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SWEETWATER
UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: August 21, 2015

To: Dr. Karen Janney
             Superintendent

From: Ana Maria Alvarez

Re: Computer Science Program: Expanding Program and Recruiting Students

Efforts to expand the Computer Science program and increase the number of students with access to Computer Science throughout the district commenced in the Summer of 2014. Dr. Roman Del Rosario, Curriculum Director for SUHSD, and Dr. Katrine Czajkowski created a plan that included short and long term goals for the implementation and offering of Computer Science courses at all district school sites. Expertise and input for the plan was provided by CS-CAVE, our higher-ed partners; Art Lopez, pilot instructor of the College Board's AP Computer Science Principles course; and Joseph Pistone, Computer Science teacher at Sweetwater High School.

Training workshops for teaching teachers how to teach Computer Science courses for both the high and middle schools were conducted in the Fall and Spring semesters of 2015 and 2016. As part of the training workshops, recruitment plans and efforts for the CS courses were described by Art Lopez. These recruitment efforts started in November of 2015 to recruit students for CS courses for the 2015-16 school year. Teachers in the training workshops were asked to conduct an "Hour of Code", an event sponsored world-wide by Code.org to inform students and staff the importance of learning CS and taking CS courses.

A key aspect to these efforts was informing and attempting to gain full support of school-site administrator leaders, the Principals, for the CS program and its importance for students to have the opportunities to take such courses. This aspect was first demonstrated by Dr. Del Rosario when he was Principal at Sweetwater High School during the initial stages of this program, followed by the continuing full support of current principal Maribel Gavin.

Dr. Del Rosario determined that a presentation of the CS program and outlining its importance for students' public education and future endeavors be conducted for the principals. A presentation of the importance and availability of CS courses for students was conducted by Art Lopez, Dr. Katrine Czajkowski, Dr. Diane Baxter (Associate Director: Education, San Diego Supercomputer Center and UCSD) and Dr. Susan Yonezawa (Associate Director UCSD CREATE), our CS-CAVE partners.

Art Lopez also piloted a local meeting for counselors at Sweetwater High School to inform counselors of the new CS course and its importance for students to gain their support. This was well received by the counselors. The intent is to expand this presentation to all counselors within the district. Five district high and four middle schools responded to and supported these initial efforts and were able to generate CS courses for their students for the school year 2015-16.

In the summer of 2015, office hours were conducted by Art Lopez to provide continuing support and preparation for both high and middle school teachers to teach CS courses at the school. A presentation of the CS program and its importance for students, the partnership with CS-CAVE and an outline of the efforts of expanding the CS program district-wide was conducted for Superintendent Dr. Karen Janney, the SUHSD Board of Trustees and SUHSD Cabinet members.

Plans for conducting new workshops to help teachers learn how to recruit students for CS courses starting in October/November 2015, gained the full support of school-site Principals and counselors are currently being set in place.