them is arriving at the classroom door prepared and ready to learn and part of that preparation is a healthy meal in the morning, a healthy meal again at noontime and hopefully one in the evening. I would invite you to check your sample ballot which has my candidate statement and also there is literature on the small table over here on the side that tells a little more about me and my platform and those who support me. Thank you.

Valerie Davis, District 3: Good afternoon. I'm Valerie Davis and I'm running for trustee of Fresno Unified School District representing the Sunnyside area because I want to make a difference in the lives of our children. I graduated from Powers Elementary, Wawona Junior High, Bullard High School, and a BA and a teaching credential from Fresno State. I've been teaching in Fresno Unified for the last 25 years as a teacher's aide, migrant tutor, choir director, intercession teacher, language arts teacher, and an AVID teacher. Currently I'm married to a 35-year teacher/coach in Fresno Unified, who is also a major in the Army Reserve. We have three daughters, Michelle, 20, a Smittcamp honors scholar at Fresno State, Catherine, 15, a freshman at Roosevelt, and Elizabeth, 5, a kindergartener at Ayer Elementary. As a volunteer parent in Sunnyside community, the principals at my children's schools have put me on numerous committees – Terronez boundaries, the middle school book adoption facilities committee, the Fresno High/Roosevelt/McLane pyramid, Title I Roundtable, GATE parents, special-ed parents, arts and music and drama. As a volunteer parent I have been the Ayer PTA president for many years and school site council chairman. At Tehipite Middle School I was also the school site council chairman and I am currently the booster president at Roosevelt High School and school site chairman there. Other volunteer work I've done is Meux Home, Storyland Auxiliary, Army Reserve family support coordinator, and the Metropolitan Museum. Professional associations that I am in are the Association of Mexican-American Educators and California Alliance of African American Educators. Parents know best what their kids need and as your trustee I hope to be at the table to voice your opinions. Thank you.

Nuel Brown, District 3: I'm Nuel Brown, candidate for school board, area 3. That's the Sunnyside area. I just retired. My last job was one that I held for 18 years as executive director for a statewide organization in which I served in leadership as administrator and I received and disbursed funds for a number of organizations. My wife and I have lived in Fresno for many years. We have five children. They're all grown but all five of our children and their families are living in Fresno and I now have grandchildren in Fresno attending the Fresno Unified School District. Believe me, my children wanted me to retire and start fishing but I visit my grandchildren's classrooms and I know what's going on, so I am looking forward to fixing the budget. That has to be taken care of. I have the courage to demand accountability, I have the courage to demand change and so I'm committed to a common sense approach to some of these issues. I think common sense is a very important thing when it comes to our unified school district. As my signs and all my literature state, it's about the kids and that's more than a slogan. It *is* about the kids. I believe that every child has the right to an education. That is not negotiable. Thank you.

Manuel Nunez, District 2: Good afternoon, and thank you for the lunch. My name is Manuel Nunez and I've been a board member for Fresno Unified since 1990 when the board was expanded from five members to seven. I worked at Fresno State from 1974 until I retired in 1998. While I was working at Fresno State I was also on the board and had the support of **Dr. Harold Hack** to do whatever I could

to assist Fresno State in various areas. The main things that I have run my campaigns on are three things. We have to improve student achievement and that's an ongoing process. It never ends, especially when you have increased requirements for graduation or as it is now increased requirements for admission to the state universities and the UCs. I'm really concerned about the fact that while we have an increasing number of students eligible for those institutions their answer to the problem of too much overcrowding is to increase the requirements and therefore break their promise to a lot of students who qualify but can't get in. The other one is having to do with improving on truancy. We lose a lot of money and we continue to do that with regards to students that are not able to go to school. We also have a situation where maybe sometimes parents are afraid to send their children to school if they can't walk them there. The other one, of course, is to increase the graduation rates. As far as working on issues of health I have a son who is with the California Department of Health who has made me aware of the problems of asthma. I worked running a USDA summer food program at Fresno State for over 13 years and so the awareness of the need for a balanced diet and to improve on the health of our kids is right there up front with me.

