



Press Release

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Whittier Union Expands Architectural Class Offerings

Construction Crafts class set to launch for Adult School students in fall

WHITTIER – Whittier Union High School District is expanding its course offerings in architecture and related topics, including offering Frontier High School students a summer drafting class that teaches the basics of drawing and planning for building structures and the introduction of a new adult education construction class in September.

Leading the expansion is architectural drafting teacher Mike Griffie, who has taught the class at Santa Fe High School for 20 years. He manages the school's Mechanical and Architectural Drafting Academy, a California Partnership Academy that is structured as a school-within-a-school and integrates academic and career technical education.

This summer, Griffie taught architectural drafting to five classes of Frontier High students, giving them access to the hands-on, career-oriented class, which is available at the comprehensive high schools.

"Starting a career right out of high school can be very challenging and I think that most students should at least go to a community college for experience and guidance," Griffie said. "My hope is to encourage students to get an associate degree and also acquire a skillset that makes them hireable – and I think my class sets them on a good college and career path to accomplishing that."

At Frontier, students constructed paper bridges and paper columns to hold different amounts of weight while exploring tutorials on how to use AutoCAD, a computer program used by professional architects, engineers and graphic designers for digital mapping.

Linley Palmisano, a junior who took the class, learned about the structural integrity of columns and, with a partner, built a set of paper columns that held books weighing more than 120 pounds.

"I never thought I would ever be interested in architecture at the start of the summer, but now it seems like a great career," Palmisano said. "Mr. Griffie is always mentioning taking architecture in college at schools like Rio Hondo College, so I think I might look into that."

Griffie's new night adult education class, Construction Crafts, will teach job site safety, hand and power tool safety, basic rigging, materials handling, and construction drawings and math. He will also provide insight on how to write a résumé and give tips on how to dress for a job interview.

The construction class will loosely tie in with the architectural drafting class since both careers revolve around the designing, planning, managing and building of structures. The class will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday starting Sept. 5 at Santa Fe High School.

Griffie plans to expand classroom activities to teach more hands-on construction and is looking to partner with local organizations for donations of wood, nails and tools to teach students how to build dog houses.

“Whittier Union aims every day to inspire all of our students to believe in themselves and discover their individual talents. Preparing them for careers and exposing them to the possibilities is crucial to achieving that mission,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “Mike Griffie’s architectural drafting and construction classes will provide our students with amazing new choices and opportunities that will lead them to new academic and career heights.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

080817_WUHSD_ARCHITECT1: Frontier High School senior Jacob Ontiveros, right, shows architectural drafting teacher Mike Griffie his paper bridge, which held two 6-ounce fishing weights thanks to a structural method called cross-sectional dimension. Griffie’s class showcased the basics of drawing and planning for buildings and structures to urge students to consider careers in architecture.

080817_WUHSD_ARCHITECT2: Frontier High School seniors Joshua Creepingbear, left, and Moses Garcia show off their paper bridge, which held five 6-ounce fishing weights during the school’s summer architectural drafting class.

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The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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