



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Royal Live Oaks Academy earns first College Board AP® Computer Science Female Diversity award**

**HARDEEVILLE** – Royal Live Oaks Academy has earned the first College Board AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles. Royal Live Oaks Academy is one of 13 charter schools authorized by the Charter Institute at Erskine.

Schools honored with the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have expanded girls' access in AP Computer Science courses. Out of more than 18,000 secondary schools worldwide that offer AP courses, Royal Live Oaks Academy is one of only 685 to accomplish this.

“We’re honored by this recognition and are proud of our female students studying computer science for their achievements,” said Dr. Karen Wicks, Royal Live Oaks Academy principal. “We’re committed to continuing to provide our female students with access to AP Computer Science courses to help prepare a more diverse workforce in critical STEM jobs.”

Schools receiving the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have 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. Only 490 schools earned the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award for AP Computer Science Principles.

“By inviting many more young women to advanced computer science classrooms, Royal Live Oaks Academy has taken a significant step toward preparing all students for the widest range of 21st-century opportunities,” said Trevor Packer, College Board senior vice president of the AP Program. “We hope this inspires many other high schools to engage more female students in AP Computer Science and prepare them to drive innovation.”

The AP Computer Science Principles course launch in 2016 was the largest in Program history. AP Computer Science Principles has promoted the growth of AP computer science in high schools. AP computer science course participation increased 135% since 2016, broadening STEM career opportunities for more students. The number of female, rural, and underrepresented minority students taking AP computer science exams has more than doubled in that period.

Providing female students with access to computer science courses contributes to gender parity in the industry’s high-paying jobs and drives innovation, creativity, and competition. According to [UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics data](#), less than 30% of the world’s researchers are women; in North America and Western Europe, it’s just 32%. [Research](#) shows women are more likely to pursue computer science if they’re given the opportunity to explore it in high school.

180-year-old Erskine College established the Charter Institute at Erskine in 2017 to improve public education across the state of South Carolina. The Institute currently sponsors 13 charter schools with nearly 10,000 students. Four additional schools are scheduled to open in the fall of 2019. For more information, please visit [www.erskinecharters.org](http://www.erskinecharters.org).

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