



Exploring
Computer
Science

Well-Rounded Computer Science

Broadening Participation in Computer Science

Overview

The Oregon Department of Education has partnered with Oregon State University, the University of Oregon, and Portland State University to: create the capacity to deliver [Exploring Computer Science](#), a research-based, well-rounded course in Oregon high schools; support administrative and counselor capacity to provide and sustain the offerings; and develop a data foundation to work towards continuous and systemic improvement. This program creates the capacity to deliver a proven, well-rounded course in Oregon high schools, the administrative and counselor capacity to provide and sustain the offerings, and the data foundation to work towards continuous and systemic improvement.

This work is broken down into four key initiatives:

Key Initiatives:

- The strategic expansion of Exploring Computer Science Professional Development. The Exploring Computer Science course is a year-long, research-based, high school introductory-level computer science curriculum and teacher professional development program that focuses on broadening participation in computing. It is currently being used by several school districts throughout Oregon.
- The utilization of guides and offering of professional development workshops to inform and empower school administrators and counselors.
- The creation of a cadre of Regional Exploring Computer Science (ECS) Teacher Coordinators and a statewide Specialist to support and sustain equity focused strategies, district planning activities, classroom teachers, and recruitment for teacher professional development.
- In partnership with the Expanding Computing Education Pathways (ECEP) Alliance, the development of a statewide evaluation of “Equity of Participation and Engagement in Computing Courses” to inform district plans and state education policy.

This ensemble of activities provides a foundation for persistent, statewide transformation. These initiatives will support and sustain parallel activities, such as Oregon’s [Computer Science Implementation Plan](#), with the goal of providing access to computer science education for all K-12 students by the 2027-28 school year.

To learn more about this course, please email the Well-Rounded Access Program team at ODE.WRCoursesGrant@ode.state.or.us.

ECS Priorities:

- 1. Computer Science Concepts:** The professional development cohort and regional ECS teacher network seeks to develop teachers' confidence in course content, which includes in-depth yet accessible computing concepts.
- 2. Inquiry:** The ECS curricula involve many opportunities for collaboration, problem-solving, pattern-finding, and abstract thinking.
- 3. Equity:** Through the Expanding Computing Education Pathways (ECEP) alliance, the ECS seeks to provide meaningful educational opportunities to teachers and students who typically encounter barriers to access.

These priorities, along with the goals of the Well-Rounded Computer Science program, strive to address the barriers that keep students from participating in computer science.

Sign Up for Professional Development

As part of this partnership, Professional Development is **free to educators** through a two-year cohort model. For more information about Professional Development or if you would like to sign up for the 2024 cohort, please complete this [short interest form](#).

Background and Funding:

In October 2020, Oregon received a five-year, \$9.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand access to well-rounded education courses.

In January 2022, ODE published a [Needs Assessment](#) that highlighted the importance of and current inequitable access to high-quality, well-rounded STEAM courses. This Needs Assessment, along with a [year-long engagement process](#), was the basis for ODE's decision to expand access to this course, allotting \$1.6 Million* (approximately 16% of the total funding) for these efforts. This partnership is projected to continue through August 31, 2025.

More information about this program and to learn about other projects sponsored by this program, visit ODE's [Expanding Access to Well-Rounded Education webpage](#).

*In addition to these funds, ODE has dedicated approximately \$800,000 of Title IV-A funds to this work through August 31, 2025.

The content of this curriculum and professional development does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. government.