One more for checklist

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Let's add to Tate Hill's "Checklist for a prosperous city" (commentary Feb. 28) by including a strategy that focuses on youth who aren't stellar students and young men of color falling victim to Fresno Unified School District's harsh discipline policies. How are we to have a prosperous community if youth are not graduating high school and instead led down the "school to prison pipeline"?

Fresno Unified School District's trustees must adopt and implement a restorative discipline model allowing students to take responsibility for their actions and continuing with their education, instead of pushing them out with unnecessary suspensions and expulsions.

According to Children Now, during the 2010-2011 school year, Fresno Unified suspended one in every five K-12th-grade students -- that's 14,600 suspensions! Sadly, during that same school year, only 73% of students graduated from high school on time.

Keeping youth in school and on track to graduate is a better alternative than pushing them out into a "welcoming" community of gangs and crime. Keeping youth out of the juvenile justice system and pushing for their success should be a priority, as they are the key to a prosperous future.

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