

WEST-MEC **DISTRICT** **IMPACT** **REPORT**

2019 — 2020



WHO WE ARE

West-MEC provides support for Career and Technical Education at 48 high schools across 3,685 square miles in the northern and western cities of the Phoenix Metropolitan area.



3,685
SQUARE MILES



48
HIGH SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear West-MEC community members,

Year after year, West-MEC focuses on Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that enable high school and adult students to create/make/build their future. Our unique district provides over 80,000 students with the opportunity to choose from hundreds of career-related courses that lead to certification or licensure.

Today, more than ever, it's vital that students understand the application of academics to real-world careers. The United States is, and will be, in need of a highly trained and skilled workforce for the 21st Century. We are grateful for the opportunity to develop new and thriving educational centers where students are empowered to participate fully in the economy.

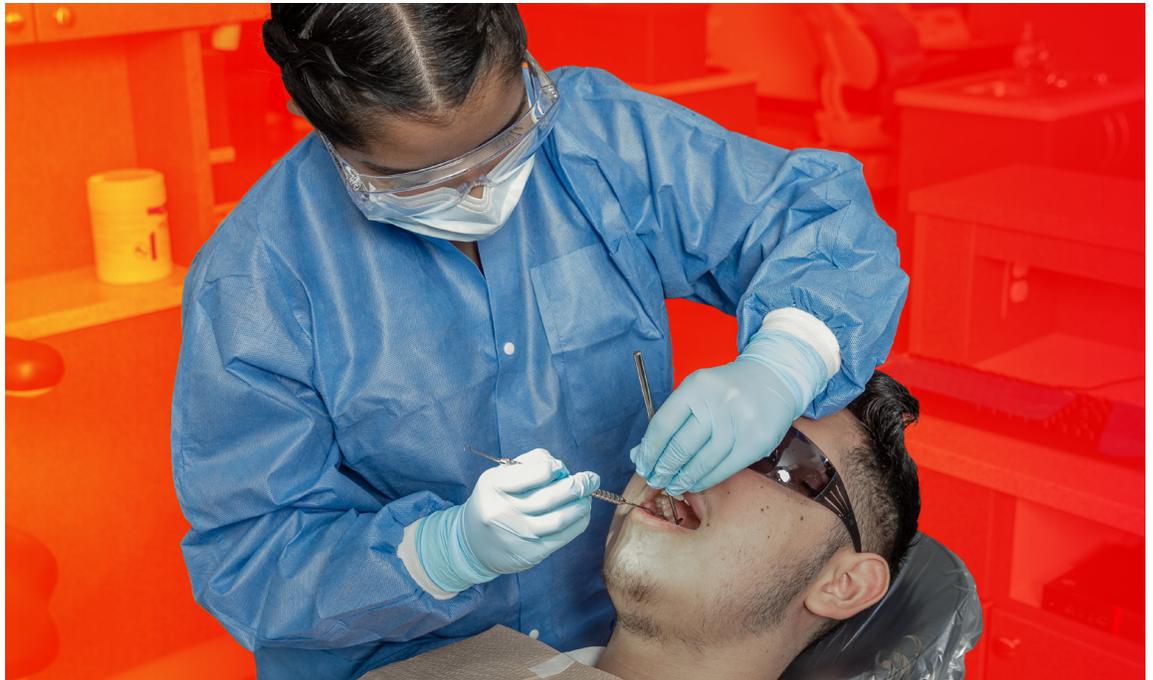
Preparing students today for tomorrow's careers is best achieved through engagement and collaborative partnerships, extending to all reaches of the community. Our teachers and

staff work side-by-side with industry experts to form advisory councils that give valuable insights for classroom and workplace application. Educators from across the state learn from our professional development offerings and bring with them insights that make us better. Signature events at each campus invite the surrounding community to learn more about what is happening right in their neighborhood. Above all, serving our communities remains a top priority.

This report provides an update for our community on a number of student, staff, and district accomplishments showing the strong link between our schools and surrounding communities. On behalf of the administration and school board, we invite you to explore our Annual Report. We look forward to building strong meaningful connections in support of student success in the coming year, and celebrating West-MEC's strong schools and strong students.

