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Photos by Laura Kloth

LAUSD Board President Monica Garcia joins TCAP President Elizabeth Soto at the ribbon cutting ceremony opening Wilson Senior High School's new Smart Room. Also on hand are the cheerleaders, students, faculty and transportation representatives who made the event possible.

Wilson Senior High Unveils TCAP Smart Room for Students on Transportation Career Path

- School officials thank Metro for ongoing support of Transportation Career Academy Program
- Smart Room will set students on a path to learning to become engineers, bridge designers, and lead them into various transportation careers.

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

In their best pep rally fashion, Wilson Senior High School students and staff recently unveiled a new state-of-the-art Smart Room complete with laptops, high-tech AV equipment, and a 960 square-foot Computer Aided Design area.

At the March 16 event, school leaders said the \$800,000 Smart Room was expected to provide a renovated facility complete with updated tools for students participating in the Transportation Career Academy Programs (TCAP), a mentorship program sponsored by Metro and Caltrans.

Speaking to some 200 students, Wilson Senior and TCAP President Elizabeth Soto gave a candid account about how she was caught cheating in math one day, and how she nearly failed before a teacher stepped in and steered her toward TCAP.



Organizational Development and Training (OD&T) Administrative Intern Katie Talbert shares a Smart Room moment with students and TCAP instructor during the recent grand opening.

"I was struggling so much with some of the assignments. It got to the point that I would even copy my friend's homework," she said. "I expected her (math teacher) to be upset but instead she was caring and understanding. This proved to me that TCAP was going to direct me, and support me through my high school career.

"The TCAP program has made my high school experience great and rewarding. It has provided me with the resources such as great teachers, technology, mentoring and after school programs to insure my academic success," Soto said.

The renovation project is part of the LAUSD's 1997 initiative to upgrade and modernize school facilities. And, so far, 17,000 projects have been completed at \$2 billion.

"It's what you do with it that's most important" said Bruce Kendall, LAUSD deputy chief executive for existing facilities.

"I think with transportation, if you choose that as a career, I think that is fantastic because I can't think of a more green type of thing that you can do," he said.

Kendall applauded Metro's and Caltran's partnership with TCAP saying the Smart Room will set students on a path to learning to become engineers, bridge designers, and lead them into various transportation careers.



Wilson Principal Robert Martinez happily accepts a plaque from the Mayor's office for creating a positive learning environment for students.

LAUSD Board President Monica Garcia received rowdy cheers from students when she addressed them saying, "You are absolutely the shining spot in El Sereno. We are very, very proud of the efforts here at Wilson."

Garcia thanked Metro, singling out Metro's Organizational Development and Training (OD&T) Administrative Intern Katie Talbert, who assists OD&T Director Marion Colston with the program, also noted Caltrans' representatives for their efforts.

Lorena Padilla-Melendez, LAUSD director of new construction and community outreach said, "We are fulfilling the promises of renovating our existing campuses and building new schools so that kids will no longer have to go to school on a year-round calendar. And that kids no longer have to be in campuses that have so many needs."

Wilson School Principal Robert Martinez happily accepted a certificate from the mayor "for establishing and maintaining an environment that encourages growth and development by stimulating and challenging our youth."

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