



CONTACT:

Madison Hardy, 208.854.3015, madison.hardy@gov.idaho.gov
Crispin Gravatt, 208.921.5123, crispin.gravatt@stem.idaho.gov
Tony Harrison, 208.880.9814, press@stem.idaho.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gov. Little declares Dec. 4-10 CS Ed Week

BOISE, Idaho (Dec. 5, 2023) — Idaho Lt. Gov. Scott Bedke coded with students at Whittier Elementary School in Boise yesterday as people worldwide began celebrating Computer Science Education Week and the 11th anniversary of Hour of Code. Bedke also read aloud a proclamation from Idaho Gov. Brad Little declaring Dec. 4-10 Computer Science Education Week in Idaho and urging the state’s citizens to participate in Hour of Code.

“The computer science and coding projects that you all are working on is really important for our state,” Bedke told the second-graders after reading the proclamation. “Our economy needs kids like you to learn all you can about computer science, because that’s where the jobs are going to be when you get to be older. What you’re doing right now is really good for both you as individuals and for everyone in Idaho; we’re very proud of you for all your hard work.”

“Every job that you kids go into here in the next little while is going to have a technology component to it,” he told the students after coding alongside them. “What you’re doing now is really going to make a difference down the road.”

Volunteer staff from Idaho Digital Learning Alliance and Superintendent Jeff Simmons, Code.org Senior Director of State Government Affairs Maggie Glennon, renowned Idaho STEM teacher and state legislator Dr. Soñia Galaviz, and Idaho STEM Action Center executive director Caty Solace were on hand to help Whittier teacher Rachel Worthington lead a class — and the lieutenant governor — through an Hour of Code assignment.

At least 80 Hour of Code events are slated statewide throughout CS Ed Week with volunteers from industry partners like Micron Technology, Idaho Central Credit Union, Cradlepoint, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Idaho National Laboratory, and many others helping students learn to code. Volunteers from Rocky Mountain Power Foundation will code with students at Ririe Elementary in Eastern Idaho. Riverside and Monroe elementaries in Boise are staging schoolwide events. And Kershaw Intermediate School in Sugar City and Twin Lakes Elementary School in Rathdrum have computer science events scheduled daily all week long.

“IDLA is proud to partner in events like Hour of Code,” Simmons said. “All students in Idaho should have opportunities to help them define and move toward their career goals. Through IDLA and partners like Idaho STEM Action Center, all students in Idaho have equal access to opportunities regardless of where they live.”

Considered the largest learning event in history, Hour of Code is a global movement Code.org founded in 2013 that has reached more than 1.7 billion learners ages 4 to 104 in over 180 countries. Hour of Code events coincide with international Computer Science Education Week and offer a one-hour introduction to computer science and the basics of coding via fun tutorials in more than 45 languages.

CS Ed Week is an annual call to action to inspire K-12 students to learn computer science and celebrate contributions of students, teachers, and partners in the field. It is playing host to more than 19,300 events worldwide this year, including over 7,800 in the U.S.

Code.org’s Glennon said STEM initiatives like CS Ed Week and Hour of Code play an important role in preparing Idaho’s future workforce.

“Computer science is essential for our young students who have only known a digital world, and over the last year especially, we have seen how fast that world can change,” she said. “By giving students the tools to interact with their world hands-on and learn to solve problems in new and creative ways, they are prepared for a future that will continue to be transformed, disrupted, and reimaged by computer science — no matter where their career takes them.”

Solace at Idaho STEM Action Center concurred.

“Developing strong computer science skills is a great pathway to good-paying, in-demand careers in Idaho, and the state is investing in C.S. education to ensure these pathways are open to Idahoans,” she said. “Idaho has funded computer science education annually since 2017, totaling \$9 million after the 2023 legislative session. And in 2023, Idaho passed and adopted a rule change requiring all elementary and middle school students receive instruction in computational thinking and digital literacy.”

CNBC recently reported STEM-related jobs in the U.S. are expected to increase by nearly 800,000 by 2031. Computer science and math jobs will account for more than half of all projected job growth in STEM fields, according to a recent SmartAsset study.

Meanwhile, the Education Commission of the States predicts computing jobs in Idaho will grow 19 percent by 2027. And the Idaho Dept. of Labor reports all 20 of Idaho’s top-20 hot jobs through 2030 require STEM skills.

Solace said there are more than 4,000 open computing jobs each month in Idaho and the average computing job salary in the Gem State is \$86,884.

The agency also offers a certificate of achievement for educators to recognize students who demonstrate exemplary dedication to computer science learning by completing 10 hours of coding activities during CS Ed Week. Along with a certificate, students are eligible for a variety of prizes that are being offered by Idaho Digital Learning Alliance.

Other online resources include hourofcode.com, code.org, and csedweek.org. Plus, you can visit blocksmithxr.com/blog/blocksmiths-hour-of-code-2023 to play an Hour of Code game from Idaho's own Blocksmith and csunplugged.org for activities that don't involve screen time.

Participants are encouraged to use such hashtags as #CodingIdaho, #IdahoSTEMAC, #CSEdWeek, and #HourofCode when posting about Computer Science Education Week and Hour of Code to social media.

About Idaho STEM Action Center

Idaho STEM Action Center is an education and growth catalyst helping educators, businesses, families, and communities prepare the workforce of tomorrow. An incubator, connector, and advocate of STEM thinking and initiatives, the agency provides resources, support, and problem solving that spark innovation and offer paths to prosperity based on Idahoans' shared values of hard work, collaboration, self-determination, family, and community stability. Learn more at stem.idaho.gov and visit stem.idaho.gov/support-us/foundation to make a tax-deductible donation to its 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation to enhance the investment the state has made in Idaho's STEM community. Contributions provide greater access to STEM camps for children, student competitions, and many other life-shaping programs.

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Text of Idaho 2023 CS Ed Week Proclamation

WHEREAS, computer science literacy is foundational for the digital age and underpins the information technology sector of our economy, which is a significant contributor to Idaho's economic output; and

WHEREAS, computer science is one of the most in-demand college degrees, and computing is used throughout many careers; and

WHEREAS, computer occupations are expected to see fast job growth as strong demand is expected for cybersecurity and software development; and

WHEREAS, computing technology is valued as an integral part of our culture and is changing how people interact with each other and the world around them, transforming industry, creating new fields of commerce, driving innovation in all fields of science, and increasing productivity in many economic sectors; and

WHEREAS, Idaho is recognized as a national leader in prioritizing computer science education, becoming the second state in the nation to adopt all nine Code. org policy recommendations; and

WHEREAS, all students deserve a thorough preparation in computer science education, including access to the qualified teachers, technology, and age-appropriate curricular resources needed to learn computer science at the elementary and secondary levels of education; and

WHEREAS, providing students the opportunity to participate in high-quality computer science activities exposes them to real-world experiences and provides critical thinking skills that will serve them throughout their lives; and

WHEREAS, participating in an Hour of Code during Computer Science Education Week can help demystify the field of computer science and encourage more students to continue their computer science studies.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRAD LITTLE, Governor of the State of Idaho, do hereby proclaim December 4- 10, 2023, to be COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION WEEK in Idaho, and I encourage Idaho citizens to recognize this special observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Idaho at the Capitol in Boise on this 4th day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred forty-eighth, and of the Statehood of Idaho the one hundred thirty-fourth.

BRAD LITTLE, GOVERNOR

PHIL MCGRANE SECRETARY OF STATE

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