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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Lodi USD and Delta College Launch Robotics Academy

Lodi, CA (April 15, 2019)—Lodi USD is excited to announce a new school will commence in the 2019-20 school year. The Valley Robotics Academy (VRA) is a joint collaboration between Lodi USD and San Joaquin Delta College to bring new and innovative Career Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) offerings to the Central Valley.

VRA is the first of its kind in the area. Delta College will provide college courses; students will receive both core program and general education courses through dual enrollment at VRA. Students in grades 7-12 will have access to robotics, drones, and automation integrated curriculum. Students will be in project-based classroom settings with opportunities for independent study.

“We are giving students the flexibility to learn and engage with CTE and STEM in a completely new way. By extending the program offerings through a hybrid, independent study model with dual enrollment, we are offering students an all-inclusive education in robotics,” said Jeff Palmquist, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education at Lodi USD.

Through this partnership, students will complete a high school diploma through a CTE pathway with opportunities for job shadowing, internships, and externships. Students will also have the ability to obtain a Delta College certificate, Associate of Science degree, or Bachelor of Science transfer.

“Preparing students for the future is a top priority for the District. We are always seeking new and innovative ways to equip students with the skills they need to be successful in their future endeavors.

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We are excited to expand our partnership with Delta College on this new academy that will support the development of skills necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said Dr. Nichols-Washer, Lodi USD Superintendent.

Salvador Vargas has served as the Dean of CTE and Workforce Development at Delta College for six years and has been with the college for over 30 years. He understands the unique challenges facing those entering college.

“The genesis of this partnership was to create more opportunities for children. It is estimated that two-thirds of students are not college or career ready after graduation. VRA will expose students to emerging technologies that are vital to the economy and free market. Dual enrollment will save students and their families thousands of dollars by allowing them to earn transferrable college credit or an A.S.,” said Vargas.

It is estimated that between 2012 and 2022, there will be over 50 million job openings for CTE graduates, and approximately 30 percent will be new positions, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“When students graduate from VRA, they will have the skills needed to pursue higher education, technical or trade schools, and secure employment. It is our goal to build and advance local and regional workforces to ensure our economic growth and global competitiveness in San Joaquin County and beyond,” said Vargas.

VRA students will be entitled to the same support services as any other currently enrolled Delta College student, including counseling, computer labs, student email addresses, and access to the library, food services, and bookstore.

In its inaugural year, VRA plans to enroll 90 students in grades 7 – 9. In future school years, VRA will be expanded to include grades 10 – 12.

VRA will be housed at the Walter J. Katnich School site, located at 13451 N. Extension Road, Lodi, CA 95242. High school students will attend classes at VRA and Delta College.

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One-way transportation will be provided from Katnich to Delta College.

Lodi USD is accepting applications for the 2019-20 school year from April 15 – May 15, 2019. Interested students and parents are encouraged to visit [valleyrobotics.lodiusd.net](http://valleyrobotics.lodiusd.net), email [valleyrobotics@lodiusd.net](mailto:valleyrobotics@lodiusd.net), or call (209) 331-8008 to learn how to apply.

Parent information nights will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 from 6PM – 7:30PM in the McNair High Theatre and Thursday, May 2, 2019 from 6PM – 7:30PM at the District Office.

**About San Joaquin Delta College:**

Delta College is a top destination for students in the San Joaquin Valley and Mother Lode wishing to learn a new trade, upgrade their skills, or earn transfer units to four-year colleges and universities. Established in 1963, the College serves over 20,000 students at its campuses in Stockton and Mountain House, as well as online and at satellite facilities across the region. For more information, visit [www.deltacollege.edu](http://www.deltacollege.edu).

**About Lodi Unified School District:**

Lodi Unified School District is located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Home to 49 school sites, Lodi USD provides high-quality education to a diverse population of 29,000 students. Lodi USD encompasses more than 350 square miles, including the Cities of Lodi and Stockton as well as the rural communities of Acampo, Clements, Lockeford, Victor, and Woodbridge. For more information, visit [www.lodiusd.net](http://www.lodiusd.net).

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