



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 2, 2023 CONTACT: Andrea Garcia PHONE: 909-447-2403

## Whittier Union High School Recognized with AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award

**WHITTIER** – La Serna High School has been recognized by the College Board for expanding young women’s access to Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science classes, presenting the school with its 2022 AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award. This is the second year La Serna has received the award.

The Female Diversity award is given to schools that have 50% or more female exam taker representation in its AP Computer Science Principles (AP CSP) class or a percentage of CSP exam takers that meets or exceeds that of the school’s female population. La Serna is one of just 832 high schools across the country to receive the award in 2022.

“We are excited and honored to receive this recognition from the College Board,” La Serna Principal Griselda Castro said. “Equal representation in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects brings new ideas and innovations to the table and opens the doors to lucrative careers for all students. We have a wonderful AP CSP teacher in Laura Glass. Her approach is fresh and student-centered and she serves as a role model for our young women on campus.”

AP CSP is an introductory course that provides a thorough overview of computer science, from learning programming languages like Python, to website building with HTML and CSS. Glass compares the class to sampling different flavors at an ice cream shop, allowing students to discover which aspects of computer science appeal to them.

“AP CSP is a great class for students with no background in computer science. Also, it’s not language-specific, so it gives teachers flexibility in their approach to the curriculum, and they can focus on their strengths,” Glass said. “It’s a fun class that is introducing our students to career paths they may have never thought of pursuing. It’s a draw for all students, but really resonates with our girls, who in tandem with the strong support and encouragement of our counselors, do an excellent job of spreading the word on campus to encourage other girls to enroll.”

Glass credits La Serna High Class of 2017 alumna Markie Wagner for her advocacy in establishing the AP computer science program at the school. After graduating from La Serna, Wagner attended both USC and Stanford before forming Delphi Labs, a frontier tech research and advisory firm that partners with companies to launch new technology campaigns focused on artificial intelligence (AI).

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Wagner was a computer prodigy and began building websites while still in elementary school. By the time she arrived at La Serna she had already created and marketed her first smartphone app, based on the game Catch Phrase. After participating in the Girls Who Code program, Wagner began tutoring and mentoring fifth-grade students in Los Angeles during her junior year.

La Serna’s former principal Ann Fitzgerald, who is currently the District’s Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services, encouraged Wagner to start a coding club on campus as a way to inspire other students, particularly girls, to pursue STEM careers, and to advocate for Glass and AP Physics teacher Todd Boschman to receive training in AP CSP and Intro to Engineering through Cal Poly Pomona’s Project Lead the Way program. The two classes debuted during the 2016-17 school year.

“I think it’s beautiful to set something in motion that continues to grow. It’s an honor to contribute to something that has blossomed in that way,” Wagner said. “Engineers are going to build the future. I have already heard from former students saying that they are working as an engineer at SpaceX or Microsoft. I am so grateful for everyone who supported my advocacy for believing in me and putting the future into these students’ hands.”

**PHOTO CAPTION**

**WUHSD\_SCIENCE1:** La Serna High School’s AP CSP teacher Laura Glass celebrates La Serna winning the 2022 AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award alongside her computer science students.

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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.

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