

Realizing Gov. Lamont's K-12 Computer Science Education Plank

(A)s governor, I will prioritize:

Promoting STEAM education in our K-12 schools. Specifically, I strongly support incorporating computer science and statistics into our K-12 curriculum, similarly to what our neighbors have done in Rhode Island.

Why: Computing occupations are the #1 source of all new U.S. wages and make up over half of all projected new jobs in STEM fields. Connecticut's open computing positions are among the most of any occupation. Our non-STEM jobs increasingly require computer science knowledge. Yet, fewer than half of Connecticut's schools offer any computer science. These are largely in magnet schools and the affluent suburbs. Other States have moved to address their shortages.

What Rhode Island did: CS4RI (Computer Science for Rhode Island) is a state initiative to bring high quality computer science learning experiences to all students. It is a partnership between Rhode Island state government, the Rhode Island Department of Education, K-12 schools, higher education, private industry, and non-profits across the Rhode Island. Launched in 2016 by the Office of Governor Gina Raimondo with the aim of having computer science taught in every public school, CS4RI worked with stakeholders across the state to reach that goal in December 2017!

Why it is feasible to move now: Connecticut has a better start than Rhode Island. The State Board of Education is committed, has adopted standards and is nearing announcement of teacher certification. Local teacher training programs are available. Computing equipment is already in the schools. The Department of Economic and Community Development's Technology Talent Advisory Committee has three years of funding remaining to invest. Its main goal is to double the number of Connecticut software developers by 2026. K-12 computer science education has bipartisan support in the legislation, among the business community, and local and national not-for-profits. Finally, the leaders of CS4RI have committed to help us.

What to do: Commit to having computer science taught in every public school by December 2020. Identify a leader for the initiative in the Governor's office. Convene a planning group from SDE, DECD, K-12 schools, higher education, private industry and non-profits along with the leaders of CS4RI to produce a detailed plan in time for any necessary legislative actions in the 2018 legislative session.

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