



Sacramento City Unified School District

For Immediate Release

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SCUSD Superintendent José Banda Expresses Support for Worldwide ‘Hour of Code’ Initiative

Event focused on bridging digital divide, promoting computer sciences

December 9, 2014 (Sacramento): Superintendent Jose Banda called on all teachers in the Sacramento Unified School District to be leaders in teaching computer science to their students by joining the worldwide “Hour of Code” movement.

Tens of millions of students of all ages and backgrounds have already tried an Hour of Code, a one-hour introduction designed to demystify computer science and show that anybody can learn the basics. This year, Banda, along with other leaders in the education and tech fields such as Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg, are hoping to reach 100 million students.

“Sacramento is one of the most diverse cities in the world, right in the heart of Northern California and the high tech space. We need to do more to awaken our students to the opportunities in the field of computer science,” said Banda.

The movement aims to help close the “digital divide,” the gap between demographics and regions that have access to modern information and communications technology, and those that don’t or have restricted access.

The Hour of Code exercises are all online at hourofcode.org, and are designed to be self-taught and easy to follow. Some exercises are based on games, such as the popular “Flappy Bird,” where students issue commands to the bird to navigate a maze, and then learn how to write the appropriate code.

Banda believes that SCUSD can be a leader in the movement. So far, over 22 out of 75 district schools are voluntarily participating with more than 100 teachers planning to teach one hour of code to their students.

To energize the cause, the district has partnered with local tech businesses and will deploy engineers from those companies to join teachers and help get kids excited about programming. News stations and other local media will be visiting select school sites to raise awareness and provide coverage of the movement.

Unfortunately, the biggest barrier to participating in the Hour of Code is the same reason more people don’t get into the tech field. “People think it’s too hard. But that’s just not the case. Kindergartners are figuring it out and doing the exercises, and they love it!” said Mac Clemmens, CEO of Digital Deployment, one of the companies partnering with SCUSD.

“You don’t have to be an English major to use English,” said Ben Shell, a software engineer at Digital Deployment. “The same is true with programming. You don’t have to be a computer scientist to use programming. More than ever, programming is involved in every field: science, education, medicine, communications, entertainment.”

“Throughout my career in education, I have been committed to providing equity, access and opportunity for ALL students,” said Banda. “The Hour of Code provides an opportunity to introduce the field of computer sciences to a number of kids who may not have had that access in the past.”

SCUSD has assigned veteran teacher and district administrator Joseph Stymeist to coordinate the efforts and answer any questions teachers have. To date, the district has also provided trainings and information materials, and rallied more than two dozen teachers at the district headquarters in preparation for Hour of Code.

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