Name of Project:
New Educator Academy Draft Day

What was the purpose of your entry?
Arcadia Unified’s New Educator Academy Draft Day (full video of the 2021 event can be viewed here [https://youtu.be/3iVzwCeiwlY](https://youtu.be/3iVzwCeiwlY)) was created to make our new educators to the district feel special, valued, and appreciated as we help them kick off what we hope will be a long, successful career with us, which ultimately benefits our students’ learning outcomes and personal and academic successes, as does it contribute to the success of the culture and climate of our entire district. In addition to that, with the national teacher and staff shortages, it also helps recruit and maintain our staffing levels, which is crucial for keeping our students engaged in learning and development.

Typically held the week before school starts, Arcadia Unified hosts a New Educator Academy (NEA) each year to give a warm welcome to its newest educators in the district. This process includes both training and informational sessions and opportunities for new personnel to find out about important resources, be connected with veteran teachers and administrators in the district, meet our Board of Education members, and more. In addition, the Public Information Office has been fortunate enough to be given a session within this program to share about what makes our district special and how we promote ourselves to help attract families with school-age children, retain the students we currently have and motivate world-class educators to apply to join our team. We also use this session to promote the responsible use of social media and showcase it as a valuable tool for educators to use to help share and increase viewership of the magic happening in the classrooms. We encourage our educators to celebrate and publicize both what’s working and what hasn’t worked in their lessons, other aspects of their classrooms, etc. on Twitter, as do we explain how Twitter is a great conduit for connecting and collaborating with teachers across the district, state, country, and even the world!

Over the years, the NEA program has undergone an annual evolution, with each iteration geared towards onboarding our educators with engaging energy and excitement to help bolster their enthusiasm to be on our team and get them charged for the school year ahead. Ultimately, we want to attract and retain the best talent we can, so we try and make the entire hiring process and onboarding process as seamless and fun as possible. As a capstone to this wonderful program, NEA Draft Day was born.

In the sports world, Draft Days for professional athletes is a significant moment and right of passage filled with eager anticipation and life-changing adventure ahead. We sought to integrate this electrifying atmosphere into our NEA, a complete video of our 2021
NEA Draft Day can be found here [https://youtu.be/3iVzwCeiwlY](https://youtu.be/3iVzwCeiwlY). Creating a press conference-style moment for our new educators, our Chief Communications Officer kicks off the event with a humorous intro for the draft, which is done to the tune of the famous Chicago Bulls theme song. Our CCO then introduces our organization’s commissions (superintendent) who has an opportunity to welcome our draft picks, introduce our Board of Education, and kick off the rest of the fun.

Each of our schools/departments that have new hires gets to walk down a red carpet with their “team captain” or “team owner”, aka the school’s principal or department administrator, to a fun song (which the administrator selects to represent the energy of their site or department), all the while, flash photography and colorful lights bouncing off the walls can be seen, which aim to amplify the hype of the moment. Once at the press table, the administrator shares words about the work done during the offseason to secure the best talent for the team and how they arrived at their team selections. They also share fun facts about their new recruits, and new educators are presented with swag and cheered for by the crowd. It’s a feel-good event that we have gotten only tremendously positive feedback on, and we are happy to host it each year to celebrate those who choose the noble calling of teaching and those rockstar educators we are lucky to have join our team. One teacher noted that she was so stunned that the district organized this capstone event, that her jaw was on the floor for most of it, and knew she immediately made the right decision choosing Arcadia Unified with such a warm and energetic welcome and team.

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