



# AZUSA

## UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

### PRESS RELEASE

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## **Center Middle School Debuts New \$200,000 LCAP-Funded Engineering and Medical Pathways STEM Lab**

Azusa Unified officially debuted Center Middle School's new \$200,000 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lab during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 21. The classroom serves as a preparatory conduit for students who will go on to Azusa High School's Engineering Pathway or Gladstone High School's Medical Academy.

The lab, fully funded through AUSD's 2014-17 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), features learning solutions supplied by PITSCO Inc., a leading STEM educational service provider.

"We have made a major investment in our students' future by creating STEM Pathways at our high schools," AUSD Superintendent Dr. Linda Kaminski said. "In this room, we will help to develop and nurture the creative brilliance of our children, provide them with the academic tools they need to absorb knowledge and prepare them for the challenges that lay ahead."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by AUSD board members, staff, parents, students and community members. The District was also presented with certificates of recognition from State Sen. Ed Hernandez, the office of Rep. Grace Napolitano and the Azusa Chamber of Commerce.

The STEM lab demonstrates AUSD's ongoing commitment to promoting college and career-readiness and access to technology for all of its students, while developing curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking and collaborative learning.

"This project would not have been possible without the support of our community, District and our Board of Education," said Center Middle School Principal Zepure Hacopian. "We are thankful for this critical resource and cannot wait to see the learning that takes place within this state-of-the-art lab."

Eighteen collaborative work stations, each equipped with two computers and visual aids, will allow students to study 18 separate STEM modules, from space flight to sustainable agriculture. Each work station enables two or more students to share ideas and projects, while the teacher provides one-on-one instruction.

In addition, Center Middle School has acquired iPads, Google Chromebooks, and additional desktop computers, bringing their student-to-computer ratio to 2.5 students for every computer.

“Middle school may seem a long way from college, but preparation for higher education starts now,” AUSD Board President Yolanda Rodriguez-Pena said. “We hope that as our students explore exciting topics such as rocketry and space and water management – they will be inspired to pursue their dreams and discover what they are passionate about.”

Center students will have a wide range of STEM modules available to study, including: alternative energy, aquaculture, astronomy, breakfast nutrition, ecology, fitness and health, flight, gravity, rocketry and space, mission to Mars, natural disaster, robots, sustainable agriculture, microwave cooking and nutrition, rocks and resources, water management and weather.

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**PHOTO1:** Center Middle School held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 21 to celebrate its new STEM lab. Pictured from left, State Sen. Ed Hernandez, Azusa Unified Board President Yolanda Rodriguez-Peña, Board Member Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez, Board Clerk Helen Jaramillo, Superintendent Dr. Linda Kaminski and Center Middle School Principal Zepure Hacopian join community members and students in the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon.

**PHOTO2:** Students served as tour guides of Center Middle School’s new STEM Lab following a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 21.

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