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### **Ridgewood High School Earns College Board AP<sup>®</sup> Computer Science Female Diversity Award**

*Recognized for Closing the Gender Gap in AP Computer Science Principles*

**Ridgewood, NJ** – Ridgewood High School has earned the College Board AP<sup>®</sup> Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles. Schools honored with the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have expanded girls' access in AP Computer Science courses.

Out of the 20,000 institutions that offer AP courses, 1,119 achieved either 50% or higher female representation in one of the two AP computer science courses or a percentage of the female computer science examinees meeting or exceeding that of the school's female population during the 2019-2020 school year. That's nearly 37% more than the 818 schools recognized last year. In 2020, Ridgewood High School was one of 831 recognized in the category of AP Computer Science Principles.

“We are extremely proud of the determination and commitment of our female students to the study of AP Computer Science,” said Thomas Gorman, acting superintendent of the Ridgewood Public Schools. “It is exciting to witness their growing enthusiasm and interest in this subject area. The future promises to hold endless opportunities for our students to explore their passion for next generation technology and achieve lifelong success.”

“Ridgewood High School's students need the power to shape technology, not just cope with it,” says Stefanie Sanford, College Board chief of global policy and external relations. “Young women deserve an equal opportunity to become the next generation of entrepreneurs, engineers and tech leaders. Closing the gap in computer science education empowers young women to build the future they want.”

The first year of AP Computer Science Principles in 2016-17 attracted more students than any other AP course debut, and participation is on the rise. In 2020, more than 116,000 students took the AP CSP Exam—more than double the number of exam takers in the course's first year, and a 21% increase over the previous year. In 2020, 39,570 women took the AP CSP exam, nearly three times the number who tested in 2017.



Providing female students with access to computer science courses is critical to ensuring gender parity in the industry's high-paying jobs and to drive innovation, creativity, and representation. The [median annual wage](#) for computer and information technology occupations was \$88,240 in May 2019. However, a code.org [analysis of 2017 Bureau of Labor Statistics data](#) finds women represent just 24% of the 5 million people in computing occupations.

That's why new College Board [research](#) about AP CSP is so encouraging. According to the data, **female students who take AP CSP in high school are more than 5 times as likely to major in computer science in college**, compared to similar female students who did not take CSP. The study also finds AP CSP students are nearly twice as likely to enroll in AP CSA, and that for most students, AP CSP serves as a stepping-stone to other advanced AP STEM coursework.

These findings make it all the more imperative that schools nationwide achieve gender parity in AP Computer Science classrooms. The 1,119 schools that receive this year's AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award should serve as inspirations and models for all American high schools, where overall, female students remain under-represented in computer science classes, comprising just 34% of AP Computer Science Principles participants. So there is a long way to go to achieve equal gender representation in the field of computer science. Currently, less than half of the nation's high schools teach foundational computer science, a clear opportunity to be addressed by strong partnerships between policymakers, the tech industry, and educators.

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### **About Ridgewood Public Schools**

The Ridgewood Public Schools, committed to a tradition of excellence and innovation, deliver a high-quality education focusing on maximizing the potential of every learner. As the largest school system in Bergen County, the district comprises 10 schools and serves over 5,600 students. The Ridgewood Public Schools are continually recognized on state and national levels for school and individual achievements. All students are taught in a technologically advanced setting and are provided with numerous opportunities to excel in the classroom and extracurricular activities, including the arts, athletics and academic competitions.

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