Paul H. Garcia, District 2: My name is Paul H. Garcia and I am a candidate for the school board for area 2, Roosevelt area. I am a product of Roosevelt High School. I have eight children, seven daughters and the last one is a son. I never give up. The reason I'm running for the school board, I think that we need a change and I think change is good, especially in this time and age. I feel that the students need good leadership and it starts from the top. I think the parents are the best teachers. They are the first teachers of the students, and they know better and they know what is best for their children. I think as a parent and a community activist I've shown my leadership by being involved in various committees at the district level and also in the community. Being an elected official on the Fresno County Economics Opportunity Commission that deals with nutrition and providing services throughout the San Joaquin Valley and to Fresno Unified School District, I think that we have a long ways to go. I think you have a group of people here that are running for those positions and I think that they need to work collaboratively to get over the budgets. I think that the state has mandated numerous things from this district. We need to build a trust among the employees and among parents and the community. I bring harmony also to this board and I hope that they will trust in the Lord and work together collaboratively for the students in this district. Thank you.

Edie Jessup: Thank you all very much. We will now proceed to the three questions that have been posed to the candidates. They will have one minute to respond.

The first question is: **There is a Fresno Unified School District Healthy School Environment Policy Committee that is currently working on policy recommendations for the Fresno Unified School Board on nutrition and physical activity as a response to the obesity and chronic disease epidemic that is facing Fresno children. Over 40% of our children are overweight and unfit. How will you be supportive of proceedings, policy recommendations, and implementation of new policy to assure Fresno children are healthy and ready to learn?**

Paul H. Garcia, District : I believe in getting input from the community, parents, and specialists in order to develop a policy. I think you need to do your groundwork and your homework and not just making the decision of just a few people. I think that we need the input from the area that you represent and then collaborate with the other board members before you set a policy.

Manuel Nunez, District : First of all, the Food Service of our school district is well aware of nutrition needs and what to do with regards to providing breakfast as well as lunch for our children. When you have the large number of our students, in some schools almost 100%, that are eligible for free and reduced lunch we have to do the best we can to provide them not only with a nutritious meal but something that they will eat. Now, that's very important because we have so many cultures in our district, that when you go home your meals may be totally different from what would be recommended by nutritionists, but that's the nature. I would eat school lunch and then when I got home there was a pot of beans and tortillas available for me and that's what I had as a snack. Of course now, looking back at it, the beans were good, the tortillas may not have been. But we have made great strides in

trying to improve the quality of their food to make sure that the children have a chance to eat a nutritious meal. I'm all for not having soda pop machines in our schools but we can change that too.

Nuel Brown, District 3: Well, first of all if I'm elected I would want to meet with the Environmental Policy Committee. I think they're doing a great job, that is, I think they are. I would like to know that and anything that they are promoting and supporting. I trust their intelligence and their knowledge to do so and as a board member I would certainly support anything in this area because it is about the kids.

Valerie Davis, District 3: I too would be very supportive of mandating a policy and structure it from an elementary level, and goals and objectives to meet at that level and then moving it up to a middle school, goals and objectives, and a high school level-- so the continuation of a policy is consistent and we're teaching children lifelong skills about nutrition. So, yes, I would be very supportive of this committee made up of parents, educators, nutritionists, and people in the community that desire to be on that committee.

Carol Mills, District 5: I think first you need to adopt the recommendations that come out of that committee and then you need to charge staff with implementing those recommendations. That's the first step for any school district in terms of making any changes. Things that I've noted that I'd like to see changed in terms of getting a healthy breakfast: sometimes the school buses don't arrive in time for the students to eat that breakfast. The bus schedule needs to be altered slightly so that they are there in time to actually eat. In terms of what is offered and provided for breakfast and for lunch I think we need to try to move away from so many processed foods and put more healthy choices on those school breakfasts and lunches and I think we also need to direct ourselves to P.E. There are guidelines of what should be taught in each grade in P.E. They're not really being implemented and I can tell that because I've compared what my son receives to what the guidelines show. If possible we need to make P.E. mandatory again for all four years of high school.

John Madrid, District 5: Thank you. I'm unfamiliar with this committee itself but I look forward to getting more information on it. I think that's an example of not only are we educating our youth on what is healthy and what is the appropriate and the right thing to do as far as nutrition but we also need to communicate and educate our community in regards to this. Much of that is about the networking of our resources with other groups. The Fresno County Office of Education has a nutrition element. The mayor's Fitness Council is about tagging and networking of those resources and hopefully putting some structure in that so the entire community can engage in that process. I look forward to again finding more information on the Environmental Policy Committee. Thank you.

