



PRESS RELEASE

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Gardenhill, Glazier adopt elite 'Project Lead the Way' curriculum

STEM Program Expands to Elementary Schools

Before students at the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District headed back to class in early September, a group of elementary school teachers were hard at work to bring a popular Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program to their classes.

After much success at the District's middle and high schools, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) – the nation's leading provider of STEM programs – is making its way to the District's elementary schools, beginning with Gardenhill and Glazier.

The PLTW program provides curriculum that allows students to learn through activity, projects and problem solving. Students learn to identify problems, find unique solutions and lead their own learning.

"Research shows students decide as early as second and third grade whether they like or think they are good at math and science," said NLMUSD Career Technical Education Facilitator Joanne Jung. "In fact, 65 percent of scientists and graduate students said in a 2010 study that their interest in science began before middle school."

The PLTW program at the elementary level, titled "Launch," is designed in modules. It aligns with the Common Core State Standards for math and English-Language Arts, Next Generation Science Standards and other national and state standards. Students will learn the design process, structure, function, design, motion and stability, energy and conservation, robotics and more.

All kindergarten to fourth-grade students at Gardenhill Elementary will participate in Launch, as well as Glazier students in grades one, three and five. The plan, however, is to have all students at NLMUSD participate in Project Lead the Way programs.

"Project Lead the Way curriculum in our middle and high schools has made an impact on our students," said NLMUSD Interim Superintendent Ginger Shattuck. "Students are finding their passion, test-driving careers and bolstering their own self-esteem in math and science, which for some are intimidating subjects."

The District has received a grant to help supplement the implementation of K-12 PLTW pathways and the ultimate goal of the PLTW would be to have seamless pathways that align with local college and university programs and careers in various STEM fields.

“One of my goals when I first became Board President was to expand Project Lead the Way in an effort to offer these opportunities for academic excellence to more students,” said NLMUSD Board of Education President Margarita Rios. “It makes sense that we expose all of our students to this program as having a strong grasp of STEM is essential in a 21st century workforce.”

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