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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West-MEC returns to in-person instruction

(Sept. 10) - Following weeks of online learning, students at Western Maricopa Education Center's four campuses returned to class for in-person instruction on Sept. 9. West-MEC - a public career technical education district - welcomed around 3,000 students to finally experience campus and meet the other students in their individual career technical training programs.

Although donning masks and staying socially distant as much as possible, Wednesday felt like a true first day, back-to-school experience for students and staff alike.

"The students just breathe new life into the campus. That's why we're here, the energy they've brought in a short time, you can feel it," said David Svorinik, Assistant Northeast Campus Administrator.

"They're actively engaged, taking care of business and showing how motivated they are for the rest of the school year, and that's promising to see."

Caleb Rushing, a senior in West-MEC's automotive technology program, even enjoyed getting to do mundane tasks like mopping the floor of the school's car shop, knowing it was a step toward getting to actually work on cars again.

He said that he immediately felt "a different vibe" compared to the important-but-limited online learning environment.

"It's just a whole other learning experience rather than watching YouTube videos on cars and online lessons. You get to actually be there to walk through every single step of learning about the cars," he said.

His instructor, automotive technician teacher Nick Shumaker, agreed.

"From digital and online to in-person learning, the connection with the students and seeing them actually here is great. When they're actually able to touch the tools and make that connection is

when they're really starting to learn," Shumaker said.

For others like Alexia Schuyleman, a senior in the veterinary sciences program at West-MEC, the return to in-person learning is important, too.

For her, being in the classroom and labs is the reason she wanted to enroll at West-MEC in the first place.

"It's amazing being back. We get that person-to-person connection with our teachers and classmates," she said. "And in this program it means hopefully we'll be able to actually work the animals soon, too."

About West-MEC:

West-MEC is a career technical education public school district that focuses solely on innovative career and technical education (CTE) programs that prepare students to enter the workforce and pursue continuing education. West-MEC CTE programs provide students opportunities to earn college credit and industry credentials. West-MEC serves more than 37,000 students from 48 high schools, across 3,800 square miles in the northern and western cities of the Phoenix Metropolitan area. West-MEC now also offers adult education programs. Visit www.west-mec.edu for more information about West-MEC's career-driven education opportunities or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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