Richard Morgan, District 5: Yes, thanks. I'll address the issue of obesity first here. Obesity is primarily a function of eating too much. Now, God gave you the law in Leviticus chapter 11 and God tells you what to eat and what not to eat. Now let's go to the next step, chronic diseases. Chronic diseases are the function of the people violating the law of breeding genetics. This law is written in stone, folks. You violate the law of breeding genetics and you will have kids with chronic diseases that are known and soon chronic diseases that are unknown, and that's written in stone. Thank you.

Diane Kallo, District 6: I think that before we implement any policies at all we should consider the effects on the students' health first. Also, I think we should maybe consider making P.E. mandatory every year. I want to mention that if you open a yearbook from my high school and you compare the pictures in there to the pictures in yearbooks you would open today from 2004, you will find that the students in my day are about half the size. I know that that's pretty critical but there has been a real change of lifestyle in this country and it has not been for the better. I would support Food Services making nutritious lunches as opposed to any form of unhealthy fundraisers that are going on in the schools today, and there are a few of them. I would also like to look at what goes into those lunches. You find animals eating animals today and that is strange. Look at the feed that goes into animal foods.

Michael O'Hare, District 6: Thank you. I had the opportunity on June 9th of passing the resolution forming this committee to look into the policies for a healthy school environment. And I must say I appreciate the effort that Metro Ministry and Edie has done in getting a well balanced committee. When I've seen holes in the committee of places or people unrepresented she has been very receptive to me, as I often have suggestions of people that might need to be there to make sure, because this is a lifestyle. It's not just a school, it is a lifestyle, and so I've been very receptive to that. Like I said, we make over 14 million meals a year in Fresno Unified and we do use too much processed food. We're in the process of getting a production center which will enable us to use food more economically but also it won't have so many of the chemicals that are used in processed food.

Sean Radbill, District 6: I think it's important to start this by pointing out that the real heart of the matter I think Ms. Mills touched on, and that's adopting what the committee says. Fresno Unified has a policy of forming committees just like Congress does. They'll study something forever, they'll come out with a nice little report, bind it at Kinko's, pass it out so everyone can see it, and where does it go? A recent example is CAC. They met with the CAC, they met with people and they made a special education report. They had forums and focus groups, they came out with a report, then they disbanded the CAC. So I think it's what Ms. Mills said. We need to listen to the group, follow the recommendations. That's what really matters here. That's how you support them. Don't just make a committee for the purpose of making a committee. Make a committee so you're going to follow their recommendations. Thank you.

Karin Robinson, District 6: I'm a licensed minister so I might have a little bit of a different approach on this. I believe nutrition starts spirit, soul, and body and I believe to provide a healthy belief system that fosters growth regarding our children's hopes, futures, and dreams. Also, with the soul, here again my conviction that we need to guard our children's minds, hearts and ears monitoring what they watch and listen to-- Internet, cable, etc. For instance, yesterday my children watched the debate last night. Body, of course you heard I'm an athlete so all my kids we enter all the local races. We support the community that way as a family, and we need to support single families as well. I'm big into nutrition at home, eating soy products and so forth. And maybe perhaps we can have a food bar. I want to compliment Edie on this wonderful information such as develop regional food banks, task groups for farmers, and Second Harvest. Thank you.

Janet Ryan, District 6: Well, as much as I appreciate what the committee is doing, and certainly you have educated me and I've enjoyed reading all the material that you've sent, I think we're going to be spinning our wheels if we don't first educate the parents. I'm not just talking about parents from low-income families. I'm talking about parents from all over town. My own grandchildren who have shuffled from one practice to another game to another meeting and it goes on and on. These kids are eating fast food and they're not getting nutritious meals, so I think we need to do more with the parents on nutrition, cooking, exercise, and the longterm effects of not eating properly and not having proper exercise. What those long-term effects are on their children. And unless we can get to the parents, I'm not so sure that we can do a whole lot although I'd be supportive of anything that I could do, particularly if we can get the information to the parents and somehow convince them that this lifestyle is not good for their kids.

Edie Jessup: I want to thank you for your thought about this. I hope that all of you will take a good look at what the committee is working on and if there are any materials that you need to help you orient yourself to the fact that our kids are very unhealthy, the Committee would be happy to help you with that. It could be we should look at the environment that our kids are in for eight hours a day at school. It might be important to change that environment, so that the children have access to healthy food during school now. And then, while we're in the process of educating the rest of the community, we can increase access to healthy food in the rest of the community. Thank you very much.

