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News Release

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L.A. Unified Announces Larger Focus on Computer Science for K-12
District, Code.Org Form First Complete K-12 Partnership Among California Schools

LOS ANGELES - The Los Angeles Unified School District will partner with a prominent non-profit organization to offer all students in kindergarten through 12th grade instruction in computer science, expanding upon the District's earlier efforts with UCLA to broaden access to the subject matter in high school.

L.A. Unified officials announced today a cooperative agreement with Code.org, a Seattle-based organization. The group aims to bring computer science to all K-12 public schools in the United States and to increase participation by women and by underrepresented students of color.

The collaboration, the organization's first complete K-12 partnership in California, may help diminish the digital divide that leads to few women and people of color, in particular, competing for high-technology jobs. Critics have cited several reasons for this disparity. Among them: that public school children, even in big urban districts like Los Angeles, receive little training in problem solving, critical thinking and writing computer software—especially at an early age.

Superintendent John E. Deasy said the new partnership leads to students gaining competence in computer science, which enhances learning, regardless of a child's ultimate interests. This readiness will serve them well, he said.

"It is absolutely critical that we equip students with an education that prepares them for life," Deasy said. "Teaching students how to code enhances their relevant skills, no matter what academic or career path they eventually choose. Coding is, by any measure in a digital-age economy, an essential skill, and is something that all students should have the opportunity to learn."

Hadi Partovi, founder and CEO of Code.org added: "We're proud to partner with LAUSD to bring computer science to *every* Los Angeles student and give them knowledge to lead in any 21st-century career. When less than 10 percent of schools offer computer science nationwide, expanding access for students in the second-largest school district in the country is a milestone we should all celebrate today."

Partovi noted the significance of working with the very district where the national movement for

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K-12 computer science began with "Exploring Computer Science," a course focused on increasing diversity and equity in computer science, which even more Los Angeles high school students will take through the new partnership.

Under the agreement, the new computer science education plan will be rolled out over the next three years. The components include:

- Offering computer science to grades K-5, teaching concepts in computing using a blended approach of self-guided and self-paced online tutorials, along with other activities that require no computer at all.

- Establishing a program for middle school students that combines computer science with the mathematics and science curriculum. Computer programming, as well as Algebra, will be used to problem solve.

- Expanding the computer science classes offered at high schools, including by 2016, an Advanced Placement course.

Code.org has agreed to prepare teachers throughout the school year in multiple phases of in-person and online professional development and support. The group will provide curriculum, marketing material, and workshops at no cost.

Code.org was co-founded in 2013 by Partovi, who has served as an early advisor to numerous startups including social media giant Facebook, file sharing business Dropbox and shoe retailer Zappos. Code.org has partnered with 31 other school districts, including L.A. Unified.

While learning code is fledgling but rapidly spreading among school systems, L.A. Unified officials believe the new partnership furthers the District's goal of producing graduates who are college-prepared and career-ready. For instance, students who take high school computer science are four times more likely to select computer science as their college major, according to the College Board, which administers the Advanced Placement program at schools nationwide.

More importantly, Google, the world's-largest search engine, surveyed its workforce and found that 98 percent of its U.S. employees were exposed to computer science before enrolling in college. In addition, those who studied computer science in college were more likely to have learned about that career path in high school.

"Learning about computer sciences and coding are essential for every career in this century, from agriculture to zoology," said Todd Ullah, an administrator for the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support, who created the initial computer science program for the District and acted as a conduit with Code.org in this project.

"We all know that technology touches all of our lives in very important ways here in the 21st century. Our district's K-12 partnership with code.org is a step in the right direction in terms of access, equity, and preparing our students to be college prepared and career ready," he said.

Computer Science   14/15-069   3-3-3-3

The following videos provide more information about the computer science programs. Please click on the links below:

Elementary school program: http://code.org/educate/k5.

Middle School Math: http://code.org/educate/ms
or http://code.org/files/Code.org%20Middle%20School%20CS%20in%20Math%20Program.pdf

High School 'Exploring Computer Science' course: http://code.org/files/ECSonepager.pdf

High School Advanced Placement course: http://code.org/files/CSPcurriculumflyer.pdf

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