



HACIENDA LA PUENTE

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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La Puente High Expands VAPA Programs with New CTE Pathways in Dance, Graphic Design

CITY OF INDUSTRY – La Puente High School students have an opportunity to immerse themselves in dance and nurture their creative talents through the school’s popular and dynamic dance program, which has expanded and transformed into a three-year career technical education (CTE) pathway – one of three exciting new visual and performing arts (VAPA) programs making their debut in the 2023-24 school year.

La Puente High has also rolled out a three-year Graphic Design CTE pathway, which will teach students how to create their own products and learn what it takes to become a professional entrepreneur. The new CTE pathways are joined by the Youth Cinema Project, which comes to La Puente High after its successful implementation at select Hacienda La Puente Unified elementary and middle schools.

The dance pathway is open to any student, regardless of experience, with the first year dedicated to learning the fundamentals of dance. In the second year, students will learn about dance history, with a focus on teaching students to choreograph their own dance routines. The third year is the Capstone course, where students will both learn and teach dance, working with elementary and middle school students, as well as outside professionals.

The pathway aims to prepare students to enter the workforce, either as teachers, fitness instructors or stage choreographers. For Sparks Middle School students, the pathway begins early, with La Puente High Dance and Cheer Program Director Michelle Riggs now teaching dance to students in grades 7-8.

“The dance program at La Puente is truly a unique and rewarding experience,” LPHS senior Alyssa Sanchez said. “You not only get to perform, but engage with your school and District community. I would encourage any incoming freshman considering dance to not let anyone diminish your shine and go for it – you won’t regret it.”

The graphic design pathway is for students with a flair for creativity, entrepreneurship, drawing, communication and more, focusing on creating visual content, adding it to apparel and introducing the students to small business ownership. Students will then reach out to local businesses to offer their services. La Puente graphic designers recently created beautiful school-themed shirts for Bixby Elementary School’s color run, as well as shirts for La Puente football players and other clubs on campus.

“I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do when I first started high school, but graphic design has been an out-of-this-world experience and I’ve learned so much,” La Puente sophomore Calico Lopez said. “The teacher not only shows us various ways to bring things to life but also encourages us how to successfully operate a business.”

MORE

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The Youth Cinema Project comes to La Puente High after pilot programs in elementary and middle schools across the District inspired students to explore the basics of filmmaking and tell their stories. The program, administered by the Los Angeles Latino International Film Institute, focuses on all forms of film production, including script writing, directing, lighting, sound mixing, acting and editing.

Industry professionals will visit with students twice a week to help with their storytelling and lesson plans. Students will have the opportunity to showcase their films during the Film Institute's annual summer film festival in June.

"I think it's really cool that the District offers this program to students of all ages," La Puente senior Angel Millan said. "When I grow up, I'd love to work at an animation studio so the Youth Cinema Project is an amazing experience for me."

The dance, graphic design and cinema programs are still open for any student wishing to enroll. Applications are currently being accepted for all classes. For more information, visit the La Puente High Future Warrior [website](#).

"Thank you to our Board of Education for helping us reach new levels of achievement by bringing new innovative CTE pathways and expanding our programs across the District," Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jiménez said. "At Hacienda La Puente Unified, we are dedicated to inspiring deep learning and helping to prepare our students for exciting careers across a multitude of emerging professions."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

HLPUSD_CTE1: Youth Cinema Project student Angel Millan discusses the success of La Puente High School's new film program during an interview on Aug. 25.

HLPUSD_CTE2: La Puente High School announces its dance captains for the 2023-24 season with a team celebration during the first day of school on Aug. 9.

HLPUSD_CTE3: Junior Dolant'a Foley, a Digital Graphics student ambassador, showcases the new CTE classroom and equipment during a District interview on Aug. 25.

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