March 2020 *Monthly Newsletter* Vol 1 Issue 09

COMPUTER SCIENCE in ARKANSAS

REGIONAL WINNERS TO COMPETE AT ALL-STATE

Sixteen teams won the Feb. 28 All-Region Coding Competitions. Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA) won the 2019 All-State competition, and received an automatic invitation to the 2020 All-State competition. Teams advancing to this competition will receive an official invitation with more details by April 17, 2020.

The following teams have been selected to advance to the All-State competition.

* ASMSA in Hot Springs – Karsen Beck, Dunagan Evans, and Trinity Robinson
* Bentonville High School in Bentonville – Katherine Pearce, Mekhi Scullawl, and Caleb Jones
* Bentonville West High School in Bentonville – Karina Batra and Ryder Johnson
* Cabot High School in Cabot – Ethan Peck, Tyler Lacroix, and Addison Zheng
* Central Junior High School in Springdale – Jackson Daniel, Audrey Shellhammer, and Connor Simmons
* Clinton High School in Clinton – Titus Johnson, Alex Prosser, and Reynaldo Saavedra
* Conway High School in Conway – Ethan Moss, Brian Russell, and Kevin Lewis
* Don Tyson School of Innovation in Springdale – Lucas Kellar, James Cassady, and Benjamin Easterling
* Fayetteville High School in Fayetteville – Gabriel Giarratana, Katherine Pummill, and Minsoo Song
* Greenbrier High School in Greenbrier – Geoffrey Shoemaker, Hayden Herman, and Christian Watts
* Greenwood High School in Greenwood – Shea Brown, Jackson Stewart, and William Hutchinson
* Haas Hall Academy in Fayetteville – Owen Bell, Julian Sanker, and Daniel Whitmire
* Har-Ber High School in Springdale – Samuel Lonneman, Jesse Ford, and Melvin Vizueth
* Horatio High School in Horatio – Jacob Brecheisen, Duncan Connor, and Hannah Norman
* Jonesboro High School in Jonesboro – Matthew Sherman, Kyle Clayton, and Eric Seglem
* Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock – Hetvi Shah, Alex Borengasser, and Anne Li
* Rogers New Technology High School in Rogers – Volodymyr Miata, David Daniel, and Joshua Thomson

Awards for placing in the All-State Coding Competition are $2,000, $1,000, and $500 for each member of the first, second, and third place teams respectively. All cash prizes are awarded as a deposit into a 529 College Savings Plan.

In addition, sponsoring schools of the first, second, and third place teams will receive $10,000, $6,000, and $4,000 respectively to support their computer science programs. All prizes and competition expenses are paid for with a Verizon grant to ARCodeKids.

THE GREAT ARKANSAS HISTORY VIDEO GAME SUBMISSIONS OPEN!

Online submission began April 8th and will close at noon on April 15th. If you have questions, feel free to email CSforAR@arkansas.gov or swing by the CS Coffee Cafe at bit.ly/ARCSCoffee.

We understand that the situation has changed and want to assist you and your students in completing the project and the submission.

In the coming weeks, a survey will be distributed to participating sponsors and to the ARKidsCanCode listserv. We will be looking for feedback to help plan the contest next year.

For more information, please visit: bit.ly/ARCSHistComp

CS RESOURCES FOR ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION (AMI)

Unplugged Activities

Do your students not have access to technology? Are you having trouble finding activities that continue your course work?

What about using unplugged activities?

If you've never worked with unplugged activities before, these activities do not require any form of technology, and are generally hands-on or paper-based activities.

As an attempt to help students, teachers, and parents, we have gathered a collection of unplugged activities for students during this challenging period.

Link to Unplugged Activities:
bit.ly/UNplug4U

CS Coffee Cafe

Our team wanted to make sure we stay in touch and are available to you. Therefore, we have a computer science coffee cafe! It's always open for the Arkansas CS Educators to hang out in and when they want to just drop in and drop out? Well, this is the place!

CS Coffee Cafe Hours:
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Every AMI day until the end of the school year.
Join the CS Coffee Cafe on Zoom:
bit.ly/ARCSCoffee

Online Activities

Are you looking to implement more online resources for your students other than Google?

Would you like your students to be practicing their coding skills with various academic challenges?

Our #CSforAR team put together an AMI resources document for our computer science teachers.

Here are some of the resources available:

*Daily Circuit Playground Challenges
*Computer Science Teacher Resource Bundle
*ADE Resource Document

Link to AMI Document:
bit.ly/ARCSAMI

CS SPECIALIST SPOTLIGHT

“I probably don’t fit the coder archetype. I came up watching Jesse James in Motorcycle Mania and on Monster Garage. Computers weren’t even in the picture.”

Joshua Rodgers, who joined in the summer of 2019, came to the CS team from Dumas Schools where he was the tech coordinator for three years. “I got into tech around 2013 while working as a welder in Dumas at a big manufacturer there. That job built so much of my personality.

"I grew up on a farm where my dad worked down in Chicot County, so I already had a good image of what work ethic looked like. Welding just solidified it.

