

July 26, 2016

Dear Valley View Families,

I am writing to you with exciting news about a summer project at school. We have begun to transform our library and computer lab into a ['Learning Commons'](#) which has been named '21 Commons' for 21st century teaching and learning in a common learning space. It is a place where students can play, tinker, explore, collaborate, create, design, and share with other students, staff and the broader community. The philosophy is to foster critical thinking, risk taking, creativity, problem solving, and a positive attitude toward failing...leading to success, of course. It also includes Makerspace where students can be 'makers' with creative learning by doing. What is ['Makerspace'](#)? Also, check out what [President Obama](#) says about the Maker Movement sweeping across the country.

The impetus to make this shift is multifaceted. First of all, our math, language arts, and next generation science standards call for regular collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity, and design thinking as these are some of the vital skills that our students will need for their future careers; jobs that have not even been created yet! Next, our students are 'digital natives', meaning that they were born into the world with technology already here. Unlike many of us over 35 years old, we are more like 'digital immigrants' in that we are adapting to the new technology and assimilating our past and current ways. Technology will be a big part of their learning from now on and into their careers. In the 21 Commons, students will have access to a variety low and high technology and opportunities to create with apps/sites to share interests and learnings. Also, our Strategic Planning team (which included parents, teachers, and classified staff) collaborated for several months to identify actions that would ensure our students are provided exceptional educational opportunities. As noted in our Strategic Plan, the 21 Commons will foster students deep critical thinking and problem solving skills, allow for student directed learning and passions, as well as, opportunities to impact others with community projects/services.

We hope that you, too, are excited and will partner with us in this endeavor. The 21 Commons will open in the fall as a first phase. As we use the commons, we will revise and enhance over time based on the needs. This is a pilot project and we will share with other Rocklin schools what we learn and experience from the student, staff and volunteer perspective. There are multiple ways that you can become involved. We invite anyone who has a skill or knowledge to impart to our students in nearly any area; science, arts, business, technology, social sciences, math, engineering, photography, sewing, communications, startups, or makers of anything! If you just want to be helpful and be present in 21 Commons, this is needed too. We are open to many ideas; sign ups will be coming soon from your child's teacher and the librarian. Or feel free to email with your interest.

Makerspace has both purchased items, as well as, left over 'stuff' or what some might even call, garbage. At this time, we are asking families to save a few items around the house for our 'making'. We are not asking you to purchase any items, just extras or unwanted items around the house. It is very important to wash/clean all items and send in when requested (requests will be made near time when project occurs).

Cardboard boxes - cereal box size or smaller

Plastic containers - gallon milk size or smaller

Plastic bags - grocery

Paper towel/toilet paper rolls

Small odds/ends around house

Arts/crafty items - popsicle sticks, felt, pipe cleaners, glue (sticks, elmer's, wood), yarn, googly eyes, paint, brushes, pompom/cotton balls, etc

Altoid tin boxes (and other similar small tin)

Fabric scraps

Sewing thread

Sewing tools - needles, bobbins, seam ripper,

Buttons (extras often come with new clothes)

Bubble wrap

Singular sock (can't find the match?)

Other items like aforementioned

Unwanted items to 'take apart/make something new' station

Watches

Clock

CD player

DVD player

VCR player

Radio

Motorized/battery operated toys

Flashlights

Remote controls

Small items with motors, batteries, gears, levers, etc.

Tools (screwdrivers, pliers, wrenches, etc)

Other items like the aforementioned

We are excited for students to return and experience the 21 Commons! Now, back to your summer fun!

Sincerely,

Principal Shari Anderson