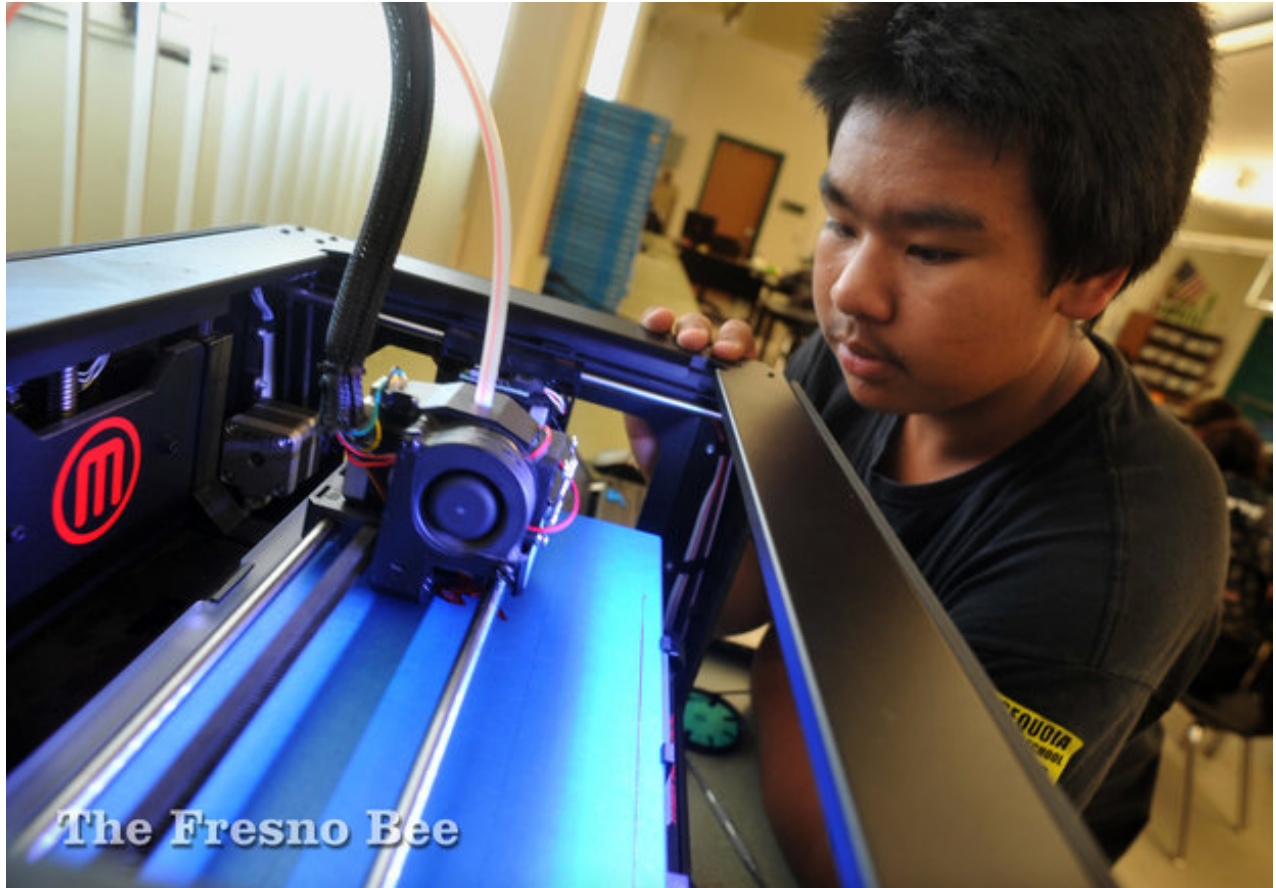


Fresno Unified gets \$7.8 million grant for science-math teacher training | Education

By Barbara Anderson



Sequoia Middle School student Dara Kreng checks on the progress of a plastic logo he's making with a 3D printer in teacher Chris Fuge's class.

JOHN WALKER — THE FRESNO BEE [Buy Photo](#)

Fresno Unified School District has been awarded a nearly \$8 million federal education grant -- one of 24 awarded to colleges and school districts nationwide -- to improve science and math teacher training.

The grant allows the district to establish a Fresno Teacher Residency Program at Fresno State with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math that covers the spectrum of teaching from kindergarten to 12th grade.

The district is among two dozen getting a piece of the \$35 million allotted in this year's Teacher Quality Partnership, a grant competition President Barack Obama announced in May.

The Fresno Unified grant for \$7,795,066 will support the training of 300 teacher residents over five years, said Kim Mecum, associate superintendent for human resources.

The grant builds on others that the district has secured in the past five years with the goal of putting effective teachers in every classroom and increasing the diversity of the teaching work force, Mecum said.

"Any time you receive a grant of this significance -- there's only 24 given in the nation -- you really have to prove you're reliable for that kind of funding," she said.

Five years ago, the district got a \$2.2 million federal Transition to Teaching grant to target and recruit instructional aides to enter the teaching profession, Mecum said.

And two years ago, the district was awarded \$403,000 from the Bechtel Foundation for a teacher residency program in science, math, technology and engineering for grades four through eight. The first group of 13 teacher residents will finish the program this semester at California State University, Fresno. A second group of 24 students began the program this summer.

This latest grant allows the district and Fresno State's Kremen School of Education to expand the residency program to include transitional kindergarten, first, second and third grades and high school grades, Mecum said.

Teacher residents have the opportunity to earn not only a multiple subject credential to teach in kindergarten to eighth grades but a foundational credential in math or science to teach those subjects in middle and high school.

Each also will get a stipend of about \$12,000 to help with college or living expenses for the program's duration, which is 15 to 18 months. In return, they must agree to teach in Fresno Unified schools for a certain number of years, if the district hires them.

Fresno Unified and the university are working on details, but most likely the teachers will have to make a three-year commitment to the district, said Colleen Torgerson, coordinator for school partnerships for teacher preparation at Fresno State.

The latest grant also requires that 65% of the 300 teacher residents be members of underrepresented groups to increase workforce diversity, Mecum said.

Mecum said she isn't concerned about reaching that target.

According to the district, seven of the 13 students set to complete the current program this semester are Hispanic, five are Caucasian and one is Asian. Of the 24 students who began the program this summer, 11 are Hispanic, eight are Caucasian, four are Asian and one is African American.

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