



PRESS RELEASE

Poway Unified School District

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Poway Unified Awarded Prestigious Golden Bell Award for its Career Technical Education Programs

(San Diego/Poway, CA) – The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is extremely proud to announce that it is the recipient of the Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association (CSBA). This prestigious honor, which highlights the best education practices across the State, is being awarded to the PUSD Career Technical Education (CTE) Program’s “Jump-Starting Pathways to Rewarding Careers” program.



Through PUSD’s CTE program, students can receive real-world, hands-on experiences in a career area that interests them and that connects them to their core academics. PUSD’s CTE program represents a wide variety of industry sectors, from agriculture, engineering, and business, to arts, construction, and medicine. Exposure to CTE pathways in PUSD starts as early as elementary school, where students learn about their strengths, interests, and passions through programs such as Project Lead the Way, Xello Career Exploration tools, BizTown, and more.

Over the past several years, PUSD’s CTE department has worked with school site and district leaders, counselors, and teachers to closely examine pathway offerings, completion patterns, curriculum alignment, and promotion and post-secondary transition opportunities to improve access and equity for

students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, female students in STEM, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and students in foster care or experiencing homelessness. By recognizing and remedying misalignment in both course and pathway offerings; promoting and celebrating pathway completion through an innovative certification program, transcript notation, and diploma seal; and promoting cross-grade course-alike planning that brought high school and middle school pathway teachers together, the enrollment in PUSD CTE courses has grown 70%, serving 20,742 students. Specifically, female enrollment has increased by 67%, English Learners +16%, Students with Disabilities +77%, Low Socioeconomic Status +83%, Homeless/Foster Youth +213%.

“I’m especially proud of how our district has worked hard to improve access for historically underrepresented students in high-demand STEM fields such as computer science, engineering, health sciences, and business/entrepreneurship,” said Superintendent Marian Kim Phelps. “Earlier exposure and exploration of these areas helps to inspire more students in pursuing their passions and dreams in high school, college, and future careers.”

One student provided the following comments: “Having taken engineering courses in high school, I was able to discover different career paths in the industry and understand what each path requires. From there, I was able to form a clear idea of what I wanted to pursue post-high school. I was able to apply skills learned in the classroom directly in my internship at Northrop Grumman, where I excelled. These experiences helped me succeed in a male-dominated industry, one where many leaders don’t come from backgrounds like mine, that might have seemed intimidating to be a part of; I am better prepared for college, career, and life.”

Executive Director Kathleen Porter added, “More than ever before, our students are yearning for a voice in their educational journey. We believe that we have provided a unique opportunity for student voice and agency through our work, and look forward to sharing this work with other districts.”



About CSBA’s Golden Bell Award Program

The Golden Bell Awards are presented by the California School Boards Association to promote excellence in public education and school board governance practices. The awards reflect the depth and breadth of education programs and governance decisions supporting these programs that are necessary to address students’ changing needs. CSBA is a non-profit education association that represents the elected officials who govern

public school district and county offices of education, supporting nearly 1,000 education agencies and more than 6 million students statewide. To learn more about the Golden Bell Awards and all 39 winners, visit: <https://gb.csba.org/>

About Poway Unified School District

The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is an award-winning, national leader in TK through 12 public education. PUSD serves 41 schools in the northern suburbs of San Diego County. PUSD is the 3rd largest public school district in the County, serving nearly 35,000 ethnically diverse students and 4,000 staff members. Named a 2019 California Exemplary District and 2022 California Pivotal Practices District, PUSD’s vision is “to create culture and conditions to empower world-class learners.”

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