



# Fontana Unified School District

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## New Leadership Inspires Engagement, Innovation at Fontana Unified Elementary School

**FONTANA, CA** – With a new principal at the helm, Chaparral Academy of Technology has embraced its "Level Up Your A-Game" theme, helping students find renewed excitement and passion for learning, and setting the stage for a dynamic school year.

Chaparral Academy's schoolwide call to level up your A-game or the five characteristic traits that start with A: altruistic, aspiring, artistic, adaptable, and achieving has not only inspired Roadrunner students but faculty and staff – or "staffulty" a term Principal Tim McCaffrey calls them.

"I feel blessed that our 'staffulty' has embraced our mission of creating a safe, welcoming, and meaningful environment," McCaffrey said. "Scholars love coming here, and so do the 'staffulty.' We value every individual and are building a culture where everyone thrives."

McCaffrey, who was named the Association of California School Administrators Region 12 Elementary School Principal of the Year in 2023, has worked in Fontana Unified since 2006. He served as Almond Elementary School's principal for five years before transitioning to Chaparral Academy this summer.

Chaparral Academy kindergarten teacher Shawna Corona has been at the school since it opened its doors in 2001. Having met McCaffrey through District committees, Corona knew a little about his energetic nature and thought he could bring a spark to the school.

"He has been a breath of fresh air; our leadership meetings are so filled with energy," Corona said of McCaffrey. "We all bounce ideas off each other, we feel like we have a voice."

McCaffrey is known for bringing an infectious joy and energy to all his initiatives. Twice a month, McCaffrey wears an inflatable star costume – sometimes joined by other inflatable characters like Mr. Potato Head – and surprises the classroom with the best average attendance with a mini-dance party and a "Best Attendance" trophy.

Throughout this school year, Chaparral Academy has been laser-focused on making school fun for both students and "staffulty." The school has incorporated tech into every classroom and designed a curriculum to inspire students to challenge themselves as they navigate new concepts in an increasingly digital world.

Chaparral Academy provides one hour of tech instruction per day, even for the school's youngest students.

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In fourth-grade teacher Eric Francis' class, students research shapes and images as they learn to create models of standalone figures, like people, animals, or buildings. Using their Microsoft devices, students design their model, then code and program the classroom's 3-D printer to create it.

"The students love creating their own projects and learning to manipulate shapes into 3-D figures. This leads to greater math and computer science comprehension skills," Francis said. "We have a lot of fun with our 3-D printer. The students are eager to learn the technology required to use the machine."

Future initiatives include a Makerspace in the library to enhance literacy. The technology would be employed to assist English learners increase their vocabulary and comprehension skills. McCaffrey said he is also considering adding a puppeteer space in the library where students could create scripts, props, and costumes to bring stories to life.

Chaparral Academy's transformation is set to level up this summer after the school won the Jostens Renaissance Epic School Revamp earlier this school year. The win comes with a prize package valued up to \$150,000 that will go towards a full campus rebranding, with new murals, banners, and other vibrant visuals that embody the essence of Roadrunner spirit. The school will unveil its revamp on Tuesday, May 13.

"Tim McCaffrey is a whirlwind of ideas, creativity, and energy, but it's his dedication to his students, his faculty, staff, and school community that makes him indispensable in Fontana Unified," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "I am so proud of Chaparral Academy of Technology faculty and staff for embracing the changes he is bringing to campus and enthusiastically assisting him in all his endeavors. This is what education should look like."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_CHAPARRAL1:** Chaparral Academy of Technology Principal Tim McCaffrey (center) visits a fourth-grade classroom as students create figures using their laptops and a 3-D printer in the classroom. McCaffrey has focused on making school fun for students and staff in his first year as the school's principal.

**FUSD\_CHAPARRAL2:** Chaparral Academy of Technology's theme this school year has been for students and staff to level up their A-Game or five traits: altruistic, aspiring, artistic, adaptable, and achieving under first-year school principal Tim McCaffrey.

**FUSD\_CHAPARRAL3:** This school year, Chaparral Academy has implemented one year of tech instruction per day for students of all grade levels. The school has incorporated technology into every classroom and designed a curriculum to inspire students to challenge themselves as they navigate an increasingly digital world.

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