The next question is: **Some schools have broken away from soda, candy, junk food, and fast food contracts as a way to fund schools. How will you commit yourself to supporting eliminating unhealthy food from Fresno Unified School District?**

Richard Morgan, District 5: Thank you all. It's imperative that I give you the law God gave you for what to eat and what not to eat. You've got to understand the law is still there. In Leviticus chapter 11 God explains that real good, what to eat and what not to eat. Now, Edie's right. We've got to stop the junk food and foods that are loaded with calories. You get fat by stuffing too many calories in your mouth. Quit eating those calories and you'll lose weight. You don't get fat by breathing air or drinking water. There's only one way you do that. You've got to eat and eat and eat and if you eat dead calories, which most junk foods are, you'll get fat faster. People, there is no magic pill if you're overweight. You've got to cut down your calorie intake. That's the bottom line. Thank you.

Diane Kallo, District 6: I think I would start by banning the vending machines. I'd support purchases of local fruits and vegetables. I don't see why we can't buy directly from farmers in our locale and have it shipped to the schools. I'd like to point out this book, Fast Food Nation. I notice he's coming to town, Eric Schlosser. It's very critical of our fast food habits and I think that this would make good reading for anyone who is involved with nutrition and with students.

Michael O'Hare, District 6: For years the PTA and parent clubs and stuff have used different means to raise funds for schools- and of course World's Finest Chocolate. I'm sure most of us have had an opportunity to buy at one time or another from our children or grandchildren. One of the things I've always incorporated is having a jogathon at the school for fundraising, having nutritional type of drinks out of our soda machines or vending machines. There is no reason why we can't have water at \$1.00 and soda at \$1.25 and let the students themselves make the decisions. We need to have more nutritional vegetables and more fruit available; possibly having vending machines now for fruit also, so the students have an opportunity to purchase snacks during their free time.

Sean Radbill, District 6: I think the important thing here is education. We can get rid of all the fast food at the schools, but kids will still go off campus and go to Wendy's. You can have a snack bar selling grapes and peaches and plums and salad, and that's nice but no one is going to buy it. It has to start with education. You can get rid of the soda machines. That doesn't work either. Everyone is just going to go down the street. When I was at Edison we would just go down the street to the liquor store. So it doesn't matter what the school sells. We have to teach the students what's good and what's bad. It's just like tobacco. Taking away the unhealthy foods from the schools is a step, but that's not really going to change anything as long as students can go off campus and still buy unhealthy foods. We really need to do the education in the classroom, so we can have them make the right choices instead of just forcing healthy food upon them.

Karin Robinson, District 6: Thank you, Sean. I agree. We have to educate the parents, the public, etc. As a board of trustee member, hopefully sitting in one of the seats, why not join the kids in the cafeteria and eat with them, not drinking sodas in their sight, eating healthy in front of them, being an example to them, and being more involved in the menu preparation such as we're doing right now. Also, joining a food giveaway perhaps. Cornerstone Church in November and December has big food giveaways, Thanksgiving and Christmas. And, encouraging better, healthier items in the vending machines such as nuts, dried fruits, and Gatorade as well. Also I would like to add educating the parents and having available the immunization shots.

Janet Ryan, District 6: I was absolutely appalled when I found that schools were selling junk food because they needed the money. We've got to stop that. I would be in favor of absolutely stopping all the sale of soda, candy, and junk food at school sites. I know they do it to raise money particularly after school. They sell these things perhaps to alleviate the loss of the revenue, which I know they need. We could consider something like offering them other savings. If they save money on janitorial bills or on electric bills, for example, we could let them keep that money instead of the junk food sales.

If you're going to sell the candy and that sort of thing at all, I think it should be an occasional thing as a treat, certainly not every day.

John Madrid, District 5: Thank you. I think as a board not only do you need to get provided the data driven information, I think there is plenty of it out there that shows that that food is unhealthy, and that we need to support that with action and I am supportive of eliminating those junk foods especially from the elementary and junior high. We are responsible for preparing our youth with the tools and the wisdom to make the decisions on their own, but we also need to reinforce that on our campuses. The fundraising element is not going away. That necessity (to fundraise) is going to be there. But I also believe that we need to make sure that our schools function as efficiently and as effectively as possible so that we can free up resources for where that need is. I believe that that is the first step in so many issues, and this is just one of those.

