



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 10, 2017 CONTACT: William Diepenbrock PHONE: 909-206-5304

Baldwin Park Unified Elementary School Transforms Classrooms into Tech- Infused Learning Centers

BALDWIN PARK – Baldwin Park Unified has transformed nine classrooms at De Anza Elementary School into tech-infused, flexible-design learning centers in which each student has access to a laptop, teachers can seamlessly integrate digital tools into instruction and desks can be quickly reconfigured to accommodate almost any lesson goal.

“These classrooms are completely outfitted for the 21st century,” Superintendent Froilan N. Mendoza said. “They possess the perfect combination of technical tools and flexible environment to support collaboration, critical thinking and unbounded academic exploration.”

The project’s roots stretch to 2015, when Baldwin Park Unified replaced aging portable classrooms at De Anza with Gen 7-style buildings constructed by American Modular Systems. The new classrooms – which serve three classes of first-graders, second-graders and third-graders – are energy efficient, high-quality spaces that include skylights to provide ample natural lighting.

At the end of the construction, school leaders discovered they had saved about \$600,000 in matching funds – dollars that would have been lost if not dedicated to the project. So, they directed a portion of the funds to upgrade the classrooms’ digital footprint: a 36-laptop Chromebook cart, teacher laptop and tablet, and mobile big-screen TV.

As a final element, the District added modular, wheeled furniture that allows teachers to create centers of two to five students, depending on the level of collaboration desired each day.

The tools came together this winter, but teachers have been preparing since summer with classes on integrating technology into their lessons.

“It has really added a big creative element to my classroom,” third-grade teacher Patricia Shelton said. “The students are just taking off – creating documents, learning to code, writing blogs and even creating videos to demonstrate their understanding of math concepts.”

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Shelton, a 19-year De Anza teacher, said she has engaged in more than 18 hours of online preparation on classroom technology, collaborated with fellow teachers and participated in full-day training programs to ensure she was ready for the arrival of the digital tools.

Her first step was to educate students on what they could achieve with the tools – including elements such as document creation and sharing – followed by a rigorous review of internet safety.

Now, she tries to ensure technology plays some role in every day's lesson plan. On Mondays, for example, each child updates a blog crafted around a theme of their choosing. Students write blog items on pets, sea shells and one, a top-ranked wrestler, writes about her competitive world outside the classroom.

"They love it. They look forward to it every Monday and I'm seeing growth in writing and communication," Shelton said.

Shelton said the digital tools also allow her to customize instruction to each student's needs, especially in English language arts and math, and provide her a host of data so she can be sure her lessons are connecting.

"Education is no longer just learning and memorizing facts – it's about collaborating with others, solving complex problems and developing different forms of communication and leadership skills," she said. "That's what I want them to take out of my class this year."

PHOTOS

BPUSD_TECH_1: De Anza Elementary third-grade teacher Patricia Shelton works with children in her tech-infused classroom, which contains modular furniture that can be quickly configured for different sized collaboration groups.

BPUSD_TECH_2: Every student in De Anza Elementary teacher Patricia Shelton's third-grade classroom has access to a Chromebook thanks to a technology project that spans nine of the school's 21 classrooms.

BPUSD_TECH_3: De Anza Elementary third-grade teacher Patricia Shelton helps a student with a computer lesson. Students in the classroom are learning to code, writing blogs and creating videos with their expanded access to computers and software tools.

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