



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

Fontana Unified Administrators Envision the Future of Education during Leadership Institute

FONTANA, CA – Nearly 200 Fontana Unified administrators brainstorm creative solutions to educational challenges, celebrated innovation among their peers and strengthened their management skills during the District’s inaugural Leadership Institute on July 16 and 17.

The two-day, team-building seminar kicked off with a keynote address from Dr. Adam Steltzner, the chief engineer on NASA’s Mars 2020 project. Steltzner discussed his unconventional path to becoming a NASA engineer and discussed the importance of embracing curiosity-based decision making.

“When we rely on the model of what has worked in the past instead of seeing the world as it is, we can get stagnant,” Steltzner said. “It’s important to continue to explore and to build a culture of curiosity and collaboration, where separate ideas can come together to provide solutions.”

Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett also discussed the district’s vision and encouraged administrators to continue building their moonshots – long-range goals to propel Fontana Unified into the future – for their schools and departments.

“We need to challenge our students, but it needs to happen in the context of the world they’re living in,” Bassett said. “Moonshots are meant to equip students to solve society’s bigger problems.”

Administrators from various school sites and district departments then split into 12 groups to design innovative learning environments that address current educational challenges and provide opportunities for creativity, critical thinking and collaboration.

Over the two days, the teams designed prototype learning environments that had to be sustainable and scalable, integrated community and business partnerships, adapted to last-minute obstacles and were marketable to the community. The teams then presented their prototypes before a “Shark Tank” style panel of judges.

The District also awarded recognition to administrators who have spearheaded innovative projects and made strides in launching their site’s moonshot.

Errol Glenn, Director of Grants and Funding, received the first-ever Moon Man Award for spearheading the District initiative to use renewable energy resources to power its school sites and facilities, an effort projected to save more than \$68 million over 20 years.

Three principals were also honored with the Launchpad Award; Dorothy Grant Elementary Principal Anne-Marie Cabrales and Chaparral Elementary Principal Dr. Andrea McClain were applauded for bringing the Code to the Future computer science curriculum to their schools, while Kaiser High School Principal Terry Abernathy was recognized for kickstarting a renewable energy pathway at his school.

Fontana Unified launched the Leadership Institute to replace its annual back-to-school seminar with a more engaging forum to spark creativity and inspire excitement for the 2018-19 school year.

“This year’s leadership training was a little different, and a little uncomfortable compared to the status quo,” Bassett said. “We wanted to encourage our administrators to explore a different perspective on education and to dream of the best ways to serve our students in a rapidly changing world.”

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PHOTO CAPTION:

072718_FUSD_LEADERSHIP: Kaiser High School Principal Terry Abernathy presents his team’s prototype of an innovative learning environment during Fontana Unified’s inaugural Leadership Institute on July 17.