Carol Mills, District 5: Well, the sale of these items has traditionally been used to fund extracurricular activities for the students, and to some extent athletics. And the schools are in a shortage of funds; so we need to find alternatives. I think the students will buy healthy alternatives. I think there also could be non-food items that are being sold at the elementary school. They can do pencils and things like that. But on the healthy food items, what's going on now, I believe that some of these contracts with these vending machines are set by central purchasing for all of the school sites. What I would rather see is that authority delegated to the individual sites so that they can tailor the healthy food items to the particular culture of the student body and to the age group of the student body. Different things may appeal to different students and I think then we've achieved two goals of providing healthy snacks, healthy food, and still doing the fundraising benefit.

Valerie Davis, District 3: I'm the parent in charge of buying everything that my children eat in our home, mainly because my husband isn't authorized to go to the store and buy anything. So as your trustee I will actively investigate, recruit, and look for vendors that have healthy food. Maybe that might be farmers. In my home if it's not there, they can't eat it. So as your trustee I will go out actively and sincerely, find vendors with healthy food and alternatives for our children. I think it's pretty simple. Thank you.

Nuel Brown, District 3: Well, to me the issue of fun is not even an issue. The issue is junk food. I think the second question sort of complements the first question or at least they would work together. I probably would be in favor of breaking away from the junk food machines by all schools, especially the lower classes. However, this is something if we allow it, it's pretty hard to judge and control the consumption. So we have a problem there with consumption.

Manuel Nunez, District 2: We have one school, Sequoia Middle School, which broke away from providing sugar products to the students, and they're doing quite well. The students have a choice of low-calorie drinks as well as water. The other schools could easily follow and probably have as much success; but some of them have not been willing to do that. I am amazed at the ingenuity of American industry to do whatever it is pressured to do, and the abundance of low-carb, low-sugar in terms of candies or cookies or whatever is there. Just go to the grocery store and you'll see all that and all of that is available for all of our schools to be able to buy and put into those vending machines. It's just a matter of them taking the initiative to do it and I hope they will.

Paul H. Garcia, District 2: I believe in educating the parents on what's good for their children for nutrition. I believe that there are agencies that provide a service to educate parents on nutrition. I think that parents, when they go to the grocery stores, what do they load up? Nothing but junk food. If you look at the cereal, nothing but sugar. Sodas, cakes, a lot of sugar. So actually, I would like to see a policy being developed where all schools, not just one school, for all schools that they determine some other types of fundraisers that will not be utilizing sweets. Thank you.

Edie Jessup: Thank you. I do want to note that Food Services at Fresno Unified School District, Billie Richardson, is very committed to developing healthy offerings, And that the Purchasing Department is also willing to work on the contracting issues. They are both looking for direction from the school board on that. Thank you very much.

Our next question is a cultural question. Channel 21 is looking to speak with any school board candidates who speak Spanish. If you will let them know that they will be happy to discuss things with you afterwards.

What will you do as a Fresno Unified School Board member in promoting understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of our community and protect the rights of all persons regardless of their national origin or sexual orientation. How will you promote cultural competence in the delivery of all school district services?

Carol Mills, District 5: I think the appreciation and understanding of the diverse cultures needs to start at the school site level, and I believe with the principal and the staff being trained to understand the nuances of the different cultures. What we may find as a common practice might be offensive in another culture. I think we need to understand that as we're dealing with these families and these students. I think this is a great place for the community to play into and work with the district. We have different organizations that could assist with that. To the extent that there needs to be training that requires money, I think Title I money could be used to pay for such training and I think that also our Parent Engagement Center and the Multilingual/Multicultural Center within the district can serve a valuable service here both with the staff and with other parents in the district.

Valerie Davis, District 3: You're looking at a culturally diverse rich woman. My father is Hawaiian and Filipino and my mother is Mexican American and African American and I'm married to a garden variety white guy, so I tell my children that they've been blessed and cursed. What I would like to see as far as cultural awareness is how we all came to the United States. Our people all came here with an exception of Native Americans, and how the American dream and how our people came here and what they have done and how far they've gotten and how it relates to being an American of the salad bowl type of concept, or the mixing soup bowl, or the melting pot. But I'd like to see it brought back more to an American type of rich cultural difference.

Nuel Brown, District 3: I believe understanding is very important, and that comes through education. Our people have to be educated to understand the different cultures in order to appreciate them. I believe this is an area that the families and homes should be encouraged to be brought into it. I know that's a difficult job to get parents involved, but I believe this is an area where a lot of support systems need to be established in order to promote an understanding. And I believe if we understand more about our neighbors' culture we'll be able to get along a lot better.

