Support K-12 Computer Science Education in Mississippi

Computer science drives job growth and innovation throughout our economy and society. Computing occupations are the number 1 source of all new wages in the U.S. and make up over half of all projected new jobs in STEM fields, making Computer Science one of the most in-demand college degrees. And computing is used all around us and in virtually every field. It’s foundational knowledge that all students need. But computer science is marginalized throughout education. Only 45% of U.S. high schools teach any computer science courses and only 10% of STEM graduates study it. We need to improve access for all students, including groups who have traditionally been underrepresented.

Mississippi had only 207 computer science graduates in 2017; only 16% were female. In Mississippi, only 47% of all public high schools teach computer science.

Computers science in Mississippi

- Mississippi currently has 1,013 open computing jobs (4.4 times the average demand rate in Mississippi).
- The average salary for a computing occupation in MS is $72,039, which is significantly higher than the average salary in the state ($39,420). The existing open jobs alone represent a $72,975,502 opportunity in terms of annual salaries.
- Mississippi had only 207 computer science graduates in 2017; only 16% were female.
- In Mississippi, only 47% of all public high schools teach computer science.
- Only 327 exams were taken in AP Computer Science by high school students in Mississippi in 2019 (27 took AP CS A and 300 took AP CSP).
- Only 37% were female (30% for AP CS A and 38% for AP CSP); only 22 exams were taken by Hispanic or Latino students (1 took AP CS A and 21 took AP CSP); only 42 exams were taken by Black students (5 took AP CS A and 37 took AP CSP); no exams were taken by American Indian or Alaska Native students; no exams were taken by Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students.
- Only 20 schools in MS (10% of MS schools with AP programs) offered an AP Computer Science course in 2017-2018 (2% offered AP CS A and 10% offered AP CSP), which is 7 more than the previous year. There are fewer AP exams taken in computer science than in any other STEM subject area.
- Universities in Mississippi did not graduate a single new teacher prepared to teach computer science in 2017.
- According to a representative survey from Google/Gallup, school administrators in MS support expanding computer science education opportunities: 78% of principals surveyed think CS is just as or more important than required core classes.
What can you do to support K-12 CS education in Mississippi?

- Nominate a teacher for professional learning: www.code.org/nominate
- Send a letter:
  - To your school/district asking them to expand computer science offerings at every grade level: www.code.org/promote/letter
  - To your elected officials asking them to support computer science education policy in Mississippi: www.votervoice.net/Code/campaigns/58463/respond
- Find out if your school teaches computer science or submit information about your school's offerings at www.code.org/yourschool.
- Visit www.code.org/educate/3rdparty to find out about courses and curriculum from a variety of providers, including Code.org.

Who can you connect with locally to talk about K-12 CS education policy?

- You can reach Code.org’s policy contact for your state, Amy Roberts, at amy.roberts@code.org.
- The Expanding Computing Education Pathways (ECEP) Alliance (www.ecepalliance.org), an NSF funded Broadening Participation in Computing Alliance, seeks to increase the number and diversity of students in computing and computing-intensive degrees by promoting state-level computer science education reform. ECEP supports 22 states and the territory of Puerto Rico to develop effective and replicable interventions to broaden participation in computing and to create state-level infrastructure to foster equitable computing education policies. You can reach your ECEP point of contact Shelly Hollis at shelly.hollis@rcu.msstate.edu.

Code.org's impact in Mississippi

- In Mississippi, Code.org’s curriculum is used in
  - 26% of elementary schools
  - 32% of middle schools
  - 19% of high schools
- There are 4,472 teacher accounts and 197,406 student accounts on Code.org in Mississippi.
- Of students in Mississippi using Code.org curriculum last school year,
  - 78% attend high needs schools
  - 78% are in rural schools
  - 49% are female students
  - 43% are underrepresented minority students (Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, or Hawaiian)
- Code.org, its regional partner(s) Mississippi State University, and 13 facilitators have provided professional learning in Mississippi for
  - 773 teachers in CS Fundamentals (K-5)
  - 346 teachers in Exploring Computer Science or Computer Science Discoveries
  - 50 teachers in Computer Science Principles
“Computer Science is a liberal art: it’s something that everybody should be exposed to and everyone should have a mastery of to some extent.”

— Steve Jobs

What can your state do to improve computer science education?

States and local school districts need to adopt a broad policy framework to provide all students with access to computer science. The following nine recommendations are a menu of best practices that states can choose from to support and expand computer science. Not all states will be in a position to adopt all of the policies. Read more about these 9 policy ideas at https://code.org/files/Making_CS_Fundamental.pdf and see our rubric for describing state policies at http://bit.ly/9policiesrubric.

Mississippi has not yet created a state plan for K-12 computer science. A plan that articulates the goals for computer science, strategies for accomplishing the goals, and timelines for carrying out the strategies is important for making computer science a fundamental part of a state’s education system.

Mississippi has established K-12 computer science standards.

Mississippi has allocated funding for rigorous computer science professional development and course support.

Mississippi has clear certification pathways for computer science teachers.

Mississippi has not yet established programs at institutions of higher education to offer computer science to preservice teachers. The computer science teacher shortage can be addressed by exposing more preservice teachers to computer science during their required coursework or by creating specific pathways for computer science teachers.

Mississippi does not yet have dedicated computer science positions in state or local education agencies. Creating a statewide computer science leadership position within the state education agency can help expand state-level implementation of computer science education initiatives. Similar positions at the local level could support districts’ expansion of course offerings and professional development.

Mississippi does not yet require that all secondary schools offer computer science. The state can support the expansion of computer science courses by adopting policies that require schools to offer a computer science course based on rigorous standards, with appropriate implementation timelines and allowing for remote and/or in-person courses.

Mississippi allows computer science to count for a core graduation requirement. Find out how Mississippi allows computer science to count towards graduation at http://bit.ly/9policies.

Mississippi allows computer science to count as a core admission requirement at institutions of higher education.

Follow us!

Join our efforts to give every student in every school the opportunity to learn computer science. Learn more at code.org, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Launched in 2013, Code.org® is a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to computer science, and increasing participation by women and underrepresented students of color. Our vision is that every student in every school should have the opportunity to learn computer science.

Data is from the Conference Board for job demand, the Bureau of Labor Statistics for state salary and national job projections data, the College Board for AP exam data, the National Center for Education Statistics for university graduate data, the Gallup and Google research study Education
Trends in the State of Computer Science in U.S. K-12 Schools for parent demand, the 2018 Computer Science Access Report for schools that offer computer science, and Code.org for its own courses, professional learning programs, and participation data.