



GOVERNOR'S STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL

dedicated to building a strong STEM education foundation for all Iowans

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Governor Reynolds announces Computer Science is Elementary project

(DES MOINES) – Gov. Kim Reynolds and Roger Hargens, CEO of Accumold, co-chairs of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, on Monday announced a project to launch six innovative computer science elementary schools. The six high-poverty schools will be competitively selected to transform existing buildings with engaging computer science instruction. This will create more opportunity for their students, including real-life work experiences with area employers. It also will establish a network of computer science expertise as a resource for all public and non-public elementary schools across the state.

Loess Hills Computer Science Elementary School in Sioux City is the inspiration for the Computer Science is Elementary project. The district pioneered one of the first computer science elementary schools in the nation in 2015 when Loess Hills started teaching computational thinking and other skills, such as problem solving and teamwork. Loess Hills will serve as a blueprint for the project, which aligns with the Future Ready Iowa initiative to prepare more Iowans for rewarding, high-demand jobs.

“Computer science is a new basic skill in the 21st century,” said Reynolds. “It is critical to build a strong foundation early so students are ready for outstanding career opportunities in a technology-driven economy. These are Iowa jobs that pay well with a lot of potential for growth.”

“The computer science workforce shortage that employers face will grow unless we accelerate computer science instruction in K-12 schools,” said Hargens. “Many more jobs will require at least some computer science in the future, even if they are not strictly IT positions.”

Gary Scholten, executive vice president and chief digital and information officer at Principal Financial Group, is leading corporate engagement and support for the project. The campaign is working to raise \$450,000 from the private sector by December 2018: \$50,000 one-time planning grants for each of the six schools; \$50,000 for Loess Hills Computer Programming School to serve as a blueprint; and \$100,000 for a project manager. Once the six schools are launched they will operate with regular school funding like Loess Hills Computer Programming School in Sioux City. Contributions so far include \$175,000 total from Principal Financial Group, MidAmerican Energy Company, Rockwell Collins and Kemin Industries.

The Computer Science is Elementary Advisory Group listed below will meet Aug. 29 to begin designing the criteria to select public and nonpublic elementary school awardees. In January 2019, the STEM Council will issue requests for proposals, and plans to announce the awards in spring 2019.

The Computer Science is Elementary project will enhance other work to expand computer science, including a \$1 million fund to prepare Iowa's computer science teacher workforce. This follows a new state law encouraging elementary,

middle and high schools to offer high-quality computer science instruction, and the State Board of Education recently adopting statewide voluntary computer science standards.

For more information, please contact Carrie Rankin, Managing Director, Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council at Rankin@IowaSTEM.gov, 319-273-2757 or 319-269-4116.

Computer Science is Elementary Advisory Group

- 1) Co-chair Erika Cook, Iowa Department of Education Chief, Bureau of Standards and Curriculum
- 2) Co-Chair Carrie Rankin, Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Advisory Council Managing Director
- 3) John Bedward, Department Chair, Mathematics, Science and STEM Education, Associate Professor of Education-STEM, Buena Vista University School of Education
- 4) John Beeck, Sioux City's Loess Hills Computer Programming Elementary School Principal
- 5) Kim Buryanek, Sioux City Community School District Associate Superintendent
- 6) Greg Ebeling, Pella Community School District Superintendent
- 7) Linda Fandel, Governor's Special Assistant for Education
- 8) Paul Gausman, Sioux City Community School District Superintendent
- 9) Shanna Helmke, Linn-Mar Community School District Elementary Technology Coach
- 10) Cindy Herren, Waukee Community School District Technology and Innovation Leader
- 11) David R. Hill, Shared Superintendent North Tama County and Gladbrook-Reinbeck Community School Districts
- 12) Meredith Junk, Kum & Go Software Developer and Student Mentor
- 13) Kate Lamoureux, Van Meter Community School District Instructional Coach
- 14) Ann Lebo, Iowa Board of Educational Examiners Executive Director
- 15) Ben Schafer, University of Northern Iowa Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science
- 16) Gary Scholten, Principal Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer and Chief Digital Officer
- 17) Ellen Stemler, Principal of St. Theresa Catholic School, Des Moines
- 18) Pat Thieben, Iowa Department of Education Administrative Consultant, Bureau of Career and Technical Education
- 19) Mary Trent, Northwest Regional Manager, Governor's STEM Advisory Council
- 20) Kate Washut, Far Reach CEO, Cedar Falls
- 21) Ann Wiley, Johnston Community School District Instructional Technology Coordinator
- 22) Laura Williams Great Prairie Area Education Agency 21st Century Learning Specialist