



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

December 20, 2019

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Arkansas Students Complete 1 Million Computer Science and STEM Lessons

LITTLE ROCK — Following a successful Computer Science Education Week, December 9-15, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), the Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC), and Learning Blade are excited to announce that Arkansas is the first state to complete over 1,000,000 computer science and STEM lessons.

Under the leadership of Governor Asa Hutchinson and his #ARKidsCanCode / #CSforAR Computer Science Initiative, Learning Blade was first provided to schools statewide three years ago and continues to be provided by a grant from ADE Office of Computer Science to APSRC. In addition to these tremendous engagement numbers, the latest validated student survey results indicate a 61% increase in Arkansas students who say “I am interested in a career in computer science” after experiencing Learning Blade resources.

Learning Blade, based out of Tennessee, is a supplemental STEM and computer science toolbox of interactive online lessons, ready-to-use lesson plans, and classroom activities proven to increase STEM and computer science career awareness for middle school students. Learning Blade also provides teachers with valuable feedback on student skills, while demonstrating the relevance of academics in real-life contexts for students.

As Governor Asa Hutchinson’s computer science efforts lead Arkansas and the nation into the 21st century, there is a recognition that STEM and computer science career awareness is necessary to enhance these efforts. In 2017, Arkansas adopted Learning Blade statewide to increase student interest in computer science and STEM careers and to assist in academic achievement in middle schools across the state of Arkansas. Now in its 3rd year of statewide adoption (4th year in the state), managed by APSRC with support from the Arkansas Department of Education, Learning Blade continues to show excellent results.

“The Learning Blade team, working with our agency, APSRC, and the education service cooperatives, has been a great partner to Arkansas in helping us create student interest in pursuing computer science and other STEM related courses,” says Secretary of Education Johnny Key. “The State of Arkansas is committed to continuing to provide opportunities for students to explore, discover, and prepare for any pathway they choose.”

During Computer Science Education Week, Learning Blade had over 7,477 students across the United States complete 41,679 online computer science and STEM lessons. In Arkansas, 1,422

students at 49 Arkansas schools completed 9,127 computer science lessons equaling 1,040 hours of computer science and STEM engagement using Learning Blade's new Intro to Computer Science course and other computer science lessons.

Arkansas has seen a dramatic increase in the number of students taking computer science courses in high school with a gain of 789%, and an increase in female participation of 1180%, since Governor Asa Hutchinson's computer science initiative began in 2015.

Schools, teachers, or parents interested in Learning Blade, may reach out to Info@LearningBlade.com for more information or to find out how to have their students participate.

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