Sincerely,
Gregory J. Donovan,
West-MEC Superintendent

WEST-MEC STUDENTS VOLUNTEER FOR THE ARIZONA DENTAL MISSION OF MERCY



**Glendale, Ariz.
(Dec. 19, 2019)**

Students at Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC)—a public career technical education district—volunteered at the 8th annual Arizona Mission of Mercy (AZMOM). The organization provides free dental care to those in need.

On December 12th, over one hundred students from West-MEC's Northwest and Southwest campuses went to the Arizona State Fairgrounds to transform the Veterans Memorial Coliseum into a dental clinic. The clinic provides a range of free services, including extractions, fillings, and cleanings. All the dental care is provided by volunteer dentists and hygienists, along with donations to cover equipment and supplies.

"Our students sped up the setup process by a great deal. I've volunteered for AZMOM for 8 years, and this is the first time we weren't still setting up late into the night," said Julie Ehrman, Dental Assisting Instructor at the Southwest Campus.

Senior students in the dental assisting program returned on December 13th and 14th to assist in providing care to patients, helping pass tools, polish teeth, and sterilize equipment. Throughout the event, students networked with dental professionals and experienced different dental issues that they wouldn't see until they are further into their education.

"Participating in this type of community event allowed them to think outside of themselves and about how their skills could help others that don't have access to the dental care they need. I think these types of events not only help them with professional skills but more importantly, it helps them to develop compassion for others and grows their desire to help others more often," said America Segura, Career Services Coach at the Northwest Campus.



“Leaving West-MEC and moving onto the next chapter in my life, I feel both excited and prepared for the future. Receiving guidance in resume building, job interviewing, college, and the field of pharmacy has me feeling very prepared for my future education+career path. Thank you so much to you and West-MEC for everything. It has been an honor to have been a student on the Southwest Campus this school year, and a privilege to have met and learned from many great individuals.”

Thank you,
Megan
Pharmacy Technician Program Completer

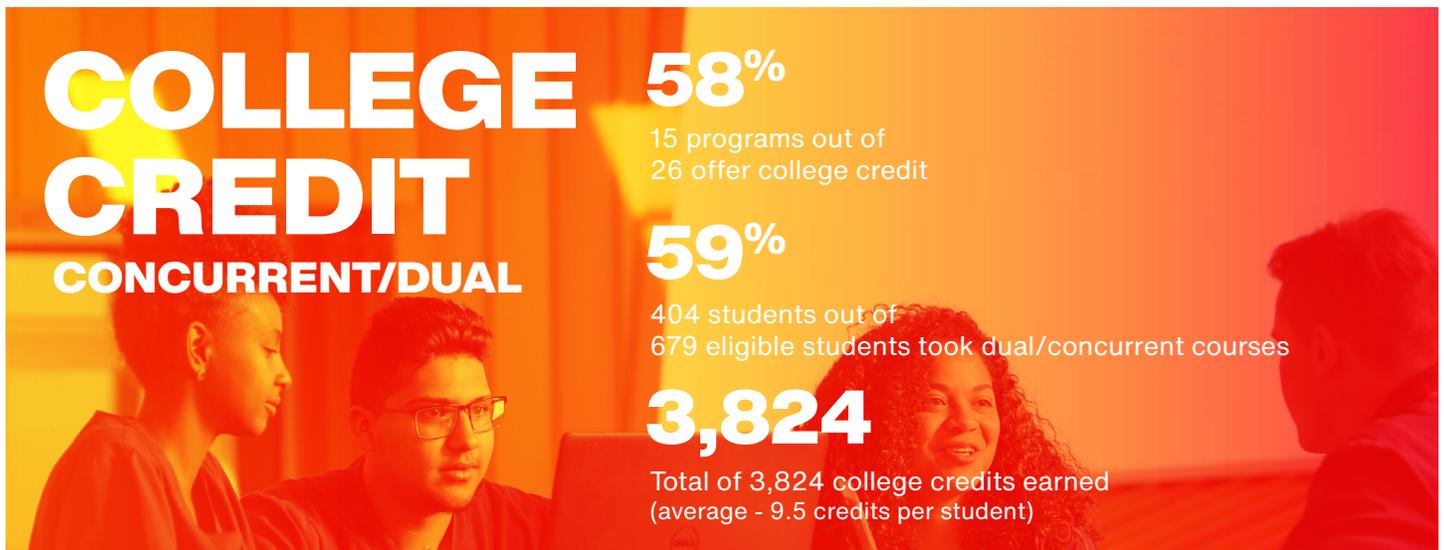
ENROLLMENT

2,063
CENTRAL PROGRAMS

Certification training programs owned and operated by West-MEC

42,125
SATELLITE PROGRAMS

Elective Career & Technical Education courses offered to students at their designated high school campuses and funded by West-MEC



