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RAFT TO SUPPORT ALUM ROCK UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT IN STEAM LEARNING INITIATIVES

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Through their recently-formed partnership, Resource Area For Teaching (RAFT) will be offering various services that enrich the STEAM learning initiatives of the [Alum Rock Union School District](#) (ARUSD) over the school year. Various hands-on activities, workshops, and events will be held with the goals of increasing student, parent, and community engagement as well as ensuring instructional and programmatic depth in STEAM.

“Looking ahead, we believe we can expand educator capacity, engage students and families, and continue to build a robust STEAM learning community,” says Steve Rummell, RAFT Director of Partnerships in Education. “The initiatives we’ve planned serve the dual purpose of strengthening social-emotional learning through hands-on collaborative engagement and bringing STEAM learning to life.”

RAFT has been providing STEAM learning activities at ARUSD for over a decade, and the partnership furthers that existing collaboration by providing an approach that will reach more schools, classes, students, and teachers to further embed STEAM learning into the community fabric.

Jackie Montejano, Academic Services Administrator in the Alum Rock School District states, “Already, our Alum Rock Districtwide STEAM Kick-off event at RAFT, brought over sixty principals, district leaders, and teachers together in educational fun! Exciting design challenges and makerspace initiatives paired with accessible, affordable resources make for a perfect, timely opportunity to expand Alum Rock School District’s STEAM success!”

Over the fall and spring, RAFT’s [Maker Mobile](#) will visit twenty-two schools across the Alum Rock Union School District. Totalling forty-four visits, the Maker Mobile comes equipped with all the tools, materials, and staff support needed to deliver unique programming.

RAFT will also host virtual Maker events for grade clusters K-2nd, 3rd-5th, and 6th-8th in the Alum Rock Independent Studies Program. Each student participating in these events will be

given a Makerspace in a Box, which is one of RAFT's signature STEAM Project Kits. These kits consist of only upcycled and donated materials—nothing was purchased or ordered from stores—and are designed to be adaptable to a wide range of creative science projects and Design Challenges.

In addition to providing supplemental STEAM activities for ARUSD students, the partnership aims to expand teaching capacity with hands-on learning. RAFT will host district-wide Educator Professional Play Workshops, which focus on STEAM [Design Challenges](#) and utilize RAFT's Makerspace in a Box. These workshops strengthen teacher efficacy in STEAM teaching and learning through design thinking. They augment teacher expertise with embedded hands-on learning experiences for all students, at every grade level.

To further engage families and the community, RAFT will host a district-wide STEAM Expo in the fall, which will include various Design Challenges and Make and Take activities for up to two hundred families. In the winter, RAFT will host the STEAM Family Expo Nights, a four-night event that will consist of community building activities for each of the four Alum Rock Union School District clusters. This serves as a momentum-building event for the district-wide STEAM Spring Showcase where all participants will be given the opportunity to demonstrate and exhibit their creations and inventions.

About RAFT: *Established in 1994 by a local teacher, RAFT's mission is to help educators transform a child's learning experience through hands-on education to one that inspires the joy and discovery of learning. RAFT enables educators to increase instructional minutes in STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) by providing hands-on project kits, design challenges, and professional development. RAFT helps bridge the educational gap amongst underserved students who don't have access to high quality STEAM education and inspires the next generation of innovators, problem solvers, and creators. For more information, visit raft.net.*

About Alum Rock Union School District: *The Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is nestled in the beautiful foothills of East San Jose. It is a family-oriented community that provides students with high quality twenty-first century learning, and builds upon cultural diversity. Alum Rock prides itself in preparing students for the future in a diverse and competitive world while celebrating 90 years of excellence through service, perseverance, love, trust, and equity. For more information, visit arusd.org.*