Manuel Nunez, District 2: I went to school at a time where cultural awareness or identity was sometimes not spoken of very favorably. People would identify us as Caucasian when in fact we were not, and people were afraid to say, "Are you Mexican?" They would rather call us, "Are you Latino, are you Spanish, are you Hispanic," or whatever, and it took a long time for schools to recognize that cultural awareness was not a form of isolation or segregation or intolerance. What we've gotten away from with the district is recognizing cultures not just by having the cultural food available on the day of Cinco de Mayo, or whatever the celebration is; but to have a little bit of understanding of the history of that culture in order to be able to have students understand where we came from, and even our own people where we came from, and to be proud of that. So that's the effort that we've been making for the last 14 years that I've been on the board, and we will continue to do that.

Paul H. Garcia, District 2: I think we need to save our culture and respect everybody else's culture. As a past president and co-chair of the district Bilingual Advisory Committee, which is the ELAC, we stress that, and also include in the master plan for bilingual education recognizing the different

cultures in this district, respecting that and promoting it. I think that we as parents have requested to the district that they have training in cultural diversity throughout the district, and not only us but other districts also requested for them to receive training. This is recommended on a yearly basis because we have new people coming into this district, so it's very important to promote the diversity.

John Madrid, District 5: Thank you. I grew up speaking Spanish to my parents and having tortillas at every meal, which I still miss at this point. It isn't until you get a little bit older that you really gain the appreciation for all those differences. I think it's critical for all of us to gain the appreciation of those differences and to educate the folks, but I also think it's important to build upon the similarities that we all have in common, all ethnicities and all groups. I saw *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and that's my family, but in Spanish. I mean, there are so many similarities. I think it's important to focus on that. Any culture that comes to this community is still a part of the American dream that we all want, and they need the basics. They need to learn how to read. They need the three R's and all the other things that go along with that.

Richard Morgan, District 5: Thank you. I agree with her. We're all Americans. I don't know why you people want to divide up in separate camps and divide. I'm an American. I'm with her. I'm American. I don't know why you people want to divide up and fight in camps. But to alleviate this we have laws and as long as our laws are administered fundamentally fair then that eliminates a lot of problems. The people that don't want to be Americans, because there are some folks that don't want to be Americans. You've seen them. You've seen them on the late night news. As long as the law is administered fairly to everybody, then everybody will be in the same equitable position. I'm going to drop a bomb on you. Your government did the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks. The Arabs didn't do that.

Diane Kallo, District 6: If we're going to try to keep our cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity I think the parents may be the ones responsible for continuing these traditions. I think that we should encourage parents to practice ethnic customs and traditions in the family and at home. I think that probably in high school is when there is probably the most peer pressure to be conforming and I think it's easier for the kids at that time to get lost in sort of a homogenous American culture. I read this book and have taken it to heart. It talks a lot about how in the 40s we started with our drive-ins and it was special at first, a soda, but now it's every day and all the time and everybody, and so I really think that if we're going to maintain our cultural traditions we've got to try to do it in a pure sense, not try to be too homogenous. I hope I've made sense with that statement.

Michael O'Hare, District 6: You know, one of the reasons I moved here to Fresno was because of the diversity of the community. With 80,000 students and over 100 languages spoken we go from A to Z. One of the things we in Fresno Unified have done is have a Multilingual/Multicultural Department that's funded out of Title III federal funds that deals with cultural sensitivity, cultural language, and religious diversity in the community. I had the opportunity of working at VMC (Valley Medical Center) in the early 80s, and there were two groups then that wound up being a challenge because they were new to the area. One were the Southeast Asians with their medical practices that they brought with them, and trying to acclimate that into the Western medical system; and the other were the HIV patients that came, and the scare that we had in dealing with them. But education overcame both of those challenges at that time, and education of all of our people and parents and families will help us to understand and enjoy the richness that we each bring to the community.

Sean Radbill, District 6: The second part of the question asks how will you promote culture competence. I think that's the key. We have a lot of in-service days at schools, but their focusing on testing and things like that. We really need to have more cultural competency training. When I enrolled in McCardle Elementary, it was a predominantly white school. I was the kid who brought fish in his lunch. When I enrolled in school the people there saw me speaking in Japanese to my mother and immediately they put me into ESL testing. They had me go turn the doorknob, pick up the red cube. I can do that and I think I'm fine today. So I think we really need to educate them that just

because I'm speaking Japanese to my mom doesn't mean that I can't speak English. It's bilingualism, not just one, you know, and we really need to look at that. What are we doing with our in-service days? We can do more cultural competency training. It's not something that comes naturally.