COLLEGE CREDIT CONCURRENT/DUAL

58%
15 programs out of 26 offer college credit

59%
404 students out of 679 eligible students took dual/concurrent courses

3,824
Total of 3,824 college credits earned (average - 9.5 credits per student)

PARENT ENGAGEMENT



8.2 OUT OF 10 PARENTS RATE ENGAGEMENT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

ADULT EDUCATION

To help meet the growing needs of our community, West-MEC is excited to provide educational opportunities to adults looking to further their skills and education. Our 2019-2020 Adult Education Program offerings included:



CENTRAL CAMPUS

- Aviation Maintenance Technology – Airframe
- Aviation Maintenance Technology – Powerplant
- Aviation Maintenance Technology – Airframe and Powerplant
- Avionics/Electronics
- Precision Manufacturing – Manual
- Precision Manufacturing – CNC
- Precision Manufacturing
- Welding Technology – Plate
- Welding Technology – Pipe
- Welding Technology

NORTHEAST CAMPUS

- HVAC-R

SOUTHWEST CAMPUS

- IT Security
- Pharmacy Technician
- Welding Technology

“I got a job at San Mar thanks to Project Search. Try out the program, it really works!”

– Ricky, Project Search Program Completer

PROJECT SEARCH

- Distribution Logistics
San Mar Distribution Center
- Hospitality
Renaissance Glendale Hotel & Spa
- Luke Air Force Base

96.4%

For the year, we had an overall 96.4% attendance.

→ 27

To date, we have celebrated 27 completion ceremonies for our adult learners.

WEST-MEC AND PROJECT SEARCH EMPOWER ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Glendale, Ariz. (Feb. 26, 2020)

Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC)—a public career technical education district—partners with Project SEARCH to train young adults with disabilities to become employable members of society.

The Renaissance Phoenix Glendale Hotel & Spa stands tall in the Westgate shopping center, just north of where the Arizona Cardinals play. Inside, the hotel staff greet guests, stock shelves, and prepare food.

Kaitlyn Cooley, an Agua Fria High School graduate, is among the employees. She serves up coffee and pastries with a bright smile. Cooley is one of ten interns who participate in the Project SEARCH program at the Renaissance Hotel. She develops marketable skills in the hotel cafe Monday through Friday, from 8-2:30 p.m.

“My parents are proud of me because I’m working, learning new things, and helping people,” Cooley said.

In one of the hotel’s conference rooms, ten Project SEARCH interns gather for their morning class. There, they learn about basic work skills, personal finance, and disability awareness.

“If a student tells an employer that they have an intellectual disability or are autistic, not everyone is going to know what that means. We talk with students about how they work best: do they like written instructions? Do they need someone to show them the process visually? That way they start realizing what they need to request to do their job best,” said Colleen McLoone,

Project SEARCH instructor. Once the morning check-in is finished, the interns move on to their work rotations. The next time the interns will be together again is at their wrap-up meeting in the afternoon.

“There’s only about an hour and a half of the day we’re all together. The rest of the time they are in their own departments with their mentor,” said McLoone.

Over the course of the program, interns spend twelve weeks in three different areas of the hotel to grow their capabilities.

“We really work on identifying what skills students need when they leave us, what we can teach them here, and how to connect those to transferable, marketable skills,” said Julia Anderson, director of Project SEARCH. “It’s not about mastering working in the laundry, it’s working on the ability to analyze a task and complete it.”

The Renaissance Phoenix Glendale Hotel & Spa has hosted Project SEARCH interns for five years. Over that time, both organizations have worked closely to ensure the best outcomes for everyone involved.

“We provide disability awareness training for the staff and help them understand what people with disabilities bring to a business,” Anderson said.

One of the ways the hotel helps take responsibility for the interns is by providing a mentor. Frank Villarreal works directly with the interns, explaining how he performs his job

functions and answers any questions they may have.

“As a mentor, I learn about an intern’s disability to help them get skills, but it also helps whoever they end up working for. People just need to understand that these interns are capable, but they need that little extra help, which we can provide,” Villarreal said. “It’s about helping others, not only our business.”

