



# Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Fontana Unified's Innovation Empire Encourages Students to Push Creative Boundaries

**FONTANA, CA** – The sky is the limit for Fontana Unified K-12 students looking to push their creative boundaries and channel their entrepreneurial spirit, as the debut of the District's much-anticipated Innovation Empire is set for the 2023-24 school year, which begins Aug. 3.

Fueled by the imaginations of young scholars, and buoyed by a Makerspace stocked with a fleet of state-of-the-art 3D, laser and ultra-violet printers, high-powered industrial drills, water cutters and CNC mills, the Innovation Empire is poised to be the nucleus for a new generation of STEM learners desiring to be engineers, coders and business owners.

"Innovation Empire is the future of education," FUSD Strategic Innovations Facilitator Gibran Carter said. "Students will be taken through the whole manufacturing process, from brainstorming ideas to learning what it takes to turn that idea into reality. Fontana students, from elementary to high school, will have the opportunity to become out-of-the-box thinkers, ready to change the world."

Innovation Empire encompasses two buildings: a collaborative space that will serve as a think tank for student groups using project-based learning to spur creativity, helmed by Carter; and a Makerspace where students will design and develop their own creations, overseen by FUSD Makerspace Manager Josh Brown.

"The Innovation Empire has an extraordinary range of high-tech equipment that will allow our students to use just about any technique or material they need to complete a project," Brown said. "Makerspace will encourage students to think beyond what is possible and experiment, which is the basis of all innovation. The best part of Innovation Empire is that it makes learning fun."

Innovation Empire opened its doors to Almond Elementary School third- and fourth-graders in May for a "Little Makers" introduction program, where they spent an hour with Carter discussing entrepreneurship and the difference between providing a service and selling a product. The students then received a tour of the Makerspace from Brown and took home samples of 3D printed products.

"This space will be open to all Fontana Unified students," Carter said. "We are especially excited to bring in the younger students and get them acquainted with the program and equipment, so that they can gain fundamental knowledge about STEM and start thinking about what projects they can work on as they grow older, as well as putting them on the path to a lucrative career."

Ted J. Porter Elementary School fourth-grader Carlos Alfaro is one of nearly 200 Fontana Unified students who participated in a U.S. Engineering League summer camp, held at Innovation Empire in June. Alfaro rushed up to Carter and Brown to proudly show them the SumoBot he created at the camp.

“I just like robots,” Alfaro said. “This is my opportunity to be me.”

This fall, Innovation Empire will partner with the District’s Career Technical Education (CTE) department and Honeywell International for a Shapers Academy, which will bring in industry professionals, both in-person and virtually, for a project-based master class that will teach students about sustainability and career paths.

“Innovation Empire is a huge step forward in STEM education, a place where students can immerse themselves in ideas and technology, and do more than just dream about the future, but take their first steps in creating a better future for everyone,” Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. “Fontana Unified is creating a template of success for its students that will propel them into college and career.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_INNOVATION1:** Superintendent Miki R. Inbody visits with Fontana Unified students from the U.S. Engineering League as they participate at a summer camp held at the District’s new Innovation Empire complex in June. Innovation Empire, which is set to open its doors to all students at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, aims to educate a new generation of STEM learners.

**FUSD\_INNOVATION2:** Ted J. Porter Elementary School fourth-grader Carlos Alfaro shows off a SumoBot he designed and created at a U.S. Engineering League summer camp held at the District’s Innovation Empire in June. Innovation Empire, slated to roll out at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, was designed to encourage students to push their creative boundaries and channel their entrepreneurial spirit.

**FUSD\_INNOVATION3:** FUSD Strategic Innovations Facilitator Gibran Carter stands in the conference room of Innovations Empire, which is poised to be the nucleus for a new generation of STEM learners. The complex includes a collaborative space that will be used as a think tank for Fontana Unified students, and a Makerspace stocked with a fleet of state-of-the-art high-tech equipment. Innovation Empire will be available to all FUSD students and staff.

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