



## PRESS RELEASE

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## **Wiseburn Unified and Da Vinci Schools to Hold Groundbreaking Celebration for One of the Most Innovative High School Campuses Ever Envisioned for 21st Century Learning**

Who: Wiseburn Unified School District and Da Vinci Schools

What: Groundbreaking Ceremony for New High School Facility

When: August 20, 2015 / 5:30 PM (5:00 suggested arrival time for parking)

Where: 201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA 90245  
(enter north gate across the street from the L.A. Air Force Base)

Wiseburn Unified School District ([www.wiseburn.k12.ca.us](http://www.wiseburn.k12.ca.us)) and Da Vinci Schools ([www.davincischools.org](http://www.davincischools.org)) will officially break ground on their \$140 million, four-story, 217,000 SF high school facility for real-world, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning on Aug. 20. The world-class modern and sustainable campus at 201 N. Douglas Street in El Segundo, CA, will incorporate the latest technology and hands-on, interdisciplinary environments for collaborative, project-based learning. The facility, known as Wiseburn High School, will house Da Vinci's three independent charter high schools: Da Vinci Communications, Da Vinci Design, and Da Vinci Science that serve as Wiseburn's "home" high schools. Each floor of the new facility is designated to a specific school with its own principal and faculty.

"We are extremely proud and grateful to Wiseburn community members for their huge investment in our schools. The people and resources connected to this world-class facility will ensure our children achieve success in college readiness, college completion, and career preparation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century," says Roger Bañuelos, president of the Wiseburn Unified School District Board of Trustees.

Designed by Gensler and David Stephen of New Vista Designs for 21st Century Learning, award-winning architectural design firms known for delivering innovative and flexible learning spaces, the 13.7 acre campus will serve more than 1,200 students in a combination of day and evening classes offered by Da Vinci Schools. The main building features neighborhoods of teaching spaces—"pods"—that open out to a large commons area for each school and an atrium that interconnects all three but provides each with a unique address.

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Da Vinci Science will be housed on Floor 2, Da Vinci Communications on Floor 3, and Da Vinci Design on Floor 4 in order to maintain Wiseburn and Da Vinci's commitment to small learning communities where every student is known, seen and valued. The first floor will house administrative offices for Wiseburn and Da Vinci, as well as a board room, community space, music rooms, and kitchen facilities. In response to the hundreds of visitors who have come to Da Vinci from six continents to study its best practices, a professional development center, known as Da Vinci Institute, will provide adult learning opportunities for educational practitioners around the globe to study and engage in collaborative practice sharing.

The campus also will include a multi-purpose/theater space to support visual and performing arts, an athletic field, gymnasium, and aquatic facility. Students from all three Da Vinci high schools compete in CIF sports as one team known as the Wiseburn-Da Vinci Wolves. In a joint-use agreement with the City of El Segundo, the Department of Parks and Recreation will maintain the pool and run the aquatics programs, which will be available to both El Segundo and Wiseburn residents.

The new campus, that once housed aerospace engineers working on fighter aircraft, is being built with a combination of funding that includes \$87 million in local bond Measure AA monies (passed by voters in 2010) and state matching funds of \$52.7 million from the Charter School Facilities Program.

"Wiseburn Unified School District and Da Vinci Schools are engaged in an unprecedented district-charter relationship built on mutual trust and solidified by innovative MOU and legal agreements. This partnership leverages the benefits of both a traditional school district and an independent charter school organization. This project sets new standards for collaboration, articulation, and community and industry engagement," says Chet Pipkin, the president of the Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees and the founder, chairman, president and CEO of Belkin International.

In just six years, Da Vinci Schools has solidified its position as a national model for 21st century learning, teaching, and partnerships with industry and higher education leaders that lead to college readiness, college completion, and career preparation. Da Vinci graduates have been accepted to every UC and CSU campus, and Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Yale, Dartmouth, MIT, Carnegie Mellon, Purdue, USC, and many other prestigious universities across the nation. As a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant awardee, Da Vinci has been acknowledged by the Bill and Melinda Gates and Flora Hewlett Foundations for innovative practices that accelerate 21st century learning that is aligned to workforce needs. Dr. David Brown, the former executive director of the WASC accrediting agency, said "Da Vinci Schools are among the very finest I've seen."

Similarly, Wiseburn Unified is recognized locally and statewide for being a forward-thinking school district that thinks outside the box. While most traditional school districts are breaking themselves apart into "academies" or "schools within a school," Wiseburn schools have always been small and personalized. Wiseburn has achieved remarkable educational performance results at its four K-8 schools, significantly reducing or eliminating the achievement gap for subgroups of students including African American, Hispanic, and low socio-economic students. After a more than decade-long battle, Wiseburn achieved unification becoming a K-12 school district in July 2014; rather than opening its own high school, Wiseburn trustees made the bold decision to move forward with Da Vinci charter schools

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serving as the Wiseburn district's high schools. By adding programs available to most high school students such as CIF sports, dances/prom, music, and visual and performing arts, students also receive many of the more traditional high school experiences found at much larger high schools.

Community members, educational leaders, teachers and architects participated in an unprecedented facility planning process led by Stephen, a key architect in the development of the highly acclaimed High Tech High in San Diego.

Gensler, one of the world's largest and most prestigious architecture firms, has designed a state-of-the-art campus that will truly support an interdisciplinary curriculum where students engage in a learn-by-doing, hands-on learning model. The Gensler team includes: Andy Cohen, co-CEO; David Herjeczki, design director; Nathan Kim, senior associate; and Hannah Lee, designer.

Vince Madsen, Wiseburn Unified School District's director of facilities planning, is in charge of coordinating all aspects of the project. Balfour Beatty, led by Tony Mardirosian, is the construction manager.

According to the construction timeline, the main building will be available for use by students in August 2017. Phase 2 (the gymnasium and pool) is expected to be completed by Spring 2018.

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