Once an intern finishes three work rotations in the hotel, he or she is considered a completer and starts seeking employment. Project SEARCH coaches sit down with each intern to identify employment sites near the intern’s home to apply at, then arranges transportation to attend the interview. Upon accepting a job offer, transition services are available where Project SEARCH helps the intern adjust to the new work environment.

Each year, the Renaissance Phoenix Glendale Hotel & Spa hires a few high-performing interns who have caught the attention of Villarreal and the other mentors. For these interns, a job at the hotel means an opportunity to give back.

“We have previous interns—now hotel employees—who mentor our new interns that come in,” said Anderson. “It’s full circle for a lot of them.”

To learn more about Project SEARCH, visit west-mec.edu/project-search

COMPLETERS

Program completers **1,041**
School Year Retention **92%**
FY20 Program Retention **(84%)**
includes 2-year program completers

EMT/Fire Science Program of Study: **14**

(A program of study prepares students for post-secondary education and career success in the emergency response and operation career field. These students have completed both the EMT & Fire Science programs.)

CERTIFICATIONS

87% of program completers earned at least one certification
2,568 certifications earned by 2019-20 program completers

Community Involvement
17,348 volunteer hours

GRANTS

\$27,585.00
Providing support for students:

- Registration Fees
- Licensure & Certification
- Bus Passes
- Personal Medical Equipment
- Tuition Fees to Post-Secondary Institutions

HELP WEST-MEC STUDENTS FIND A FASTER WAY FORWARD



Glendale, Ariz. (Nov. 7, 2019)

Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC)—a public career technical education district—helps students afford certification exams and other education expenses through grant funds provided by the BHHS Legacy Foundation.

When Donielle Winzeler first began teaching medical assisting at West-MEC’s Northeast Campus in 2015, it was the district’s only campus to offer medical assisting. The campus’s location in Deer Valley meant some students were traveling across the West Valley.

“I had students coming from Tolleson High School by city bus. It took them an hour each way to get here,” said Mrs. Winzeler.

Transportation is only one of the challenges. The cost of uniforms, equipment, and certifications are obstacles to success faced by economically challenged students. Thanks to the Foundation’s generosity, West-MEC students in medical assisting, pharmacy technician, dental assisting,

and emergency medical technician (EMT) receive financial assistance.

“The BHHS Legacy Foundation’s assistance has given me the means to prepare myself to attend West-MEC with the proper equipment. Without it, I may not have been able to approach my training with such comfort and enthusiasm,” said physical therapy technician student D. Gonzalez.

The completion of any West-MEC program prepares students to sit for one or more certification exams.

“We want our students to have certifications because it shows employers they have knowledge, earns them higher pay working in the field, and makes their resumes stand out for those who want to do post-secondary education,” said Mrs. Winzeler.

These tests, however, can be costly—both financially and in the time commitment needed to complete.

“For students who just graduated, \$135 is a lot to come up with, especially for students considering college but still want to go out on an externship during the summer,” said Mrs. Winzeler.

Students in Mrs. Winzeler’s medical assisting program spend 160 hours during the month of June working as an extern at a doctor’s office to qualify for the Registered Medical Assistant certification. The money provided by the BHHS Legacy Grant helps students earn their credential by removing the cost barrier.

“A lot of students just wouldn’t participate in an externship because they couldn’t afford it,” said Mrs. Winzeler. “But we had more students test last year than ever before because of the BHHS Legacy Grant.”

PD TRAINING

West-MEC offers a series of professional development courses and workshops available to anyone interested in increasing their skill set. Whether you are in education or the private sector, there is a professional development workshop available to you. All participants will receive a certificate documenting their hours of participation for recertification purposes.



“As a new teacher, I always find not only the classes and the materials useful, but the networking and friendships are just as valuable. It’s wonderful to hear from so many different areas of teaching and I always learn so much from the other teachers and administrators who attend!”

— Attendee Testimonial

WEST-MEC STUDENT TAKES SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT JOB IN GERMANY



Glendale, Ariz. (October 23, 2019)

Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC) alumnus Max Woods accepted a full stack developer role for food delivery app Delivery Hero in Berlin, Germany.

Max’s success in the West-MEC coding program and employment by app developer Delivery Hero is a welcome surprise to him, but his family always knew Max was bound to work in technology.

