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NEWS RELEASE

Governor Kay Ivey, the Governor’s Task Force for Computer Science Education and A+ College Ready Cohosts Alabama’s First-Ever Computer Science Education Summit

On March 14th, A+ College Ready partnered with the Alabama Governor’s office and the Governor’s Computer Science Task Force to co-host the state’s first-ever Computer Science Education (CSE) Summit in Montgomery.

Hadi Partovi, founder and CEO of Code.org, opened the summit as its keynote speaker, kicking off a full day of panel discussions focused on broadening computer science education opportunities in Alabama. Code.org was the developer and is the host site for Hour of Code which has now reached 1 in 4 students in America, or 25 million students.

“You wouldn’t imagine sending your kid to a school that didn’t teach biology, or that didn’t teach history or English. Today you shouldn’t imagine sending your kid to a school that doesn’t offer computer science either,” challenged Partovi in his keynote. “Alabama is actually one of the states that is leading in the grassroots support of computer science. It came from being one of the last states per capita to offer computer science and now it is #2.”

The Governor’s Computer Science Task Force is co-chaired by Dr. Jeff Gray, University of Alabama Computer Science Professor and Dr. Barbara Cooper, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for the Alabama State Department of Education. The Summit was made possible by a grant from ECEP (Expanding Computer Education Pathways) with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

A+ College Ready has served as the Code.org regional partner in Alabama for the last two years. Code.org has provided funding and facilitator preparation for computer science training, while A+ College Ready has recruited and supported the Alabama computer science teachers.

“Alabama has received national attention for its expansion efforts of Computer Science Education, and Code.org has been our partner in this important endeavor,” reported **Tammy Dunn**, Vice President of Academic Affairs for A+ College Ready. “Because of this partnership and the earlier teacher training made possible by NSF Grants sought by Dr. Jeff Gray, Alabama had 86 teachers prepared to teach AP Computer Science Principles in its inaugural year (2016-17). This year that number is 111. We will continue to expand that work this summer as we offer free training to any teacher in the state from high schools wishing to add the AP Computer Science Principles course.”

Equip. Empower. Expect More.

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Over 250 K-12 educators, school and district administrators, higher-education representatives, local and state school board members, policy makers, business and industry representatives, and non-profit representatives from around the state attended the summit, which was held at the Renaissance Montgomery Conference Center.

“It is imperative that we have a real focus on teaching our students in high school and middle school computer science,” commented **Governor Kay Ivey** in her lunch plenary address. “The careers are out there, often starting at \$82,000 a year in pay. I want students in Alabama to know as much about a motherboard as they do a scoreboard. I have a goal that EVERY high school will offer computer science by 2022.”

During this month’s regular meeting of the State Board of Education (SBOE), the new [Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards](#) were officially adopted, making Alabama among only 15 states in the country to add these to the state’s K-12 academic standards.

“Proficiency in computer science has positive impacts across the curriculum and should be a priority statewide,” said **Dr. Cynthia McCarty**, a representative on the Governor’s Computer Science Advisory Council, and SBOE representative for District 6.

“We know that the careers of the future are increasingly dependent on having some familiarity with computer science, algorithms, and the cognitive and technical skills these standards provide,” said Dr. McCarty. “I would like to see every school in the state embrace this opportunity and continue preparing our students for the future and high-demand careers.” ([From Alabama Today, March 15, 2018](#))

[A+ College Ready](#) has been working with Dr. Jeff Gray, professor at the University of Alabama who has been a leader in CSE expansion, since 2003. With the support of Code.org, A+ provides training, support and resources to participating teachers around the state on how to best incorporate the CSE standards and best practices into the classrooms. Any school, district or teacher wishing to offer computer science in middle or high school can take advantage of free teacher training offered by A+ College Ready and Code.org. Go to www.aplusala.org/college-ready/, click ‘Register Now’ and search for computer science. Also, any district or school that wishes to have a free computer science training for elementary teachers should complete a workshop request found at [this link](#).

A+ College Ready, a division of the A+ Education Partnership, was created with a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) in 2008 to implement a proven college-readiness and Advanced Placement Initiative in public schools throughout Alabama. The Computer Science Education component was added, in [partnership with Code.org](#) and the University of Alabama Computer Science Department, in 2011, and has helped over 130 middle and high schools make computer science course offerings available to Alabama students.

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