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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Traweek Middle School Offers Innovative STEM Pathways, Preparing Students for Lifelong Success**

**COVINA, CA** – Traweek Middle School is empowering students to build strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills through innovative, hands-on programs such as Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and Femineers, preparing students for success in high school pathways, college, and careers.

PLTW is a project-based curriculum that blends creativity with real-world engineering and problem-solving skills. At Traweek, students are introduced to PLTW as early as sixth grade through the rotating elective wheel, allowing them to explore the program before committing to the class in later years. In seventh and eighth grade, students can enroll in introductory and advanced PLTW courses.

"I wanted to be involved in Project Lead the Way because it is a good way to learn how to problem-solve and we can learn important life skills," seventh-grader Juliet Franco said. "My favorite part is that we can really bring what we imagine to life."

PLTW coursework begins with an introduction to the engineering design process. From there, students explore mathematical concepts such as measurements and ratios before advancing to simple and compound mechanisms and coding principles. The year culminates in a project where student groups design, build, and program their own robots, each one uniquely engineered to meet the project's goals.

"It's impactful to see my students finally put everything together," PLTW teacher Shelly Warschaw said. "During the first semester, I'm teaching them the foundational skills. In the second semester, I see everything click. Watching their confidence grow is truly inspiring."

Warschaw also serves as the advisor for Femineers, a program through California State Polytechnic University, Pomona that encourages female students to explore STEM. Femineers meets twice a month and provides hands-on experience using hummingbird technology kits that combine engineering, coding, and artistic design. Students will showcase their creations at a showcase hosted by Cal Poly Pomona in April alongside students from other schools in the region.

Warschaw also teaches computer science and leads Traweek's e-sports program. In computer science classes, students progress from block-based to line coding while learning to apply their skills through robotics projects using the same hummingbird technology kits.

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Traweek's e-sports class goes beyond gameplay to explore the careers and industries behind competitive gaming, including team management and event operations. After school, Warschaw coaches Traweek's e-sports team, which competes virtually against schools across the West Coast.

"It's so important to give students early exposure to STEM to prepare them for the real world," Warschaw said. "STEM teaches problem-solving, collaboration, and communication skills that students can apply in every subject and throughout their lives. Traweek is the only middle school in our District to offer programs like these."

In addition to its STEM offerings, Traweek Middle School is home to a robust Advancement Via Individual Determination program, which supports students in core academic classes while helping them build essential skills such as organization, note-taking, and goal-setting. College field trips and guest speakers also provide students with early exposure to postsecondary pathways.

Traweek feeds into Covina High School, which builds on this strong foundation by offering continued access to advanced academic and career pathways, including its Early College Program, which allows students to earn college credit while still in high school.

"Traweek Middle School offers unique programs, standout support, and meaningful opportunities that help students discover their strengths and build confidence in their future," Interim Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Blackmore said. "By combining innovative academics with hands-on learning and strong student support systems, Covina-Valley Unified ensures students are prepared not just for high school, but for success well beyond the classroom."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**CVUSD\_STEM1:** Traweek Middle School is empowering students to build strong STEM skills through innovative, hands-on programs such as Project Lead the Way.

**CVUSD\_STEM2:** Traweek Middle School's Femineers meets twice a month, providing hands-on experience that encourages female students to explore STEM.

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