TEACHFORAMERICA

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TEACH FOR AMERICA EXPANDS INNOVATIVE PILOT TO HELP BRIDGE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Pilot Will Help Educators Bring Computational Thinking to Hundreds of Classrooms

New York, December 6, 2018—Teach For America (TFA) announced the expansion of its computational thinking (CT) pilot, a program designed to help bridge the digital divide. The organization will bring the innovative pilot to all four of its national pre-service institutes this summer, impacting an estimated 350 incoming educators teaching in high-need schools.

The United States faces a persistent gap in accessible computer science education, inhibiting millions of students from pursuing academic and career opportunities in technology fields. Based on the success of its 2018 pilot in Atlanta, Teach For America will launch computational training workshops at its national institutes in Atlanta, Houston, Philadelphia, and Tulsa in the summer of 2019 to expand computer science learning in order to benefit students in low-income communities. The workshops will foster educators' orientation to CT and to expose new teachers to concrete practices for incorporating CT into their instruction, helping to bring computer science education to a growing number of schools in low-income communities.

"Our teachers are committed to excellence and equity in the classroom, and ensuring access to high-quality STEM education and exposing students to the wonders of computer science are important parts of that work," says Cullen White, Teach For America's managing director of computer science. "We're pursuing innovative programming that helps ensure more teachers in high-need schools can bring computational thinking learning experiences to their classrooms, helping bridge the digital divide and inspiring students to become creators of technology."

This pilot is one of three currently managed by Teach For America's Computer Science Education Initiative, all of which are funded with the support of Infosys Foundation USA, the pilots' lead corporate funder, and Siegel Family Endowment. This pilot's expansion is a direct result of these funders' support.

"By supporting Teach For America's innovative Computational Thinking pilots, we are not only helping teachers get access to high quality computer science training, but the Foundation is working to ensure that every child in the US has the opportunity to experience and learn how to approach learning through computational thinking, regardless of their circumstances," said Infosys Foundation USA Chairperson Ravi Kumar S.

"Siegel Family Endowment is committed to expanding teaching practices that will help students across the country develop creative and collaborative computer science and computational thinking skillsets," said Thea Charles, Computational Thinking Portfolio Head at Siegel Family Endowment. "Teach For America's computational thinking pilots help new teachers develop the mindsets and skills they need

to integrate computational thinking into their classrooms. It's an approach that helps students learn, express themselves, and solve problems creatively and systematically, starting in elementary school."

Computer science courses are offered in only 40 percent of schools nationwide, the majority of which are not in low-income communities. Where computer science courses are available, the number of Black, Latinx, and Native students enrolled in those courses remains disproportionately low; last year, only 21 percent of participants in the Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles exam were students of color.

By raising K-12 teachers' awareness of and competency in CT—especially in high-need schools—more students from underrepresented backgrounds can gain critical learning experiences that set them up for long-term success in computer science pathways. Given Teach For America's nationwide scale, its computer science education initiative is poised to have an immediate impact on access to high-quality computer science learning.

About Teach For America
Teach For America works in partnership with urban and rural communities in more than 50 regions across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today Teach For America is a force of nearly 60,000 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they're reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence and to lead. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Our Partners
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Pilot History
In the summer of 2018, the organization tested a working prototype of a computational thinking teacher training workshop at one of its national pre-service institutes, a rigorous five-week pre-service model where all incoming TFA teachers, known as corps members, learn the fundamentals of content, classroom management, and culturally responsive pedagogy while teaching summer school.

During this initial test, more than 50 incoming elementary teachers participated in a two-hour CT workshop designed to engage teachers as learners in hands-on CT learning activities at the elementary level. After the training, 100% of participating teachers reported satisfaction and an increased understanding of how to incorporate CT into their regular teaching practice. It was the success of this pilot that led to this summer's expansion.

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