



NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified CTE Students Advance to SkillsUSA National Conference

FONTANA, CA – Four Summit High School career technical education (CTE) students will advance to the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June after earning gold medals during the California SkillsUSA finals, leading an effort that saw 13 Summit competitors win gold, silver or bronze medals.

During the state finals, held virtually in April, Summit senior Christian Magana and junior Vincent Caudillo took gold medals in Cybersecurity, an event that saw Summit teams sweep the top four positions. Summit juniors Harsh Patel and Elijah Walker took gold in Robotics and Automation Technology.

The winning teams were forged from two of Summit's signature CTE pathways, Mechatronics and Ethical Hacking. Mechatronics explores how electrical and mechanical engineering can create more economical and reliable systems, while Ethical Hacking trains students how to protect these systems by identifying and eliminating weak points.

"This is an amazing performance from our Mechatronics and Ethical Hacking students," Summit High School math teacher Bruce Tuttle said. "The kids are really excited to see what they can do on a national stage. They have come a long way in such a short time. This is a testament to Summit's CTE program, which teaches students essential skills while also encouraging them to be creative and innovative."

Summit High's Cybersecurity teams have worked together since students joined the Ethical Hacking pathway as freshmen. The teams have accumulated valuable experience by competing in events such as CyberPatriot and the Mayor's Cup.

"It is an honor to represent Summit High School and Fontana on the national stage," Magana said. "I would not be where I am today mentally, academically or physically if I had not found my passion for cybersecurity. It took a lot of hard work and dedication to get to this point and I am glad all of it is being recognized."

Summit High math teacher Marco Torres says the strength of Mechatronics pathway is in allowing students to create their own designs, follow their own game plan, learn from their mistakes and advance to the next level of instruction with confidence and increasing skill.

“Students realize that this is just the start, they are getting their feet wet and they realize there is still so much more out there,” Torres said. “They are competing in SkillsUSA, they are trying different things and they’ve found their niche and they get really passionate about it. They start with Urban Search and Rescue, then Mechatronics and they keep growing each year.”

Summit juniors Jehad Abdallah, Yasmeen Abu-Awad, Mohamad Awad and Esmerelda Esparza-Ledezma won Entrepreneurship silver medals for their business, BeSpoke Pods, a cost-effective option for businesses focusing on converting remodeled shipping containers into on-demand pop-up retail shops. Summit senior Stephanie Nogales won a bronze medal in Employment Application Process.

“SkillsUSA has been a great opportunity for students to display their industry standard skills,” Summit CTE department chair Valerie McClellan said. “Our District, teachers and administrators have gone above and beyond to provide state of the art technology so our students could achieve these monumental milestones. Our students have represented Fontana well. Good luck to all our champion competitors.”

SkillsUSA is a nonprofit organization that prepares students for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, with 19,000 classrooms conducting training nationwide, covering 130 job categories. SkillsUSA holds regional and state competitions throughout the United States.

“We want to extend a special thank you to our CTE District Advisory members, who support our programs throughout the year, and to the Carl D. Perkins and Career Technical Education Incentive Grant and FUSD LCAP programs for funding support that ensures students have access to building workforce skills and leadership opportunities,” said Tracey Vackar, Executive Director of College, Careers and Economic Development.

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_SKILLSUSA_NATIONALS: Four Summit High School students will advance to the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June after earning gold medals at the California SkillsUSA finals in April. Senior Christian Magana (left) and junior Vincent Caudillo (center) won gold medals for CyberSecurity and junior Elijah Walker (right) won a gold medal for Robotics and Automation Technology. Walker will be joined by his teammate, junior Harsh Patel, not pictured.

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