“It was the one thing I obsessed about, I always wanted the newest iPod to tinker with. I would get into the code for it and start changing it to make it more fun,” said Max. “The more I learned about how computers worked and how we take them for granted, the more interested I became in doing it as a career.”

Max applied to West-MEC as a junior at Horizon High School, but was placed on a waitlist. It wasn’t until another student declined to enroll that Max was moved into the program.



WEST-MEC STUDENT TAKES SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT JOB IN GERMANY (CONT.)

“If I could go back and re-do high school, I would try harder. West-MEC showed me that I am capable of more,”

“I always walk a fine line with students who start the program as seniors, because it’s a two year program and it’s important to be there for those two years,” said Mr. Clawson, West-MEC professional development specialist and former coding teacher. “But right away I knew Max was different.”

Once in the program, Max’s technological prowess helped him progress swiftly.

“I didn’t go into the program thinking I knew a lot—I was just tinkering in my free time—but I got ahead pretty easily and still liked to code when I wasn’t at West-MEC,” said Max.

One area of computer science that caught his attention was artificial intelligence (AI). Even though he wasn’t learning about AI at West-MEC, Max taught himself how to reprogram a simple game so it learned from its mistakes.

“The algorithm I used was basically the survival of the fittest. Everytime it got closer to winning the game, it passed down that knowledge until it achieved the goal,” explained Max.

Seeing that Max was doing well in the program and spending his nights studying complex computer science problems, Mr. Clawson knew that Max was ready for a bigger challenge.

“Once we found out about the AI project, we felt it was incumbent upon us to recommend that he be moved into the second year of the program, something that we had never done before,” said Mr. Clawson.

The daily drive from Scottsdale to West-MEC’s Central Campus in Glendale didn’t bother Max. He looked forward to seeing his friends and solving new coding problems.

“Everyone in my class was interested in the same thing as me, and the relationship I built with Mr. Clawson was awesome. Even if I was sick I wanted to come to West-MEC,” said Max.

Being a West-MEC student reinvigorated Max’s enthusiasm for school, something that had waned over the years.

“If I could go back and re-do high school, I would try harder. West-MEC showed me that I am capable of more,” Max said.

Like many students who are attracted to West-MEC—and career and technical education (CTE) in general—Max desired a more hands-on approach to learning than is typically offered in the traditional classroom.

“Max found a place where he had a task and purpose, something that sparked that desire to learn and intrinsically motivate himself,” said Mr. Clawson.

In an industry that demands a diligent work ethic from their employees, harnessing ambition is critical for success.

“Work goes with you as a developer. If you embrace that, you’re going to be successful, and I’ve never seen anybody embrace it like Max. He truly made it part of his eating, drinking, and sleeping,” said Mr. Clawson. “He told me once that he was dreaming in code.”

Moving into the second year of the program allowed Max to attain all the available certifications, something he knew was going to help him in his job search.

“I just wanted to get my resume out there. I knew the certifications I got from West-MEC would help me stand

out and I had some projects I was willing to show off,” explained Max.

But the job postings in Phoenix weren’t yielding the results Max hoped for. On a whim, he decided to broaden his search.

“Something in my gut told me to look at Germany. I found this job posting at Delivery Hero, which is like the UberEats of Europe, Asia, and Canada,” said Max.

From there, Max described a whirlwind of events that changed the course of his life.

“The next thing I know they wanted to set up an interview, and I kept thinking that I wasn’t going to get it. Then they wanted a technical interview with their two lead software engineers, and less than an hour later they said they wanted to schedule another interview with the director of the platform,” said Max.

The interviewers were so impressed by Max’s skill and demeanor that they offered him a full stack developer role. He’ll be working on two of Delivery Hero’s apps, Foodora and Foodpanda, to ensure they’re safe, quick, and easy to use.

“When I applied, the position was an associate software engineer role focused on the front end. They told me they don’t usually hire entry level developers, but when I did the technical interview they liked my problem solving and saw that I could grow,” said Max.

The headquarters of Delivery Hero is based in Berlin, Germany, where Max will soon call home. As many of his friends enter into their first semester of college, Max will be settling into his new apartment and enjoying life abroad with a €50,000 salary.

“The benefits in Europe are ridiculous compared to here—they’re starting me off with 27 days of vacation,” said Max. “I came from Chik-fil-a to this!”