

Subject: NEWS: ISBE announces \$3 million to bridge digital divide in computer science education

From: Illinois State Board of Education <press@isbe.net>

Date: 3/21/2024, 9:09 AM

To: mcateed@mokena159.org

Click [here](#) if you are having trouble viewing this message.



For Immediate Release

March 21, 2024

ISBE announces \$3 million to bridge digital divide in computer science education

New competitive grant fosters equity and supports goal of universal access to computer science coursework

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Board of Education today announced the launch of the \$3 million competitive Computer Science Equity Grant, aimed at bridging the digital divide in computer science education. This new competitive grant opportunity, made possible through state funds in Governor JB Pritzker's fiscal year 2024 budget, will provide grantees with critical resources to develop or enhance computer science learning opportunities in Grades K-12.

The new grant program will support the goal of universal access to computer science education for all high school students and opportunities for students at [every grade level](#) to gain computer literacy skills, as specified in [Public Act 101-0654](#). The legislation requires every high school student to have the opportunity to enroll in at least one computer science course aligned to the rigorous [Illinois Learning Standards for Computer Science](#) and for all students to receive developmentally appropriate computer literacy instruction at each grade level.

"Computer science education is foundational to preparing students for success in the 21st century workforce," **said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders**. "Closing gaps in access to high-paying, in-demand technology careers starts with equitable access to computer science and computer literacy education. Whether or not students choose to pursue careers in technology, computer science education will equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world."

"For far too long, students across Illinois have not had equal access to

opportunities to prepare them for our changing world,” **said state Rep. Carol Ammons**. “This grant builds on the progress we have made to close systemic inequities by ensuring we are supporting school districts in developing or enhancing their computer science programs, as well as supporting the expansion of opportunities for students in all grades to gain computer literacy skills in an equity-driven way.”

The objectives of the Computer Science Equity Grant, established under [Public Act 103-0264](#), include:

- Expanding learning opportunities in Grades K-12 to align with state standards and emerging labor market needs.
- Providing professional development opportunities to train and retrain K-12 teachers in computer science instruction.
- Equipping classrooms with necessary materials and equipment for effective computer science education.
- Increasing enrollment of underrepresented K-12 learners in computer science coursework.
- Supporting initiatives in Grades K-8 to prepare students for success in secondary computer science coursework and future careers.

Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, state institutions of higher education, charter schools, school districts, and other qualifying entities are eligible to apply. Proposals aiming to serve populations underrepresented in the computer science labor market (based on gender or racial/ethnic identities) and schools or districts lacking accessible computer science coursework (based on population, rigor, and grade-level availability) will be prioritized for funding.

Approved entities will be responsible for ensuring the availability of facilities and appropriately trained educators to facilitate the implementation of computer science programs funded by the grant. A technical assistance [webinar recording](#) is available to assist applicants.

Annual grant awards, subject to appropriation, will range from \$10,000 to \$330,000 per year. Proposals must be submitted **by 5 p.m. April 4**. Interested parties can access the [Notice of Funding Opportunity/Request for Proposals](#) on ISBE’s [Standards and Courses webpage](#).

#

For more information:

Lindsay Record

Phone: (217) 685-3585

Email: press@isbe.net

 Visit <https://www.isbe.net/>



The Illinois State Board of Education is the State Education Agency for Illinois. Our mission is to provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

Click [here](#) to change your Subscription Preferences. Click [here](#) to unsubscribe.