

MEMO

TO: Superintendent Jeff Stephens, Board President Jon Ritchie, WSD Board Members

FROM: Sheri Heiter

DATE: September 29, 2021

SUBJECT: Computer Science Software Adoption

In order to meet the instructional and curricular needs of the Utah Core in Coding/Computer Science for grades K-6, we began a resource adoption process in the spring of 2021 which focused specifically on a stand-alone program that could be implemented by computer lab aides and supported by classroom teachers. *Skill Struck* immediately stood out as a product that could meet these needs and the company was awarded a state contract in early summer, 2021.

Skill Struck was deemed a sole-source vendor due to its “plug-and-play” design that can be easily implemented by employees who are not certified teachers and who are not specifically trained in coding. Due to the heavy load currently carried by our elementary teachers, we were highly motivated to find a product that didn’t necessitate trained providers to deliver content. This structure will allow teachers to reinforce the coding content where appropriate, but will relieve them of the actual instructional responsibility in addressing the Core Standards at the current time.

Multiple vendor products were evaluated prior to selecting *Skill Struck*. District leadership from the Curriculum Department thoroughly vetted other resources and determined that *Skill Struck* was the best fit for our current needs. The platform was comparable in price and professional learning/technical support was included in the bid. Additionally, the product was endorsed by the Northern Utah Curriculum Consortium and is the tool most member districts will be using.

I wrote and received a *Computer Science Partnership Grant* through the Utah State Board of Education that will cover \$250,000/year in costs for up to four years. At the present time, we had 11 elementary schools self-identify as early adopters for the coding program. Thus, the bill for 2020-2021 is slightly lower than it will be in the remaining four years. If another Computer Science Partnership Grant becomes available, I will apply for it to offer longevity for the program. If not, we will begin to build our own coding curriculum that will be ready for deployment in four years. We believe this offers a sustainable pathway for coding/computer science education in Weber School District in the years to come.

The cost for 2021-2022 will be \$227,250 with 11 sites completing implementation by mid-November and the other 19 completing implementation by February, 2022. The grant will cover the entire cost of the first year. After that, the annual cost for the remaining three years will be \$290,000. The grant will cover \$250,000 and local funds, mostly from the American Rescue Plan, will provide the supplemental amount.

We are seeking your approval to purchase the *Skill Struck* coding/computer science digital curriculum for grades K-6. As always, we sincerely thank you for your continued support in helping us provide the highest quality instructional resources to our students and teachers.