



## ARKANSAS INCREASES ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE COMPUTER SCIENCE AND STEM SUPPLEMENT

### **The Need for Computer Science and STEM Workers in Arkansas**

Arkansas's future depends on the quality of our workforce. By 2024, there will be over 126,000 Computer Science and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) jobs in the state.

These high-paying jobs will provide excellent careers for today's Arkansas students. But to be prepared for these openings, students need to be aware of the opportunities.

According to a recent survey, 42% of Americans would have considered STEM careers if they had better understood the career paths. A university study has shown that these career paths begin in middle school, and that a major reason students do not take the proper educational path is a lack of awareness of the available careers.

This program will work to increase student awareness of computer science and STEM careers at the critical point, and coordinate with the Arkansas Governor's program to make computer science available to all high school students.



### **Computer Science and STEM Career Awareness Program is Available FREE to all Arkansas Middle Schools**

Working with the Governor through a grant by the Department of Education and with the Department of Career Education to the Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC), the Learning Blade® curriculum system is available to all schools in Arkansas. In collaboration with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), this system includes a new component focusing on computer science and cybersecurity careers.

Learning Blade introduces students to computer science and STEM career opportunities and technologies through an entertaining game-based format. In this student-ready web-based system, the student pursues engaging missions that solve a problem such as securing a school's web sites, or finding new sources of energy or fresh food for your community.

To complete the missions, students must earn tools and teammates that correspond to STEM activities and careers by completing short academic exercises that expose the student to interesting aspects of STEM, linked to Arkansas academic standards. This provides the teachers get valuable feedback on student skills, while demonstrating the relevance of academic skills in real-life contexts.



## Implementing the Learning Blade Curriculum

The curriculum is supplemental and can be implemented in any classroom, after-school or community program. Because the lessons are self-guided, students can work on activities in spare classroom time, as part of a flipped classroom, etc. Training and professional development are available, including examples of how other schools nationwide have successfully used this system.

Schools can sign up for online accounts for the curriculum at:

[www.LearningBlade.com/AR](http://www.LearningBlade.com/AR)





**Learning Blade is a foundational skills development system for Arkansas STEM and CTE:**




- Promotes career awareness and exploration for all students
- Excellent for 8th grade Career Development courses
- Complements many Arkansas CTE career pathways
- Allows for individual and personalized study and research

  
**71%** LEARNED ABOUT  
NEW CAREERS

**69%**   
RECOGNIZING  
WHAT THEY LEARN IN SCHOOL  
WILL BE USEFUL  
LATER ON IN LIFE

**56%**   
INTEREST IN TAKING  
**ADVANCED**  
MATH CLASSES  
IN HIGH SCHOOL



  
**2x** # OF  
STUDENTS WHO  
WANT TO BE  
**ENGINEERS**  
& **SCIENTISTS**

  
**APSRC**  
Arkansas Public School Resource Center

 LearningBlade®  
Unleashing interest and sharpening skills for STEM

  
**TATA**  
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

**Learning Blade has been validated as a supplemental tool for increasing STEM career awareness and interest by Battelle Education.**

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