

PRESS RELEASE

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Village Academy Selected to Join Prestigious Network Advancing STEM Skills in the Classroom

POMONA – The Village Academy High School of Information Technology is one of 20 academies across the nation selected to join the Lenovo Scholar Network, which provides select National Academy Foundation (NAF) schools with a comprehensive mobile application development curriculum that promotes the critical thinking, team building and analytical skills needed to create the next generation of developers and innovators.

Now in its second year, the Network will provide students with more than \$500,000 in donated products and the knowledge, resources and practical mobile app development experience to support their college and future career success.

As part of the 2015-16 program, students in Village Academy's Computer Programming and Game Design NAF pathway will be challenged to design and develop a mobile app and a business marketing plan for taking the app to market. Students will present their work during an online competition in April. Select winners will share their projects at the NAF Next Convention in summer 2016.

"Inclusion in this program is an incredible opportunity for our Village Academy students, who will get the chance to work with state-of-the-art equipment that will help them create cutting-edge mobile apps that solve real-world challenges of the 21st century," Board of Education President Andrew Wong said. "The District is committed to exposing more students to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects to develop high-tech skills for success. This program will help further those efforts."

Village Academy will receive 14 Lenovo ThinkPad laptops and YOGA tablets to develop mobile apps utilizing STEM-based curriculum. The devices will help students to code, test and develop their mobile apps and provide professional development to teachers to implement the curriculum.

Working in teams of two, students will have access to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab's App Inventor – a web-based tool for creating Android-platform apps – to build and test their apps on Lenovo devices. NAF and MIT will work together to provide technical assistance and develop support materials for teachers using the tool.

Through collaboration with MIT's curriculum, NAF will grant access to a self-guided course for teachers through App Inventor and an in-person teacher training with virtual office hours held by MIT staff via Google Hangout.

“Through this amazing partnership, our students and teachers are not only going to be working collaboratively on projects that demand high skill and creativity, but they will also have the opportunity to work on Lenovo products and with academic intellectuals at MIT,” Superintendent Richard Martinez said.

“This form of collaboration provides our students with tangible, relevant tools that challenge them and prepare them for life beyond high school. We wish them the best of luck as they accept this challenge and begin creating.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

NETWORK: As part of Village Academy High School being selected to join the Lenovo Scholar Network for the 2015-16 school year, students in the school’s Computer Programming and Game Design National Academy Foundation (NAF) pathway will have the opportunity to gain practical mobile app development experience to support their college and future career success.

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