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NEWS RELEASE

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South Hills High School Business Program Develops Students into Budding Business Professionals

COVINA, CA – South Hills High School students are learning the unique skill sets they need to thrive in the world of business thanks to the school’s Business Management Career Technical Education pathway, which offers students the chance to learn and grow by operating as real companies.

The pathway consists of four classes: Entrepreneurship, Sports Management, International Baccalaureate Business Management, and Virtual Enterprise. Virtual Enterprise, the most advanced class in the pathway, groups students into different functional departments -- including executive office, marketing, design, finance, and human resources -- and challenges them to design and develop a product of their own. Students can take the Virtual Enterprise class multiple times to gain experience in different business roles and with different business plans.

“The Virtual Enterprise class allows students to find what they’re really good at and perfect those skills,” business teacher Barry Hepner said. “Operating within different departments of real companies helps them discover what they enjoy doing most, while also learning and practicing real-world skills that they can apply on Day One of their future careers.”

One of the companies created by South Hills students this year is ReLace, a tennis shoe brand that uses recycled materials such as other shoes, clothes, and plastics to create new shoes. Students manage the entire product-development cycle, from concept to the design, finance, and marketing of their product, gaining insight into what it is really like to work in the business industry.

Students then go on to showcase their work at local and national competitions, presenting their business plans through pitches and written documents to an audience that includes business professionals and their peers.

“I love seeing my students have that ‘a-ha!’ moment when they see all that they’ve accomplished,” Hepner said. “Traveling and competing with a product that they created and worked on together really helps to show them what they are capable of in their lives.”

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Virtual Enterprise Chief Executive Officer (CEO) senior Saniya Tillis said she values the class so much that she has taken it three years in a row, learning something new and unique each year. Tillis was the head of the finance department in her first and second year in the class before becoming CEO for the 2022-23 school year.

“The Business program has taught me a lot about leadership and how to analyze group dynamics and run a team effectively,” Tillis said. “I have also learned a lot of useful information about finance – not many students my age can say they know how to create and interpret a balance sheet!”

Tillis plans to attend a four-year university after she graduates in the spring, and major in either business management or economics to further perfect the skills she has developed in the program.

“Our Business CTE pathway shines a light on our exemplary students that go above and beyond to learn the skills of real-world business professionals,” Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Eminhizer said. “We are thrilled to see our students learning, creating, and competing in ways that showcase their many unique gifts.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_BUSINESS1: South Hills High School’s Business CTE pathway teaches students become business professionals by creating, developing, and showcasing their own product.

CVUSD_BUSINESS2: South Hills High School Virtual Enterprise students are grouped into departments and function as a real-world company. CEOs hold weekly board meetings with department heads to stay connected on the company’s overall progress.

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