Computer Science Education Week Recognized December 6-10

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SPRINGFIELD - Illinois state agencies are recognizing the importance of Computer Science (CS) Education Week during December 6-10, 2021, which is an annual call to action to inspire K-12 students to learn computer science, advocate for equity, and celebrate the contributions of students, teachers, and partners to the field. The Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) collectively support and prioritize the value of computer science education throughout Illinois.

Computer science is being strengthened in Illinois through the expansion of free broadband to public K-12 schools through the Connect Illinois program funded by the Rebuild Illinois initiative, which included a $20 million investment for the Illinois Century Network (ICN), to repair and expand the broadband network for schools, refresh aged components of the network and expand the existing network.

"Computer science education is critical to prepare students for the future and to grow and sustain the talent pipeline for our state," said Jennifer Ricker, Illinois CIO and DoIT Acting Secretary. "Investing in our broadband infrastructure, particularly in the Illinois Century Network (ICN), remains a top priority at DoIT. We want to make sure that schools are aware that not only is the high-speed broadband connection free to public K-12 schools, but that it also provides enhanced security protections at no additional cost."

"Jobs in computer science and technology are some of the fastest-growing and highest paying in the nation. All students – especially those who are underrepresented in STEM careers – should be encouraged to see themselves succeeding in these fields," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. "We are proud to celebrate Computer Science Education Week and to take historic strides to increase access to computer science courses. Robust computer science education also depends on qualified teachers. Our expanded pathways into licensure pave the way for industry professionals, career changes, and current teachers to prepare the next generation of technology leaders."

This past spring, Illinois lawmakers enacted groundbreaking legislation that requires schools to embed computer literacy into the high school curriculum beginning in 2022-23 and to provide all high school students the opportunity to take at least one computer science course beginning in 2023-24. ISBE convened a stakeholder group to develop rigorous computer science learning standards, which Illinois adopted last month.

ISBE has expanded the pathways for current teachers, career changers, and industry professionals to earn licensure and help prepare the next generation of technology leaders:

• **For currently licensed teachers** to earn a subsequent endorsement in computer science: 18 semester hours of coursework in computer science and a passing score on the content area test.

• **For industry professionals** to teach computer science in grades 5-12 with a Provisional Career and Technical Educator license with stipulations:

- 8,000 hours of verified work experience or
- 60 semester hours of coursework in computer science and 2,000 hours of verified work experience

• **For career changers** to earn their license while teaching with the [Content Knowledge Pathway Short-Term Approval](#), valid for three years: bachelor's degree in teaching or any bachelor's degree including 32 semester hours of coursework in computer science, plus a passing score on the content area test; license holders have three years to complete an approved educator preparation program and pass the edTPA, while receiving coaching and mentoring from veteran teachers.

In conjunction with CS Education Week is participation from Illinois in the annual Hour of Code, which is a global movement introducing tens of millions of students worldwide to computer science, inspiring kids to learn more, breaking stereotypes, and leaving them feeling empowered.

The Hour of Code began as a one-hour coding challenge to give students an introduction to computer science and has become a global learning and awareness event. Hundreds of one-hour activities in over 48 languages for kindergarten and up are available to expose students and adults to basic coding concepts. More information on how to participate can be found at https://hourofcode.com/us.

The Learning Technology Center of Illinois also created a [Computer Science Resource Database](#) to highlight new CS resources.