



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 5, 2018

CONTACT: Juliette Funes

Maritza Fairfield

(909) 445-1001

Pioneer High School Teacher Accepted into Google for Education's Innovator Program

WHITTIER – Driven by her passion to make educational technology accessible to Whittier Union's teachers and her goal to enhance the education of its students, Pioneer High School ed tech lead and math teacher Lisa Ceja has earned a spot in Google for Education's Certified Innovator program.

Google's highly competitive Innovator program is a year-long professional development experience that includes mentorship opportunities, online learning activities and an in-person, three-day Innovation Academy that helps participants launch a project related to a challenge in education. The academy will be held July 9-11 at the Google office in Venice, California.

"I am excited to belong to this group of like-minded educators who feel passionately and want to solve problems in education," said Ceja, a 24-year educator at Whittier Union. "Being accepted into the program allows me to grow as an educator and to see the bigger picture in education that will not just impact my school and district, but hopefully help others."

Roughly 30 educators from across the United States are chosen for the annual academy, with selection criteria that is based on professional experience, innovative use of technology at school, the potential to impact others and the desire to tackle challenges in education. Over the last four years, Ceja earned certifications as a Google for Education Educator and Trainer, which qualified her for the Innovator program.

As Pioneer High's ed tech lead – a position Ceja has held for four years – she supports teachers using educational technology in the classroom, helps troubleshoot issues and trains teachers in how to use a variety of Google classroom tools to personalize learning for students. She also collaborates with ed tech leads from other District schools to hold summer workshops that train and instruct teachers.

"Using technology in the classroom does not make you a better teacher, but rather how you use the technology to enhance teaching," Ceja said. "For example, to review for a test, I could assign a five-page worksheet or I could create an online activity that will better engage students and help them practice and retain the content."

For the Innovator program, applicants needed to show a history of innovation at their school or district and highlight a challenge being met through a 90-second YouTube challenge video. Ceja's challenge focused on supporting veteran teachers in the classroom as they adapt to new demands.

Ken LaVigne, who teaches La Serna High School's Organized Academic Support in School (OASIS) program, attended Ceja's workshop on how to create professional teacher websites.

"Lisa's technical knowledge and tremendous patience has allowed me and other teachers to enhance and improve our communication and effectiveness," said LaVigne, a 33-year educator. "She has a natural kindness that diffuses the anxiety of older teachers who have very limited technical acumen – we are so lucky to have her at Whittier Union."

A graduate from Santa Fe High School, Ceja attended UCLA to earn a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics and a master's degree in education. She returned to Santa Fe to teach before relocating to Pioneer High School, where she has taught since 2010.

Ceja also serves as Pioneer's intervention specialist, identifying students who are in danger of failing a class and supporting their improvement with continual advising.

"Lisa Ceja leads by example and improves the educational experiences and opportunities of everyone around her," Whittier Union Superintendent Martin Plourde said. "We're ecstatic to have educators like Lisa at our District – they are innovative, always seeking opportunities to grow and constantly exploring new ways to make learning a dynamic experience for all of our students."

PHOTO CAPTION

070518_WUHSD_GOOGLE: Pioneer High School's ed tech lead and math teacher Lisa Ceja is dedicated to making educational technology accessible to veteran teachers. Her passion has earned her a spot in Google for Education's Certified Innovator program. Google's Innovator program is a year-long professional development experience that includes mentorship opportunities and an in-person, three-day Innovation Academy. The academy will be held July 9-11 at the Google office in Venice, California.

###

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

WUHSD Board of Trustees

Dr. Ralph S. Pacheco, *President* ■ Russell Castañeda-Calleros, *Vice President* ■ Jeff Baird, *Clerk* ■ Leighton Anderson, *Member* ■ Tim Schneider, *Member*
Martin Plourde, *Superintendent*

9401 S. Painter Avenue, Whittier, California 90605-2798 ■ (562) 698-8121 ■ www.wuhsd.org