

PRESS RELEASE

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Alcott Elementary Teacher Awarded National STEM Scholarship to Boost Classroom Instruction

POMONA – Alcott Elementary School teacher Cindy Yuen is among 100 elementary school educators from across the nation selected to receive a scholarship that will strengthen instruction of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and help her integrate engineering in the classroom.

Awarded from the Museum of Science, Boston, the \$200,000 scholarship program includes a complete classroom set of the museum's Engineering is Elementary (EIE) curriculum materials, as well as tuition and travel support to attend a two-day, hands-on teacher professional development workshop at the museum later this year.

"Ms. Yuen's achievement demonstrates how well our teachers have embraced innovative STEM teaching methods," Pomona Unified Board of Education President Adrienne Konigar-Macklin said. "The experience she will bring back from Boston will enhance lessons that prepare our students for the 21st-century workforce and that knowledge will spread to other teachers and their programs."

Yuen, a third-grade teacher who has been at PUSD for 14 years, hopes to bring her newfound knowledge, skills and lesson plans to the school, which recently opened a hands-on STEM Center.

"This is an extremely exciting opportunity that will enable me to gain the skills needed to implement high-quality engineering education to students at Alcott," Yuen said. "It has always been my goal to spark student interest in science and technology and foster innovation among our teachers, who are always seeking to educate our students at the highest level."

The museum's EIE program aims to introduce engineering and technological literacy in schools and lifelong learning centers nationwide. Many states have recently implemented new academic standards that stress engineering, a new subject for many elementary teachers. The program prepares teachers to teach engineering and technology effectively and reaches children who are underserved or traditionally underrepresented in STEM.

In response to the national emphasis on STEM education, Alcott Elementary recently opened its STEM Center, a space for hands-on exploration that fosters student learning in science topics, as well as English languages arts. The facility is shared among the K-6 classrooms and includes two areas of

learning – an instructional zone where students explore STEM careers and research topics and an interactive zone where students apply what they’ve learned through hands-on math and science activities using laboratory equipment.

“This really is a multipurpose learning space in which our students can learn STEM concepts, acquire new vocabulary and writing skills and work as teams to find solutions to the problems at hand,” Principal Juan Arretche said. “Having a STEM Center and teachers like Ms. Yuen are essential to promote continued educational success among our young learners.”

Once the program becomes more active, Arretche hopes to implement a cross-age buddies system in which older students work in conjunction with the younger students on collaborative projects.

“The STEM Center enables our students to obtain enhanced instruction from teachers like Ms. Yuen, preparing our young students for college and career skills and inspire them to think about the types of STEM careers they can pursue,” Superintendent Richard Martinez said. “Our top-notch teachers and staff work rigorously to promote STEM concepts within their classrooms. This center is just another way of getting our students interested in these subjects with examples of real-world uses.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

ALCOTTSTEM1: Alcott Elementary students in Cindy Yuen’s class weigh and measure items during a math activity in the school’s new STEM Center. Yuen is among 100 elementary school teachers from across the nation selected to receive a scholarship from the Museum of Science, Boston that will equip her with skills in teaching science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and help her integrate engineering in the classroom.

ALCOTTSTEM2: Cindy Yuen helps her class of third-grade students measure liquids during a STEM activity in Alcott Elementary School’s new STEM Center.

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