

PRESS RELEASE
April 2016

Vista Unified announces advanced progress on achieving its Personal Learning Challenge Moonshot

*"I believe we possess all the resources and talents necessary."
President John F. Kennedy, 1961*

In 1961, President Kennedy declared an ambitious goal for the American people. The goal was to put a man on the moon in the next decade. Ambitious, yes, but also achievable and necessary for the position of the United States in the world, the spirit of the American people and the progress of science and technology. It was a moonshot that became reality. In 2014, Vista Unified declared its own moonshot to achieve a fully functional Personal Learning School District within five years. **The Personal Learning Challenge, every bit a moonshot in terms of difficulty and importance to the American people, is announcing progress way ahead of schedule.**

"For the students" is the primary theme of Vista Unified Superintendent Devin Vodicka's leadership.

"Each student is different bringing with them circumstances and challenges that need to be addressed so that they can focus on learning and success. The Partnership for Children coordinates agencies and services to support these children so they can be healthy, safe, and thriving, building a future to positively contribute to society." --
Chuck Matthews, Director, North County Health & Human Services, County of San Diego

This theme has led the district to embrace a transformation to a culture of strengths-based personal learning and a holistic view of individual student needs. In partnership with the United Way, Vista Unified has created the Partnership for Children to provide wrap-around services for each child, giving them the supports they need to be ready to engage their strengths.

Today over two-thirds of the students and staff of the school district have engaged in individual strengths-based assessment, six schools have successfully completed their first year of personal learning transformation and ten more schools have applied to begin the transformation. Over half of Vista Unified school's will be part of the Personal Learning Challenge by September 2016. Per Matt Doyle, Executive Director of Innovation at Vista, *"The speed of progress represents the amazing capacity of students, teachers and staff and their enthusiastic interest in the benefits of personal learning."*

Demographically, Vista Unified is representative of the great majority of American school districts and the decision "to serve as a thought leadership model for interested school districts is a role and responsibility" that Dr. Vodicka believes is important. This month, Vista Unified will begin a robust parallel strategy of sharing 'lessons learned' with the broader education community in San Diego County, nationally and internationally. One of these lessons is particularly relevant as San Diego County seeks to grow as an economic hub of the future and our nation's businesses struggle with the talent gap.

"We call this project our moonshot because it will require everyone in the organization (students, parents, teachers and support staff) to completely shift their mindset from a traditional one-size-fits-all style of learning to a dynamic, personalized approach that places students in the driver's seat as stewards of their own learning. Teachers, support staff and parents take on a new role as facilitators of the educational process, promoting flexible learning environments that extend beyond the four walls of a traditional classroom." --
Dr. Matt Doyle, Executive Director of Innovation, Vista Unified

"Chambers of Commerce all over the country need to be engaged in aligning the Talent Pipeline coming through our K-12 and higher education institutions to meet the real-world needs of businesses in our community. We are excited to play a role in doing this here in our local community to help close the skills gap." -- Bret Schanzbach, CEO, Vista Chamber of Commerce

Per Dr. Vodicka, *"Following digital infusion, personal learning is the next great lever of education in our country. Students who experience it will be better prepared to take advantage of the opportunities of the 21st century talent economy."* Vista Unified is working in close partnership with the Vista Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the OECD and the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation. *"The expansion of the traditional K12 school district to create a seamless path to new and exciting careers is a critical component of fueling business growth with future ready talent."*, per Andy Hall, Vice President and Chief Program Officer, San Diego Workforce Partnership.

Just as important is a seamless path from pre-natal to 3rd grade ensuring that all Vista children start off with equitable access to realizing their individual talent. Per Laura Kohn, Executive Director of the Education Synergy Alliance, *"The early years are so important, because skills beget skills. Starting our students on the right path early reduces the need for remediation and ensures the greatest realization of talent for all. Early childhood education has a direct and quantifiable impact on economic success. It is the best investment we can make to be future ready."*

Vista Unified Personal Learning Challenge – Recent/Upcoming Events

February

Thursday, February 18, Vista Unified Leadership Advance

Vista Unified Leadership Advance for Principals focused on strengths-based learning and greater awareness of the World of Work. Presentations were given by Ed Hidalgo, Qualcomm, the San Diego Workforce Partnership and Susie Johnson, Coordinator, Vista Unified Career and Technical Education.

March

Monday, March 21, 2016, VIDA, Vista Innovation and Design Academy, opens Think-a-bit Lab

Sponsored by Qualcomm Inc., the VIDA Lab replicates the Think-a-bit Lab Qualcomm opened in March 2014 at its Sorrento Valley headquarters where San Diego County students in grades six through eight spend a day working on projects and learning about STEAM careers.

Wednesday, March 23, Vista Unified, Vista Chamber of Commerce, and CPP Innovation Labs attend US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Event, Washington DC

Dr. Matt Doyle, Executive Director of Innovation at Vista Unified, Bret Schanzenbach, CEO of Vista Chamber of Commerce and Christian Mackey, SVP of CPP Innovation Labs attended the National Conference on Talent Pipeline Management hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Following the conference, they met with Jason Tyszko, Executive Director, Policy and Programs, USCCF Center for Education and Workforce, to discuss go forward steps for Vista and San Diego County.

