PRESS RELEASE

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Paramount High Students Thriving in New Computer Science Pathway

Paramount, CA – Paramount High School students are learning to program robots, build apps and speak the language of computer coding through a computer science pathway launched in fall 2018.

The computer science course is part of the District's career technical education (CTE) pathway programs, which prepare students for success in college and career in specific areas of study. About 40 freshmen at Paramount High School's West Campus are enrolled in the beginning course; the District will add advanced courses each of the next three years to complete the four-year program.

"A lot of the course is problem solving," PHS freshman Diana Aguirre said. "You have to figure out how to program things through trial and error, and it's a lot of fun to go through that process."

PHS West teacher Deringer Dietz, who leads the class, said many students arrived already understanding some of the concepts through their Project Lead The Way programs in middle school.

Dietz challenges his class through a range of defined assignments that require specific programming instructions and less-defined tasks that allow students to create projects more freely.

Earlier this year, students used the App Inventor for Android program to create apps around their personal passions. One student designed an app that asked questions to evaluate mental health. Another student created a game that allows users to treat injured soccer players.

"I've been really impressed with the creativity of many of our students," Dietz said. "They have successfully learned the foundational concepts and added their own ideas to create interesting projects."

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In addition to projects, Dietz said the course includes a lot of reading and helps student learn how to organize their work. Future courses in the pathway will include Advanced Placement computer coding and cyber security.

"We created these courses to be intentional about providing students with instruction that will serve them in the real world," PUSD Superintendent Ruth Pérez said. "Our students are now more confident than ever to graduate and seize their goals."

Freshman Joshua Harman, who wants to pursue a career as a programmer, said he's looking forward to soon learning Python, a high-level programming language.

"I'm impressed by our students, who have embraced the new program and shown a desire to continue sharpening their skills," PUSD Board of Education President Carmen Gomez. "I'm looking forward to seeing what they produce as they learn and grown in their study."

PHOTO CAPTION:

012419_PARAMOUNT_CSCIENCE: Paramount High School teacher Deringer Dietz works with a student during a computer science class. PHS added computer science as a new pathway in the fall to better prepare students for college and career.

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