Karin Robinson, District 6: In my family we like Muhammad Ali and Bruce Lee. I myself am Asian, half Chinese and German as well, and in our community we usually celebrate the Chinese New Year, we celebrate the Swedish festival, the Greek festival, we just try to go to all of them. We just love Fresno and what it has to offer. We attend different churches in our community. We're not just locked into one church. I go to the Chinese church with my aunt sometimes and we also do mission trips and Mexico. My son is taking Spanish and as I said, I speak German. I would like to address the sexual orientation. What we do with our sons is first of all what the definition of sexual orientation is to our kids, so I believe in real high moral values and for them to stay virgins and that's what my husband and I teach them. Thank you.

Janet Ryan, District 6: Well, the job of the school district is to educate children and prepare them for the real world. I can remember in the 60s and 70s when my daughters were young and in school and neighborhoods were becoming integrated and many friends of mine were moving their children out of the public schools and into private schools because they didn't like the integration. I felt that it was important that children stay in the public schools and I kept mine there because I don't believe that you're preparing your children for the real world if you're not allowing them to have the experiences with people who are different, people who are of diverse cultures, and that was very important to us. I would like to see some assemblies in the schools, more assemblies showing people with different cultures and follow it up in the classrooms. Fresno Bee also could help. I think they still have things in the classroom of newspapers that they prepare, but they could do one on the various cultures and it could be used in the classroom from grades 3 through whatever, and those were standards based.

Edie Jessup: Thank you very much all of you. We've completed the three questions. I do have questions from the audience and I'm going to meld some of them together so that we can get your answers.

QUESTION: Just by a show of hands: Which of you have been to a cross section of school sites in Fresno Unified and eaten lunch or breakfast with students to see what is served and what kids choose to eat and how the whole process of kids eating at school goes?

Good. A few (Candidates had visited school meals) I hope that it was enlightening for you. I would recommend all of you here, if you have not been to a school during breakfast or lunch, I encourage you to go and see what the situation is. One of the things I think that you will see is that there isn't enough space. I know of schools that have six lunch periods and kids need to run through the cafeteria space very quickly, so it creates interesting logistics in addition to interesting meals.

I have a couple of specific questions for specific candidates. I will ask them and then if anyone else has a response to it that they would like to make, just raise your hand.

QUESTION: Janet, please expand on how you would educate parents regarding nutrition and what role the school board would have in that.

Janet Ryan, District 6: Well, what I had in mind mainly was for the whole community to promote preschool. We have to prepare our children. We have an enormous preparation gap. One thought I had was that while the children are in preschool perhaps some of the mothers might be able to take some classes that would be provided on nutrition and education and the importance of feeding children the proper foods and the longterm effects of that.

Michael O'Hare, District 6: At the present time we do have parenting classes offered through our adult school and one through our preschool program that delves into the nutritional values for the students, for their children, and for their family.

Paul H. Garcia, District 2: I would like to see at the Title I meetings that they have somebody from the district to talk about nutrition. I think that is one of the biggest meetings that the district has and I think that would be very informational for the parents to receive all the information.

Manuel Nunez, District 2: One of the best ideas that I saw but could not get off the ground for some reason was where the school district provided information on nutrition to all of the pediatricians in the city and thereby having that information go to all the parents or all the future mothers that were going to that particular doctor as well as providing that information at the general hospitals where many of the other people would go. But we also have a Healthmobile bill that goes out and we need to be providing that information as early as possible to parents.

Diane Kallo, District 6: I think that the parents should be educated in terms of the food groups and how many servings of each are required every day. I know this *Lead the Way* has given us an idea of quick snacks of fruits and vegetables, and it's good to know what you can feed your children that will be healthy and quick. I'd also like to say a word about cost. I really don't believe that feeding healthy foods is more expensive than feeding junk. I think that the cost of sugar is pretty high and foods that are packaged with sugar and salt are not necessarily the cheaper ones, so you can cook from scratch and still keep within your budget, I'm sure.

Sean Radbill, District 6: I think going back to what Ms. Ryan said is important, that we educate the parents. Particularly sometimes in the minority groups the parents feel that the Western food maybe is better for their child, and things like that. There is a lot of pressure when the children go to school that their food is funny, things like that. I was always the kid that brought fish for lunch. It was kind of a funny thing, when in reality my lunch was probably more nutritious than the other kids', but I ended up trading my things for fruit gushers and fruit roll-ups. The issue is letting the parents know to not fall for the pressure when the kids go to school, that it's okay.

