One year ago, Iowa legislators passed a bill to advance the instruction of computer science. With the start of the new school year, two key objectives of that measure are in place. The Iowa Department of Education announced in June that new voluntary academic standards and a $1 million fund for professional development had been established. Developed by the State Board of Education, the new standards outline what students in every grade should know and be able to do in the area of computer science. The fund will go to local schools that help staff pursue teaching endorsements or other learning opportunities in computer science.

Meanwhile, at least two other Midwestern states, Indiana and Ohio, have taken major steps over the past year to advance computer science in schools. Under Indiana's SB 172 (signed into law in March), coursework in this subject area must be offered in every public high school as a one-semester elective at least once a year. It also sets up a grant program for teacher training and requires schools at all grade levels to include computer science in their curriculum.

Ohio’s HB 170 was signed into law late last year. It calls for the adoption of statewide academic standards and a model curriculum, and allows high school students to take computer science as an alternative to Algebra II or a unit of science.

By:
Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at 11:06 AM

Attachment

Stateline Midwest: August 2018

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