

## CREST School

### School

Name of school: The Center for Research in Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST)

Location of school: 3950 E. Bell Road, Phoenix, AZ 85032

Year opened: 2010

Number of teachers: 3

Grades of students: 9-12

Number of students: 200

School web address: <http://www.pvschools.net/crest/>

Business web address: <http://www.srpnet.com/education>

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### Brief description of the school:

The Center for Research in Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST) is a four year program of studies focusing on the practical application of knowledge and work place competency skills in three areas of scientific research; Engineering, Biotechnology and Sustainability. The school is located on the campus of Paradise Valley High School in Phoenix, Arizona. High school students from the Paradise Valley Unified School District as well as across the north valley of Maricopa County enroll to participate in a focused curriculum of study accompanied by a complete array of honors-AP courses, college and dual enrollment classes, electives, and traditional school activities. This unique school, housed in a newly constructed (2010) green building, was initiated with funding from a City of Phoenix block grant to support small learning communities focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) initiatives. The goals of the school are supported by several university and *business partnerships* that will enhance the curriculum and provide relevant learning opportunities for students.

The learning experiences of the students involve interdisciplinary studies, real-world problem solving, project/product development, and practical internships. A technologically rich environment provides abundant opportunities for collaboration with other educational institutions as well as business/industry practitioners from around the world. CREST graduates will be prepared for further studies at the university level, therefore preparing and recruiting an educated workforce that will built a strong foundation for addressing the demands of the knowledge-based economy envisioned for America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### • **How do you define "partnership?"**

A partnership is a mutually supportive relationship between a business, foundation, or higher

education and a school or school district. Partners commit themselves to specific goals and activities intended to benefit students and schools, whereas the schools support the partnerships by preparing students for the work force and fostering community relationships through involvement. In most cases, partnering is a win-win situation for all involved parties. In addition to improving the education experience, both parties of the relationship must benefit. The business partners frequently will result in enhanced goodwill and a stronger presence in the community.

- **What does a good partnership model look like?**

One of the best resources we have found comes from the Council for Corporate and School Partnerships, which states, “To define a good partnership model one critical element to keep in mind is that school-business relationships can have a powerful impact on the community. Community members and parents should play a role in the development process, since the entire community ultimately benefits from a successful partnership. Recognizing that schools are typically a focal point of every community, community leaders should be engaged and supportive of partnerships that improve the education experience. By focusing decisions about partnership activities at the local level, we can ensure the maximum involvement and success.”

- **What is required of each member of a partnership to make it successful?**

Again from the Council for Corporate and School Partnerships: For the larger and ongoing partnerships, monitoring and periodic evaluations are essential and will help keep everyone focused. A survey of the participants might be appropriate in some instances. For limited term partnerships of a smaller scale, informal monitoring is probably sufficient.

However, every partnership – regardless of size – should end with a joint review of the partnership goals to determine whether the desired outcomes were achieved. In the case of a small-scale partnership, this evaluation could be as simple as a brief phone conversation between the school leader and the business owner. In the case of a larger corporation, a meeting with all involved parties might be more appropriate. The important thing is to have a discussion – share your individual perspectives on the partnership and its achievements, address any issues that are outstanding, and express the school’s thanks. Closing out the partnership with a positive recap will reinforce the bond that has formed and will leave the door open for future partnership opportunities with that business.

### **Partner organizations to support STEM teaching and learning – STEM industry & business**

Tell us a little bit about some of your partnerships that support STEM teaching and learning?

The partnership programs at CREST encompass a wide variety of activities. A large number of businesses (SRP, Honeywell, Boeing, TGEN, BioDesign, Robertson Fuels) have stepped forward to forge strong partnerships that have provided our teachers with staff development, curriculum design, policy development, instructional development, and for our students; guidance, shadowing, mentoring and internship experiences. A strong group of leaders have assembled for all decisions since CREST's inception in the form of Advisory Councils, which are part of all PVUSD’s Career and Technical Education programs. Our business partners may also provide incentives and awards to our students, however we focus more on the development of “relationships” between the employees, teachers and students, and only look for potential financial resources after a strong relationship has been established and our partnership goals have been met. Though the types of partnership activities can vary widely, the common goal of our school-business partnerships is to improve the education experience.