QUESTION: Meanwhile, until parents are educated, until our community changes the milieu in which children have access to the kinds of food that they have access to, until the poverty rate is not as high as it is, until kids have access to enough good and healthy food, **do you think that we need to change the milieu given that we have children in elementary school being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, that we have children presenting at Valley Children's Hospital with broken bones because of the weight that they are carrying? Do you think that we can wait until that education process occurs fully for our parents?**

Michael O'Hare, District 6: One of the great challenges is that the food program is a federally funded program and as such the federal government has guidelines that we have to follow, but by following these when the child goes back to their home and has food there oftentimes the value system is out of whack. That's one of our biggest challenges. The federal government states we have to have certain portions and certain amounts of things and as a consequence we wind up sometimes when the child goes home of not having an overall all-day good nutritional balance.

QUESTION: Sean, there is a question specifically for you: Are proposing selling cigarettes in schools and are you willing to close the campuses so that kids' access to food while they're in the care of school is better?

Sean Radbill, District 6: No, I'm not interested in selling cigarettes. What I'm saying is I'm comparing the education with anti-tobacco, which has really gotten into the schools now and it's really effective where they're cutting down smoking and things like that. The same thing needs to be done with food. As for closing campuses, that's just too drastic of a measure. Answering the question about what we were talking about earlier, for immediate change like you were saying because we can't wait around while children have bones that are breaking and things like that, it has to be done in the legislature. AB 2686, I have a copy here that (Governor) Schwarzenegger vetoed, would have

required that school lunches cut down on calories. In Los Angeles nearly 10% of the meals included 50% or more calories from fat and 25% of the meals include 40% or more calories from fat.

QUESTION: And this is policy that Fresno Unified School Board could adopt. Is that true?

Sean Radbill, District : Right. I think this is something we need to look at.

Diane Kallo, District 6: We have to remember that calorie consumption with young people is a lot less dangerous than calorie consumption with older people because it's a lot harder to lose weight once you turn 25 than it is when you're 18 and very active. One of the things about addressing obesity, if you see a child that is squinting or having a problem hearing it's not hard to recommend an eye exam and hearing test and so forth. But when you see a child that is very overweight it's very hard for us to say, "You know what? We have a problem here. You're fat and we need to do something about it." We need to be able to get over that hurdle and identify ways in which we can help that child lose weight as well as remain healthy and not be offensive about it. But it's important that we attack the problem as soon as possible.

Manuel Nunez, District 2: Several years ago the President had a physical fitness program throughout United States and a lot of the schools participated, but now we've gotten away from it with the fast foods and all that. I think that educating and adopting a policy that would encourage the parents also.

Edie Jessup: Thank you all very much. There are still questions that people have. My commitment is to writing these up and to getting them to all of you so that you have the opportunity to answer them as you will. This forum has been recorded and we will be publishing your responses to these questions. I want to thank you all and commend you for your commitment to kids and I hope that you will look at the impact that you can have as school board members on creating the policies that will make the environment really great for our kids, and a healthy place for them to grow up in. We can do that. We could be a model for the valley for school districts throughout the valley of how to do this. I look forward to working with all of you in the future and I want to thank you. Thank you again very much, and vote on November 2nd.

PACKET

- Stakeholder list
- Summary of Hunger & Nutrition Forum: Sustainable Agriculture & Jobs
- Request for testimony and comments from State Superintendent of Schools re: policy recommendations
- CROP Walk Flier
- Town Hall Flier: Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation)
- Evaluation

Healthy School Environment Policy Committee

The Health School Environment Policy Committee should represent the diverse cultural, racial, and religious groups that reflect our community. This diversity is represented by the Committee Stakeholders. The committee will work in open public meetings. This Committee will report findings and recommend policy to the FUSD Board of Trustees. The preliminary Report is to be presented by the Committee to the FUSD Board before the end of 2004, with a Final Healthy School Environment Policy Proposal for the FUSD Board's consideration and adoption in January.

The Committee for a Healthy School Environment Policy is preparing recommendations including, but not limited to:

1. Nutrition standards for snack food and beverage sales
2. Proposals to mitigate fiscal impact of restrictions on sales
3. Steps to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables
4. Steps to increase participation in reimbursable meal programs
3. Expansion of nutrition education efforts
6. Establish a process to assess physical activity programs

Contact Edie for more information:

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