

**Title:** Our K-12 Students Cannot Wait Any Longer For Computer Science Education

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**Target outlet:** EdTech Digest

**Length:** 700-750 (currently 643)

In my 30-plus years as a teacher, principal and superintendent, I've learned a strong, high-performing education system is a vital piece of a robust national infrastructure, perhaps even the centerpiece. K-12 schools have a moral obligation to prioritize our childrens' academic, social and emotional development not just so they'll thrive but so our states and our nation will, too. We all win when students leave school prepared for the future—everything from changes in the workforce to challenges in their communities.

As we talk in conferences, meetings and phone chats, my fellow superintendents and I often find ourselves discussing our districts' need for technology education, specifically computer science courses. [Computing jobs](#) also are the largest source of new wages in the nation and are projected to grow at twice the rate of jobs in other fields. That's something particularly noteworthy for students from populations that are underrepresented in the tech sector—young people who dream of jobs that will propel them into the middle class but often lack the connections to get there.

It's clear our children need instruction that will open doors to high-paying, high-demand jobs in emerging tech fields while also meeting future workforce demands.

Unfortunately, though, [only 51%](#) of U.S. public high schools offer any computer science courses. Increasing that number is vital for the stability of our economy and the security of our nation and will require strong leadership and engagement at the highest levels.

That's why last month, more than 600 CEOs and nonprofit leaders made news when they [called](#) on states to give every student in every K-12 school the chance to learn computer science. The coalition includes tech companies like Apple, Microsoft, Google and Amazon; retailers and manufacturers like Nike, Starbucks and Walgreens; as well as

the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and our nation's teachers unions, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association.

I supported the letter because I've seen first-hand how the demand for students with computer science skills continues to outpace the supply. [According](#) to Code.org, there were nearly 700,000 computing jobs open in the U.S. in 2021, but fewer than 80,000 computer science students graduated into the workforce. Perhaps most shockingly, [fewer than 5%](#) of high school students across 37 states were enrolled in foundational computer science courses. That's especially disturbing given Latinx students are 1.4 times less likely than their white and Asian peers to take these classes.

In Los Angeles, we've worked hard to expand access to computer science courses for all of our students. **[INSERT MORE ON HOW LAUSD HAS DONE THIS]**

In the last decade, many states have taken steps to give students more access to computer education courses, including allowing these courses to count toward core graduation requirements and making it easier for teachers to earn certifications in computer science education. And, nearly 45 governors have recently [signed a compact](#) to boost funding for computer science education; increase the number of schools offering these courses; raise participation by students from traditionally underserved populations; and create postsecondary career pathways in computer science.

But we need to do more, faster. My fellow school superintendents don't have to wait for their state to take action. We have the opportunity to ensure we're offering computer science as a foundational course for all students—regardless of how technology fits into students' future plans—so they'll succeed in an evolving workforce. We can select curriculum that integrates computer science into other subjects of study. We can

Innovation is driving sweeping changes in the skills and training workers need, whether they're futures will take them to the factory floor or to the corner office. That's why we must make computer science education as integral a part of K-12 education as reading, math or history. It's no exaggeration to say that the future of our children—and our nation—depends on it.

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