



# Bellflower Unified School District

## Media Release

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## Bellflower Unified Unveils 21st Century Science Lab as District's STEM Focus Expands

**BELLFLOWER** – Students in Bellflower Middle School's engineering and robotics program on Wednesday moved into a newly renovated, state-of-the-art science laboratory that provides three dozen computer stations, four islands for collaboration, modernized lighting, two interactive whiteboards and an electronic instructor control system.

The 1,482 square-foot lab, in the works since late summer, will be the base for a growing number of courses focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) at Bellflower Middle and High School.

"Everything is new. We completely remade the space into a modern facility that enables students to explore a variety of STEM subjects with the best possible tools," Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs said. "This effort represents Bellflower Unified's commitment to preparing our students for success."

Workers gutted an existing lab, replacing aging work stations with customized desks and collaboration islands. Two walls are lined with large-screen, all-in-one computers supported by arms to provide the maximum possible workspace. The computers, which use wireless mice and keyboards, serve as tools for coding instructions for robotics and engineering design via Autodesk software. Lighting in the lab also was updated with new, energy efficient systems.

The four power-enabled islands allow students to work together as they construct projects, such as the spring-loaded cars seventh- and eighth-graders recently created during a class competition in an engineering and robotics course launched this year with Project Lead The Way (PLTW), the nation's leading provider of STEM curriculum. Just under 40 students are enrolled in the course.

**MORE**

## Standard of Excellence - Nothing Less

Bellflower Unified School District provides a pathway for all students to attain the expertise and develop skills of academic excellence that will empower them to become lifelong active learners, demonstrate respect for themselves and others in a dynamic, diverse and global society, become responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizens, and perform successfully in their chosen field and in society.



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Bellflower Unified plans to launch Project Lead The Way's high school engineering program with an Introduction to Engineering Design course in 2016-17 followed by a second-year Principals of Engineering course in 2017-18. PLTW offers a four-year high school engineering sequence, as well as sequences in other STEM fields.

"These new engineering programs build on a Bellflower Unified mission of creating strong preparation for students in STEM fields, such as our award-winning health career program," said Board of Education President Dr. Paul Helzer. "We are continuing to explore innovative ways to expand STEM programs that help provide students with specific skills that will give them an advantage as they prepare for college and explore career options."

STEM jobs are key to the U.S. economy, growing as much as three times faster than non-STEM jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. They provide more stable employment and higher pay than non-STEM fields.

## **CAPTIONS**

**020416\_SCIENCELAB\_1:** Thirty-six computer stations line the walls of Bellflower Middle and High School's new state-of-the-art computer lab, which includes four collaboration islands, new lighting, two interactive whiteboards and an electronic instructor's desk. The renovation was launched in summer to create a modern lab to support a growing number of courses in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

**020416\_SCIENCELAB\_2:** Seventh- and eighth-graders in a new engineering and robotics class work on a spring-powered car. The students are taking the class through Project Lead The Way's Gateway program, which prepares students for high-school engineering courses now being planned.

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