



## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Whittier Union Schools Recognized for Boosting Female Representation in STEM Courses

**WHITTIER** – Two Whittier Union high schools have earned the first College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in their AP Computer Science Principles courses, integrated into the curriculum in 2016 to expand student access to STEM education.

La Serna and Whittier high schools were recognized for either reaching 50 percent or higher female representation in the AP course or having a percentage of the female computer science examinees meeting or exceeding that of the school's female population.

Out of more than 18,000 secondary schools worldwide that offer AP courses, the Whittier Union schools are among only 685 to accomplish this feat.

“We know the impact STEM programs have on our students – particularly on our female students – and their interest in pursuing innovative, creative and competitive jobs in lucrative fields,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “Our girls continue to excel in their respective academic pursuits and are taking every opportunity to shine as they prepare to become the scientists and leaders of the future.”

Whittier Union launched the AP Computer Science course in the 2016-17 school year for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students at La Serna and Whittier high schools, accommodating 88 students. Students learn the foundational concepts of computer science, using the tools and processes incorporated by artists, writers, computer scientists and engineers.

Research shows women are more likely to pursue computer science if they're given the opportunity to explore it in high school.

Overall, AP Computer Science course participation has increased 135 percent worldwide since 2016. The number of female, rural and underrepresented minority students taking AP Computer Science exams has also more than doubled in that period.

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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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