



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-7600 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2022

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

Fontana Unified Dual-Language Teacher Accepted to National Air and Space Museum's Teacher Innovator Institute

FONTANA, CA – Dolores Huerta International Academy (DHIA) sixth-grade Spanish dual-language immersion (DLI) teacher Ashley Silva wants to make learning a fun and innovative experience for her students. She is constantly looking for new approaches to blend STEAM concepts into the school's inquiry-based, transdisciplinary International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.

Silva, who models herself after Ms. Frizzle, the exuberant teacher from "The Magic School Bus" TV series, will have the opportunity to expand her science, technology, engineering, art and math teaching skills after being accepted to the Teacher Innovator Institute (TII) professional development program, which will be held July 11 to 22 at the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) in Washington, D.C.

One of only 10 teachers across the U.S. to be accepted to the program this year, Silva will join education and STEAM experts to explore the connections between STEAM education and authentic learning. Silva will be part of the program for two years; in the first year, she will work with a mentor to develop new strategies in teaching, and in the second year, she will mentor a new cohort of STEAM educators.

"I can't wait to go to Washington, D.C. and take part in this amazing program. I feel very honored," Silva said. "My passion for teaching is driven by the magic that is in my classroom every single day. I love the deep conversations that I have with my students. I take great pride in working with wonderful educators and building authentic relationships with parents. Going to TII is the opportunity of a lifetime."

For Silva, every school day is a chance to guide her students towards being independent, self-directed learners through teamwork and collaboration, with a series of activities that are both educational and fun. Whether designing and engineering roller coasters or studying hot dog mummification, Silva's students incorporate technology and art in ways that inspire and challenge them.

"As a DLI teacher at an IB candidate school, I want to incorporate STEAM concepts in ways that transcend disciplines while instilling my scholars with confidence, love and empowerment," Silva said. "Getting to know my students as whole-hearted human beings with hope and dreams beyond what they share with me in the classroom is something I strive for every year when I meet my new students."

Silva said she is especially excited to see how her TII experience will shape her daily lesson plans. As part of the Primary Years Programme, IB students must prepare an end-of-year exhibition that encompasses what they have learned throughout the year. Silva, who is part of DHIA's Instructional Leadership Team, said she is eager to bring back innovative practices to implement in the classroom and share with her colleagues.

TII scholars will split their time between a series of workshops, discussions, STEAM projects and team-building activities, touring the Udvar-Hazy Center at NASM – which contains thousands of space artifacts including the Discovery Space Shuttle and a Concorde jet – and participating in STEAM-related fun, including indoor skydiving and evening stargazing at the Phoebe Waterman Haas Public Observatory.

Silva will continue to stay connected with her TII mentors and cohort throughout the 2022-23 school year while preparing for her next step as a TII mentor in summer 2023. Silva was recently chosen by her peers as DHIA’s 2021-22 Teacher of the Year.

“I am extremely proud of Ashley and the tremendous impact she has made on her students and DHIA colleagues over the years,” DHIA principal Sandra Loudermilk said. “Ashley is never afraid to try new concepts and we expect her enthusiasm and creativity will make her TII experience as educational and fun for her cohort and mentors as her classroom is for her students.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_NASM1: Dolores Huerta International Academy sixth-grade Spanish dual-language immersion teacher Ashley Silva was recently selected to attend the National Air and Space Museum’s Teacher Innovator Institute professional development program.

FUSD_NASM2: Dolores Huerta International Academy sixth-grade Spanish dual-language immersion teacher Ashley Silva channels Ms. Frizzle from the “Magic School Bus” TV series to inspire her students to be creative and have fun learning STEAM subjects. Silva has been selected to attend the National Air and Space Museum’s Teacher Innovator Institute, to be held July 11 to 22 in Washington, D.C.

###