Fontana Unified School District
Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities
9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 5, 2026

CONTACT: Nancy Yeang
909.204.6012

Fontana Unified Students Code Their Way to Competing on the World Stage

FONTANA, CA - Fifteen Fontana Unified School District students will take their coding and problem-solving skills to the international stage from Dec. 8-10, when six elementary and middle school robotics teams will compete at the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) in Puerto Rico.

WRO is a global science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) competition for students ages 8 to 22 that challenges participants to design, build, and program robots to solve problems. The six qualifying teams earned their spots at the United States Engineering League School National Competition in Ontario: four elementary school teams (Robo Rights, Team Bubblegum, Little Einstein – 0527, and Rulers of the Nile); and two middle school teams (Team I Don't Know and Team Fast Control.)

The competition season spans two academic school years, allowing sixth-graders to finish with their elementary school teams and ninth-graders with their middle school teams during the first semester before advancing to the next level.

"Students come into their first competition nervous about whether their robot will even work, and then you see them coming to our headquarters for extra practice because they want to go for the gold," WRO Elementary Section Supervisor Matt Valdez said. "They're building confidence and discovering how far they can take something they love."

In one of the competition categories, RoboMission, students apply coding and math skills in real time to program robots and complete scored challenges, such as navigating obstacle courses and moving objects. Sierra Lakes Elementary School is represented by two teams: Little Einstein – 0527, featuring fifth-graders Mirabelle Fan and Dean Patrick and fourth-grader Victor Herrera, and Rulers of the Nile, featuring sixth-graders Evie Carol Schuster-Hill and Kainaetochukwu Ezeoke representing Dorothy Grant Elementary. Team Fast Control will represent Sequoia Middle School with eighth-graders Camden Donahue, Joey Santana, and Oscar Padilla, while Team I Don't Know will represent Wayne Ruble Middle School with eighth-graders Flora Fan and Chidumebi Orji and ninth-grader Ivanna Vazquez.

In the Future Innovators category, students develop robotic solutions to real-world problems. Team Bubblegum teammates Samantha Bernal, an Oak Park Elementary third-grader, and Isabel Ornelas, a student at Falcon Ridge Elementary in Etiwanda School District, will compete with their creation, Culture Ball, a robotic gumball machine designed to make learning about different cultures fun. The robot shares cultural facts to encourage understanding and respect for people from different backgrounds.

– more –

Team Robo Rights brings together fifth-graders Evelyn Anaya, representing Redwood Elementary, and Kayla Nguyen and Jason Bernal, representing Oak Park Elementary. Their robot teaches users about constitutional amendments by scanning cards and sharing information through a screen and speakers. The team designed the project with the goal of making learning accessible by including auditory and visual aids for people who are blind or Deaf.

Team I Don't Know member Flora Fan is a returning international competitor who first discovered her interest in robotics in elementary school. Now in her third year in the program, Fan recently transferred from Wayne Ruble Middle School to the new Oak Grove Preparatory Academy.

"I like robotics because I get to make friends and work through challenges with them," Fan said. "When something is hard, it makes me want to keep trying. It's helped me feel more confident about figuring things out and not giving up."

Fan said coding classes and robotics opportunities helped draw her to Oak Grove Preparatory Academy, where she is expanding her coding knowledge through JavaScript and Python. She hopes to continue pursuing robotics at Oak Grove and study aerospace engineering in the future. Fan said she is drawn to challenging work and the opportunity to do things people have never done before.

"Seeing our students take their ideas and talents to an international competition is a proud moment for Fontana Unified," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "The passion we see in these teams is representative of the drive we aim to instill in our students every day. This District success further cements our commitment to helping students discover their interests and develop the skillsets they need to pursue them."

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_WRO1: Fontana Unified's elementary robotics teams will showcase their coding and problem-solving skills at the World Robot Olympiad in Puerto Rico Dec. 8-10, competing in the RoboMission and Future Innovators categories.

# # #