

EMPOWERING ADULT STUDENTS

Poway Adult School provides the tools and skills students need to succeed

By Anne Stokes

Since 1965, Poway Adult School has been empowering adult students with the skills and education needed to uplift themselves, their families and enrich their communities. Whether students are looking to learn a new art form, get healthy, earn their high school diploma, learn English, become a citizen, or start a new career, Poway Adult School is the place to start that journey.

“Maybe more than any place else in education, adult educators have the ability to truly impact communities because of the many roles that our adult education students play: our students are parents, family members, neighbors, workers, community volunteers, and business owners,” says Kathleen Porter, executive director of Career Technical, Adult and Alternative Education in Poway Unified School District. “When we impact one student, the ripple effect goes out through all of these other roles that one student has. So in changing one life, we are often impacting many lives and creating healthy, cohesive communities.”

A catalog for the many

Poway Adult School offers a wide choice of classes and pathways, including adult basic and secondary education (including high school diploma or equivalency), English as a Second Language (ESL) and personal enrichment courses, including language, cooking, art, personal finance, health and fitness. Students can also pursue short-term career training pathways, including:

- Accounting
- Marketing and business
- Court reporting
- Office software, both Google and Microsoft suites
- Professional communications
- Real estate license preparation
- Nurse assistant
- Home caregiving
- Meeting business needs

Since the 1990s, Poway Adult School has worked with local businesses and industries to ensure students’ skill sets match what

employers are looking for. Through regular needs assessments, analyzing labor market trends and demographics, and feedback from businesses, students, teachers and other community partners, the school works to prepare students for what comes after graduation. Empowering adult students with the necessary confidence and skills to enter the workforce is a primary objective.

“Our whole goal in serving students is to provide them with the education, training and support they need to reach their goals. Many of our students have goals that involve them transitioning to the workforce or to higher levels of education,” Porter explains. “The school creates a plan of action to address identified needs. This can include new training programs, offering programs in different formats, new needs for data to measure success and a whole range of other actions.”

Supporting students in their journey

While different students have different goals, many adult learners struggle with common roadblocks. According to Porter, students may face difficulties with transportation, childcare, and or a lack of confidence in their academic abilities. Educators and administrators work with students’ unique needs and situations to make sure students have the tools and support they need to achieve their goals.

“Poway Adult School has a team of student support staff that can help students identify potential obstacles that might get in the way of their success and then develop strategies or accommodations that can help ensure those barriers are addressed,” Porter says. “We have a counselor, career advisors, transition specialists, and a support for students with a disabilities counselor. All of these staff members are skilled at helping students create personalized career plans that will take potential obstacles into account and create SOS plans.”

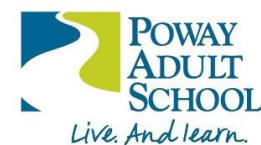
For many students, finances can be a big obstacle. Adult school programs that are associated with a public school district offer low- to no-cost career training options at a



Kathleen Porter of Poway Unified School District says adult school educators and support staff are committed to empowering adult students to overcome obstacles. Photo by Charlie Neuman

fraction of the cost compared to universities, colleges and private vocational schools.

“I think the quality of the content, instruction, and delivery provided by adult schools is far superior to most other institutions,” Porter says. “Adult school instructors have teaching credentials and have participated in teacher preparation programs. I think that’s important, because it means that teachers don’t just know their subject, they also know how to deliver content and support student learning. I think the quality of our staff directly contributes to the degree of our students’ success.”



Poway Adult School is one of almost 300 adult schools in California that are operated by K-12 school districts. California Adult Schools provide education, training, and support services to ensure that adult learners reach their education and workforce goals. For more information, visit powayadulthoodschool.powayusd.com or call (858) 668-4012.