“Tech broke into the picture for me in a weird way. They started bringing robots into the factory. One was set up right next to the line I worked on, so I saw it run every day. It never made mistakes and rarely broke down. It was a shock to my ego; tech was out-working me.

This coincided with me getting a new car that had satellite radio. I found this channel, Business Radio, where they were talking to all of these startup founders in California who were my age or younger, and had all this autonomy and control over their lives and careers. Apparently, this was all powered by something called software development. I was hooked; I knew what I had to do.

“During college at UAM--although short-lived-- I was introduced to programming via COBOL and Visual Basic.NET. Industry certifications from organizations like CompTIA, and Cisco, and Oracle were huge confidence builders for me. They take a vocational approach to get you the skills you would need in the workplace. With that confidence, I was able to apply at Dumas as a computer tech and they believed in me enough to give me a shot.

“In the educational realm, I want to provide opportunities for kids to put the stuff they’re learning to work. Right now, I’m big on pushing Github to kids. It’s great for seeing real-world code. My advice to students is, ‘you gotta be into this stuff.' It needs to become part of your life. If you want to develop games, you should spend some time every day making games, not just playing them. With social media, it’s easy to be just a consumer and to get into comparing what you’re doing to other folks and feeling inadequate. The opposite is also true, where you never look beyond what you’re doing and think you know everything. You have to resist that. There were so many topics that I didn’t improve on until I started putting in the reps, the practice, spending time making mistakes, being frustrated, and finally fighting through to the satisfaction of seeing your code--or some small piece of it usually--run successfully. That’s what creators do.

"I had a kid from Pine Bluff tell me after the Coding Competition last month how he had fought with a solution to one of the challenges, and how awesome that feeling was when it worked. That’s what I’m all about.”

CREATING VIRTUAL REALITY WORLDS IN UNITY

All high schools across the state have received VR machines and the Arkansas Computer Science team has continued to develop new professional development opportunities for the educators who use them. This school year, 28 educators and 183 students have participated in our Creating VR Worlds in Unity.

Unity is a real-time, 3D-development platform used to create various digital content in games, the automotive industry, transportation, manufacturing, film, animation, cinematics, architecture, engineering, construction, and other areas.

This training focused on inspiring students to be digital content creators, rather than simply consumers. The students and educators spent the day becoming familiar with the Unity workflow, and then began to build worlds with their own unique touch. Then, the participants' worlds were exported to a VR device for exploration.

Are you interested in exploring game development and virtual reality? Email zack.spink@arkansas.gov and schedule a time to discuss learning options in our CS Coffee Cafe. We look forward to providing beginner-friendly, hands-on training using Unity Editor beginning this next school year, and we hope to help you build and explore new worlds of your own creation this spring and summer.

LEAD TEACHER TRAINING BONUS PROGRAM

More than 500 teachers have been trained in the Lead Teacher Training Bonus Program (bit.ly/K8CSforARBonus)! It has been such a success that the ADE Office of Computer Science is continuing the program for the 2020-21 school year. For detailed requirements to be awarded as much as $2000, visit the Commissioner's Memo.

To become eligible for the K-8 Computer Science Lead Teacher Bonus Program, educators must register for the 30-hour K-8 Computer Science Lead Teacher Training. Sessions will be posted at bit.ly/CSforARPD as scheduled. Spots will be limited.

There have also been **SIGNIFICANT CHANGES** to the program. All previous participants who have completed and participants who will have completed the full K-8 Computer Science Lead Teacher Training by the end of this summer, will have until June 30, 2021 to complete all requirements for bonuses. Any participant who does not complete the requirements within this window, must completely attend another 30-hour session, and any funds previously awarded cannot be applied for again. For example, if a participant had previously been awarded the attendance bonus of $500, they are ineligible for that award again.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP

For information on services available to students who currently do not have Internet access, ADE has compiled the following list of resources made available by regional Internet Service Providers. To access this information, please see bit.ly/ARCSAMIInternet.

UPCOMING EVENTS

bit.ly/CSPD4All

4/1 - End of School:
CS Coffee Cafe (bit.ly/ARCSCoffee)

4/8 - 4/15:
History Video Game Submission

5/2:
Digital All-State Coding Competition

HIGH SCHOOL BONUS PROGRAM CHANGES

Do you hold a 528 Computer Science Endorsement? Do you teach a high-school computer science course (465XXX or 565XXX) that has at least 2% of the total high school (9-12) student population or 10 students enrolled? If so, you are eligible to apply for as much as $10,000 in bonuses over a five-year period. For more detailed information, click here.

These program changes began with the 2019-2020 school year. No retroactive bonus payments will be allowed. However, stipend payments from previous years will be treated as first-year payments.

To apply for payment from the Arkansas High School Computer Science Teacher Endorsement and Instruction Bonus (previously stipend) Program, educators must complete the application found at bit.ly/HSCSforARBonus.

Applicants are required to upload a single PDF containing documentation that demonstrates completion of program requirements . All future bonus payments will be made in accordance with ADE Commissioner's Memo COM-20-097, released on March 6, 2020.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

#ARKidsCanCode
#CSforAR