



AZUSA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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AUSD Science Teacher Chosen for New Teachers Academy

Northrop Grumman Foundation Provides STEM Professional Development

Donna Hawkins, a 16-year science teacher from Slauson Middle School, will join 25 colleagues from across the U.S. in learning methods for teaching science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects through a professional development program being launched by the Northrop Grumman Foundation.

Hawkins was selected as part of the inaugural class of educators to participate in workshops, conventions and externships starting this spring at the Foundation's Teachers Academy for Middle School Science Educators.

"I believe that our students need to be proficient in 21st century skills, and the Teachers Academy will help me build these concepts for my students," Hawkins said. "This is the perfect opportunity for me to become a stronger teacher and to further expand and establish our programs at Slauson."

Hawkins said she is especially interested in learning more effective ways to integrate computer design programs and advanced engineering concepts into her eighth-grade STEM courses – topics she began teaching only recently. For example, her students test combinations of various solids and liquids, such as vinegar, Alka-Seltzer and baking soda, as fuels for bottle rockets. After weighing costs and efficiency, students chose the best fuel.

Hawkins teaches topics under the umbrella Project Lead The Way, the nation's leading provider of STEM curriculum. This January, Hawkins will teach students to use computer-aided design (CAD) using Autodesk Inventor, a program used by drafters, engineers and architects. By the end of the course, students will know how to digitally create their own playground equipment.

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“I am excited that Donna has been accepted into a wonderful program that will allow her to continue her development as a teacher,” Board President Yolanda Rodriguez-Pena said. “Her commitment to her profession and her students serves as an example of the dedication our educators bring to their classrooms in the District.”

Over the next year, Hawkins will attend various professional development opportunities, including:

- The National Science Teachers Association Conference on Science Education in Nashville in the spring, featuring workshops and exhibits on STEM instructional practices related to the Next Generation Science Standards;
- A five-day workshop at a Northrop Grumman facility during the summer, with discussions on effective teaching strategies in engineering design practices; and
- A two-week externship over the summer at a Northrop Grumman facility, where teachers will partner with engineers or technologists to learn industry-specific skills required for success in the field.

To complete the program, Hawkins will develop a lesson plan, strategy or activity linked to the thematic area of her externship experience to implement into her classroom curriculum the following school year.

“We are thrilled that these programs are offered to our teachers as a way to advance our STEM programs,” Azusa Unified Superintendent Linda Kaminski said. “These opportunities will further our teachers’ progression in their careers which will positively impact our students’ academic experience in the classroom.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1TEACHERACADEMY: Slauson Middle School science teacher Donna Hawkins (above) giving one-on-one support to her students. Hawkins was selected as one of 25 educators across the nation to participate in the inaugural Teachers Academy for Middle School Science Educators launched by Northrop Grumman Foundation.

2TEACHERACADEMY: Slauson Middle School science teacher Donna Hawkins was selected as one of 25 educators across the nation to participate in Northrop Grumman Foundation’s inaugural Teachers Academy for Middle School Science Educators. She will take part in a professional development program to learn methods in teaching science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects.

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