



**CONTACT:**

Emily Callihan, 208.854.3032, [emily.callihan@gov.idaho.gov](mailto:emily.callihan@gov.idaho.gov)

Dr. Kaitlin Maguire, 802.356.2060, [kaitlin.maguire@STEM.idaho.gov](mailto:kaitlin.maguire@STEM.idaho.gov)

Tony Harrison, 208.332.1726, [tony@COMMposition.biz](mailto:tony@COMMposition.biz)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Gov. Little declares Dec. 7-13 CS Ed Week**

BOISE, Idaho (Dec. 7, 2020) — Idaho Gov. Brad Little has proclaimed Dec. 7-13 Computer Science Education Week in Idaho and urges the state’s citizens to participate in the Hour of Code.

“Job opportunities in computer science will continue to grow, and introducing our students to computer science early on will expose them to real-world experiences and strengthen critical thinking skills that will serve them throughout their lives,” Gov. Little said.

Hour of Code participants can code alongside Gov. Little and other special guests throughout the week in prerecorded sessions, including former NASA astronaut Steve Swanson and the Idaho STEM Action Center’s new interim executive director, Dr. Kaitlin Maguire.

Students also can code with game designers. Idaho-based Blocksmith VR has created “Don’t Yeet the Yeti,” an Hour of Code activity for beginners, and game creators have prerecorded an hour-long session students can follow along with this week. The game teaches students how to edit and create conditional statements and then they’re tasked with completing an unfinished game by adding JavaScript code to rescue a yeti and its friends. If the code doesn’t work, then the yeti is yeeted, i.e., tossed from the game. Visit [blocksmithxr.com/blog/openhourofcode](http://blocksmithxr.com/blog/openhourofcode) for instructions on how to navigate to the game.

The Idaho STEM Action Center is holding a social media contest for Hour of Code participants this week, too, with prizes like Raspberry Pi computers. To enter, follow the STEM Action Center on Facebook ([@IdahoSTEMAC](https://www.facebook.com/IdahoSTEMAC)) or Instagram ([IdahoSTEMAC](https://www.instagram.com/IdahoSTEMAC)). Snap a picture of how you participated and tag it with #CodingIdaho, #CSEdWeek, and #IdahoSTEMAC. U.S. Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho) is among several noteworthy Gem State residents taking part in the social media campaign.

Visit the STEM Action Center’s computer science page at [STEM.idaho.gov/computerscience](http://STEM.idaho.gov/computerscience) to watch Gov. Little’s proclamation, code alongside our special guests, learn how to attend the Blocksmith VR’s coding session with its “Don’t Yeet the Yeti” game designers, and find more CS activities and resources.

Hour of Code is a global movement Code.org founded in 2013 that reaches tens of millions of students age 4 to 104 in more than 180 countries. Hour of Code events offer a one-hour introduction to computer science and the basics of coding via fun tutorials in over 45 languages.

Hour of Code 2020 coincides with international Computer Science Week, which is playing host to more than 68,000 events worldwide this year, including more than 16,000 in the U.S. The event is held annually in recognition of the birthday of computing pioneer Admiral Grace Murray Hopper (Dec. 9, 1906). Among her many important contributions is Common Business-Oriented Language. COBOL was the first high-level programming language developed with someone other than a mathematician in mind and earned Hopper the title “Queen of Code.”

Idaho STEM Action Center interim executive director Dr. Kaitlin Maguire said organizations statewide are hosting about 100 Hour of Code events this year — some virtual, some in-person — that are important to Idaho’s continued prosperity.

“Educators are increasingly referring to coding as ‘the fourth R’ — reading, writing, arithmetic, and algorithms — because computers and technology play such an essential role in everyday life,” she said. “Computer science is one of the most in-demand college degrees, computing is used in a variety of careers, and strong demand is expected for computer occupations, such as IT security and software development — especially here in Idaho, where our tech sector is one of the fastest growing in the nation.”

According to the Idaho Dept. of Labor, 19 of Idaho’s top-20 hot jobs through 2026 require STEM skills — with applications software developers and information security analysts among the top-five in-demand fields. It predicts demand for applications software developers and information security analysts will grow by 30 percent annually between 2016-2026.

Code.org reports the average salary for a computing occupation in Idaho is \$71,947, which is significantly higher than the state’s overall average salary of \$43,480.

Dr. Maguire said Idaho has made tremendous progress in expanding computer science instruction in the last five years, from creating a state plan to fill instructional gaps in computer science offerings to establishing K-12 standards and requiring that all high schools offer a computer science course. She said the STEM Action Center continues to work to improve CS education and develop a computer-literate workforce in Idaho.

Visit [STEM.idaho.gov/computerscience](https://stem.idaho.gov/computerscience), [hourofcode.com](https://hourofcode.com), [code.org](https://code.org), and [csedweek.org](https://csedweek.org) for more information, and visit [csunplugged.org](https://csunplugged.org) for activities that don’t involve screen time.

***About the Idaho STEM Action Center***

The Idaho STEM Action Center was created in 2015 because Idaho citizens are not entering the STEM pipeline fast enough to meet current and future Idaho workforce needs. Its goals are to increase equitable access to STEM opportunities, align education and workforce needs, and amplify awareness of STEM throughout Idaho. The organization is working with industry, government, educators, and students to develop new resources and support high-quality professional-development opportunities to foster a STEM-educated workforce that ensures Idaho's continued economic prosperity.

Visit [STEM.idaho.gov](https://STEM.idaho.gov) for more information, and visit <https://STEM.idaho.gov/support-us/foundation> to make a tax-deductible donation to the Idaho STEM Action Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, 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.

# # #

## **Text of Idaho 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, computing is used throughout many careers, and computer occupations are expected to see fast job growth as strong demand is expected for IT security 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, in education circles, coding is increasingly being referred to as "the fourth R" — reading, writing, arithmetic, and algorithms — because computers and digital literacy are such an integral part of everyday life; 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;

WHEREAS, all students deserve a thorough and equitable preparation in computer science education, including access to the qualified teachers, technology, and age-appropriate curriculum 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 the 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; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRAD LITTLE, Governor of the State of Idaho, do hereby proclaim December 7-13, 2020, to be

COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION WEEK

BRAD LITTLE, GOVERNOR

LAWRENCE DENNEY, SECRETARY OF STATE

# # #

**A/V ASSETS**

Visit <https://youtu.be/leHQcsfe-eQ> to watch Gov. Little read his Computer Science Education Week proclamation.