

## Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### The Palmdale Aerospace Academy Researches Effective Models

The Palmdale Aerospace Academy announced today that it has been visiting schools that effectively deliver core content curriculum within a “project based learning” focus. To date, leadership from the academy has visited the well-known High Tech High in San Diego, visited academies in Texas, and also gleaned ideas from The Lewis Center located in Apple Valley.

Mr. Winheim, Palmdale School District Instructional Content Coordinator, who is in charge of developing the academic scope and sequence of the academy stated, “There are many different ways people in education can carry out project based learning. Some say that all learning should be done via a project of some kind. Others believe that students should do projects mainly as extra-curricular activities like robotics clubs and the like. But we’ve gotten to see some models that are more moderate as well.”

According to Edutopia, an educational non-profit research hub, “Project learning, also known as project-based learning, is a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges, simultaneously developing cross-curriculum skills while working in small collaborative groups.” The High Tech High charter school in San Diego embraces this theme and even offers graduate level courses for educators interested in learning how to carry out project based learning.

Dr. Jeigh Shelly, professor of engineering at the Lancaster University Center’s CSU Long Beach engineering program describes it this way, “As a practitioner of project-based learning, I have watched students really blossom when they are turned loose with a project that they must accomplish their own. Rather than emphasizing rote memorization of facts, project-based techniques emphasize small group work that requires higher order thinking skills like explanation, analysis, and synthesis of ideas. The emphasis is on individual accountability, interdependence both between students and between sets of subject knowledge, and the value of the learning.” Dr. Shelly also serves in an advisory capacity for the academy.

Carl Wunche Sr. High School in Spring, Texas is one such academy that stands out to TPAAC leadership. At this academy, students choose to engage in one of three educational “towers”, each themed around a specific career sector. They are the Professional, Technology, and Medical Towers. Each “tower” blends core curricular content with projects themed around student interests. The idea is to deliver core curricular material to students via a career field that students are already demonstrating interest in. “The structure appears to save the instructor time and helps students to understand why they are learning what they are learning,” stated Winheim. “For example, you don’t stop using math when you leave your math class. Students learn how to apply what they are learning in a real-world context.”

The Palmdale Aerospace Academy is currently accepting applications for their Headmaster position and plans to accept faculty and student applications in February of 2012. TPAAC plans to open its doors in August of 2012 with grades 7-9. For more information, please go to the TPAAC website: <http://www.palmdalesd.org/Domain/396> or e-mail the academy at [TPAAC@palmdalesd.org](mailto:TPAAC@palmdalesd.org).

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