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PRESS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Middle School Named Microsoft Showcase School for Boosting Technology

FONTANA, CA – Fontana Unified’s Southridge Middle School has been selected as a 2018 Microsoft Showcase School for its commitment to providing student access to digital platforms and bridging the technology gap.

Southridge is one of just 40 schools in the United States to be named a Showcase School this year and joins a global community of schools dedicated to pursuing innovative technologies for bolstering student achievement.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for Southridge, and reflects the hard work of our faculty and staff in promoting inclusivity and personalized learning for our students,” Southridge Principal Dr. Roy Rogers said. “Our goal is to provide equity in education by encouraging Southridge students to become innovators and develop their 21st century technological skills.”

The process to becoming a Showcase School began with a grant written by 11 Southridge teachers, who felt students would benefit from rich, engaging curriculum paired with current technology.

Supported by the FUSD Information and Accountability Department, the teachers received intense training and professional development, which focused on technology integration and utilizing Microsoft Office 365 apps and products to increase student engagement and success in the classroom.

Southridge will partner with Microsoft to introduce new education programs into the classroom, connect with Microsoft Innovation Educators (MIE) to share best practices and become a destination campus for schools looking to elevate their digital capabilities.

This year, Southridge will host three technology showcases and work with a Microsoft developer to expand use of educational technology and resources to the community, parents, and business sector.

In 2018-19, Southridge has become a 1:1 student-to-device ratio in all English language arts (ELA), social studies and math classes. Sixth-grade students are enrolled in an introductory Microsoft computer elective where they learn Office 365 programs such as Sway, PowerPoint, Word and Teams. Seventh- and eighth-grade students taking advanced classes that build on these skills, incorporating creativity and problem-solving as they learn advanced computer concepts.

“My favorite application is OneNote. It’s very organized,” Southridge eighth-grader Jose Morales said. “I can keep track of my work and it’s so much easier to do my assignments on here, because I can log in my name and see all of my assignments. It’s very easy.”

Southridge ELA teacher Lauren Freeman is pleased by how Microsoft programs make her curriculum more accessible to the different types of learners in her classroom. Tools like Dictate and Immersive Reader have helped her students who are struggling to keep pace with their assignments.

“Using Office 365 has transformed my teaching; it allows me to look at my student’s work as they are completing it,” Freeman said. “Classroom Notebook is a game-changer, because my students can keep all their papers in one spot. My students begin the class not knowing how to use a computer. However, by the time they leave, they are digital learners, they know how to collaborate.”

In addition to becoming a Microsoft Showcase School, four Southridge teachers—Christopher Fisher, Stacie O’Neil, Elsbeth Seymour, and Lauren Freeman—became MIE Experts, allowing them to share their ideas for using technology effectively with their peers while providing Microsoft with insight on new education products and tools.

“Microsoft Showcase Schools are shining examples of those applying purpose-driven innovation in a variety of ways to build connection, motivate students and to create community in and out of school,” Microsoft Worldwide Education VP Anthony Salcito said. “These schools are truly transforming learning and providing more personalized education to students, empowering them to achieve more.”

Microsoft targets high-performing, innovative schools across all geographic regions, levels of schooling and sectors and considers the degree to which the school demonstrates leadership, modern teaching and learning, inclusivity and innovative thinking.

“Congratulations to the Southridge Middle School team for the great strides they have made in implementing technological innovations into the classroom and establishing high expectations for their students and for the District,” Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “Fontana Unified is continuing our commitment to providing every student with the tools necessary to become college- and career-ready and develop into future leaders.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_SOUTHRIDGE_MICROSOFT: Southridge Middle School students will improve their digital literacy and receive training in the latest Microsoft tools thanks to the school’s status as a 2018 Microsoft Showcase School.

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