

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council

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Summary of Thursday, November 29, 2018 Meeting

PISD CAREER AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL: OVERVIEW AND TOUR

PCAC members and guests were treated to an overview and tour of Pasadena Independent School District's Dr. Kirk Lewis Career and Technical High School (CTHS). PCAC members previously toured the school in March 2015. Since then the school has grown from 900 to 1600 students.

Diane Barnes, Career and Community Coordinator for CTHS, said the school has 24 pathways from which students may choose, ranging from agriculture to welding. The entire program is driven by the school's mission statement, prominently displayed on a lobby wall: *Empower students to successfully transition to the global community through unique educational experiences*. The 24 pathways are part of 6 academies: Agriculture, Health Services, Business and Human Services, Manufacturing and Construction, Technology and Engineering, and Transportation and Shipping.

CTHS is a school of choice, meaning students must apply. Entrance criteria include school attendance records, discipline, overall academic performance, state assessment scores, and completion of an essay. Each of the 5 PISD high school campuses is allotted a number of seats in each of the 24 pathways, based on its enrollment level. Students receive core course instruction (Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies), elective course instruction (World Languages, PE, Art), and highly specialized Career and Technical courses leading to industry recognized certification in most career pathways. CTHS students may also elect to participate in Connect, AVID, PAP/AP and Dual Credit Classes.

Barnes emphasized that the school is not just for students who do not expect to attend college. While it will prepare students to enter the workforce directly, CTHS's "stacked certification" approach also is valuable to those who will move on to a 4-year college. For example, students may obtain a welding certificate at CTHS that is recognized by those who hire welders, making them employable. Alternately, a Pharmacy Tech student may obtain a certificate at CTHS and use it to find a job in that field while going to college and on to obtain a medical degree. The certifications, curriculum, and equipment have all been chosen so they are recognized by industry.

CTHS is a unique facility when compared to most schools. Students are trained to collaborate and work as teams because most jobs require that. All students and faculty have tablets, and the entire campus is wireless. Students do not have to be sitting in rows of desks in a classroom to work.

After the overview, attendees were taken on a tour of the facility where they heard from both teachers and students. The group visited Welding, Robotics, Construction, Maritime, Culinary Arts,

HVAC/Electrical, and Automotive Repair. They admired the students who described their classes and by the number of Robotics students who were busy on projects at 7:30 p.m. Watching a student steer a ship in the bridge simulator helped PCAC understand how challenging maritime work is.

To say that PCAC members and guests were impressed is an understatement. Several attendees commented that if they were younger, this would be the type of high school that they would like to attend.