April

Saturday, April 16, Vista Chamber of Commerce presents “Heroes of Vista” Award to Dr. Matt Doyle

Dr. Matt Doyle, Vista Unified, receives the “Hero of Vista” Award for his efforts in education innovation.

Sunday, April 17, Vista Unified at Digital Promise Innovation Alley, Qualcomm Headquarters, San Diego

Vista Unified, along with the San Diego Workforce Partnership and the Education Synergy Alliance, will position the next phase of its moonshot: a learning ecosystem driven by personal learning -- the school district of the future.

Sunday, April 17, Superintendents Devin Vodicka and David Miyashiro will present a TEDTalk

On premise at the Innovation Alley, Dr. Devin Vodicka of Vista Unified and Dr. David Miyashiro of Cajon Valley will discuss innovation in education. Hosted by Digital Promise, Cajon Valley Union School District, Vista Unified School District, University of San Diego, and Qualcomm. Dignitaries in attendance include Joseph South, US Department of Education and Karen Cator, Digital Promise.

Monday, April 18, Vista Unified at the GSV-ASU Summit, San Diego

Vista Unified will join the GSV-ASU Innovation Summit along with the San Diego Workforce Partnership and the Education Synergy Alliance inviting more partners to learn about the School District of the Future and join the movement.

Wednesday, April 20, Digital Promise and The League of Innovative Schools visits Vista Unified

Every year, 30 member districts of The League of Innovative Schools visit a school district that has demonstrated exemplary progress. This year, The League showcases Vista Unified and Cajon Valley Unified. Over 150 educators from across the nation will visit eight schools to see innovative learning environments in preschool through 12th grade demonstrating how Vista Unified is tapping into students’ strengths, interests and values to propel them towards success in college and the world of work. Dignitaries in attendance include Karen Cator, Digital Promise and Sara Shapiro, League of Innovative Schools.

May

Saturday, May 15, 2016, Second Annual Early Childhood Education Fair sponsored by Vista Unified, Educational Enrichment Systems and the San Diego County Office of Education

The conference theme “Navigating to Success” focuses on setting the conditions within the community for families to access a host of support services intended to prepare students for success in kindergarten.

Thursday, May 19, Vista Unified presents Change Management Needs Analysis to the Board

Using LCAP funding, Vista Unified engaged an international education change management firm, New Learning Ventures, to provide change management services and assess the district’s readiness to develop a continuous improvement ecosystem. Following the presentation to the Board and in keeping with Vista Unified’s role as a model, New Learning Ventures will prepare a version of the report for the public.

June

June 2016, Vista Chamber of Commerce-Vista Unified launch of “Building a Talent City” initiative

Last November, the members of the Vista Chamber of Commerce unanimously voted to support the creation of a Talent City in Vista. The model is based on the theory of action stated by Dr. Matt Doyle, “If we focus on developing the strengths, interests and values of each student through a holistic personal learning path program that integrates academic, social/emotional and relevance to the world of work, the student will develop a greater sense of identify, become more motivated to engage in the learning path and graduate high school ready for college and career.”

Thursday, June 16, Vista Unified showcased at OECD CERF for global study of critical thinking and creativity, Paris, France

Vista Unified is one of few US school districts engaged in an OECD study to redefine the teaching and measurement of creativity and critical thinking, preschool through twelfth grade. At this OECD event, Vista teachers will present their findings to date along with educationalists from 22 countries. Results of this ground-breaking study will inform the international PISA exams and serve as foundation for how we teach and measure 21st century innovation workforce skills globally.

July

Friday, July 29, 2016, P3SD Second Annual Conference, San Diego

The Education Synergy Alliance hosts the San Diego Region’s second annual conference focused on prenatal to grade 3 education, where leaders from early education, school districts, nonprofits, universities, government and business will gather to build an early education ecosystem.

July 2016, Vista Unified QCamp for Girls in STEM

In partnership with Qualcomm, Vista Unified is hosting a summer camp experience dedicated to encourage interest in STEM by middle-school girls. Girls will have the opportunity to work side-by-side with professional engineers and career coaches.

August

Tuesday, August 16, Vista Unified to officially launch “School District of the Future is a Learning Ecosystem Thought Leadership Collaborative” in San Diego

*Through an interactive live and virtual launch session, Vista Unified will begin its work to design and realize the second phase of its moonshot, the **Learning Ecosystem**. Scheduled to be held in San Diego, the session will include local, state, national and international thought leaders. The learning ecosystem is a new and game-changing model for education which eliminates its silos and creates pathways that enable individual student success for every student and our regional economy.*

September

September 2016, Vista Unified turns 100!

Superintendent Devin Vodicka leads a celebration of the first 100 years of Vista Unified! Join us to celebrate and hear more about Dr. Vodicka’s vision for the future.