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March 4, 2024

TO:	Eligible Applicants
FROM:	Dr. Tony Sanders
SUBJECT:	<b>NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) / REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):</b> Fiscal Year 2024 Computer Science Equity Program
CSFA Number: CSFA Title:	586-43-3167 State Programs: Computer Science Equity Grant

# **Program Overview**

## **Eligibility and Application Information**

**Eligible Applicants**: Regional Offices of Education (ROEs); Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs); state institutions of higher education; schools designated as laboratory schools, public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE); area vocational centers; charter schools; cooperatives and other joint agreements with a governing body or board of control; schools operated by an ROE, ISC, or state agency; and school districts are eligible to apply. Entities that are approved shall be responsible for ensuring that they have facilities available and educators who are appropriately trained on use of any technologies or devices acquired for the purposes of the grant.

Collaborative applications will be accepted. Entities are allowed one application.

**NOTE:** The State of Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) requires applicants to complete prequalification requirements before applying for any grant. This includes completion of the Grantee Registration and prequalification process through the <u>Illinois GATA Web Portal</u>. Grant applications must be submitted by the application deadline indicated in this NOFO/RFP. Applicants are advised to complete the prequalification requirements well in advance of the NOFO/RFP deadline

Successful grant applicants will be required to complete an FY 2024 Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment in the form of an Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ) available through the GATA Web Portal, an FY 2024 Organizational Risk Assessment through the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) system, and the FY 2024 Programmatic Risk Assessment that is found within the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) budget. Grant awards will not be executed until the FY 2024 ICQ, Organizational Risk Assessment, and Programmatic Risk Assessment are completed.

**System for Award Management (SAM):** Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or federal or state awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the federal or state awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in <u>SAM</u> before submitting its application;
- (ii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active state award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal or state

awarding agency. ISBE may not consider an application for a state award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements.

# Code of Federal Regulations / Title 2 - Grants and Agreements / Vol. 1 / 2014-01-01192

### This grant is subject to the provisions of:

- Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), 30 ILCS 708/1 et seq.
- Administrative Rules for GATA, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000

**Merit-Based Review and Selection Process for Competitive Grants:** ISBE is required to design and execute a merit-based review and selection process for applications. This process is incorporated by reference in all applicable funding opportunities. Applicants are advised to refer to the <u>ISBE Merit-Based Review Policy</u>.

**Grant Award/Cost Sharing or Matching**: Funding for the Computer Science Equity Grant is approved for up to \$3 million subject to appropriations. Annual grant awards will range from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$330,000 per year. This NOFO/RFP does not have a cost matching requirement. Proposals that score under 60 points will not be funded. Additional Funding Information on page 7.

## Proposals that score under 60 points will not be funded.

**Grant Period**: The grant period will begin no sooner than January 1, 2024, and extend through June 30, 2024. Successful applicants may reapply via continuing application for up to two additional year(s). Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon compliance with federal and state law, state grant-making rules, passage of sufficient appropriations for the program, and satisfactory performance in the preceding grant period. No promise or undertaking made in this NOFO/RFP is an assurance that a grant agreement will be renewed, nor does this NOFO/RFP create any right to or expectation of renewal.

Submission Dates and Times/Other Submission Requirements: Proposals can be submitted electronically through the ISBE Attachment Manager or emailed, no later than 5 *p.m. on April 4, 2024*. Directions for each submission method are found below.

<u>Electronic Submission</u>: Completed proposals sent electronically should be scanned into a single PDF with all supporting documents and required signatures and submitted via the <u>ISBE Attachment Manager</u>. Select **Jessica Ervin** from the dropdown menu in Receiver Information. Submit the application using the button at the bottom of the page.

Email: The proposal may be emailed to standards@isbe.net.

Late proposals will not be accepted.

**Grant Award Notice:** It is anticipated that successful applicants will receive a Notice of Award via email approximately 90 days after the application deadline. The award letter is <u>NOT</u> an authorization to begin performance or expenditures. After the merit-based appeal timeframe has ended, awardees will receive additional information from the program area that includes the next steps for finalizing the grant. Monies spent prior to programmatic approval are done so at the applicant's own risk.

**Technical Assistance Session**: A recording of the webinar will be posted. To review the recorded webinar, go to: <u>Standards and Instruction (isbe.net)</u>, click on the blue Funding Opportunities drop down menu.

**Changes to NOFO/RFP:** ISBE will post any changes made to the NOFO/RFP prior to March 15, 2024 on the ISBE <u>Funding Opportunities webpage</u>. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

**Agency Contact/Contact to Request Application Package**: For more information on this NOFO/RFP, contact Jessie Ervin at 217-782-4322 or <u>standards@isbe.net</u>. All questions asked concerning this NOFO/RFP will be responded to in a Frequently Asked Questions document so all respondents can see all questions and the responses to the questions. Changes to the FAQ will not be made after March 22, 2024. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

# **General Information**

# **Program Background and Description**

### **Program Purpose:**

The purpose of the Computer Science Equity Grant is to create opportunities for K-12 learners to develop or enhance computer science skills through coordinated statewide professional learning. The competitive grant also will support efforts to improve equity outcomes and decrease accessibility issues to ensure all K-12 students in public school districts are afforded equitable opportunities to engage in computer science learning.

## **Program Description**:

The Computer Science Equity Grant will provide funding directly to entities as described in the Eligible Applicants section on page 1 of this document to support the development or enhancement of computer science programs in K-12 schools. Entities that are approved for a grant shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate facilities are available and educators are appropriately trained on the use of any technologies or devices acquired for the purposes of the grant. The Computer Science Equity Grant sets forth requirements that apply to funding, renewal provisions, and rulemaking.

## **Program Background/History**:

The Computer Science Equity Grant is a new competitive grant that was created by <u>Public Act 103-0264</u>. Funding is subject to appropriations.

## **Program Objectives**:

The purpose of the Computer Science Equity Grant is to support the development or enhancement of computer science programs in K-12 schools to:

- Expand learning opportunities in Grades K-12 to ensure that all students have access to computer science coursework that is aligned to rigorous state standards and emerging labor market needs;
- Train and retrain teachers of Grades K-12 to be more proficient in the teaching of computer science by providing professional development opportunities;
- Supply classrooms with materials and equipment related to the teaching and learning of computer science;
- More effectively recruit and better serve K-12 learners who are underrepresented in the computer science labor market for enrollment in computer science coursework; and
- Fund initiatives in any grades of K-8 that are designed specifically to prepare students in those grades to participate successfully in secondary computer science coursework or future computer science careers.

#### **Policy Requirements**:

See Computer Science Equity Grant Program, Part 700.

#### Performance Measures:

- 1. One hundred percent of all planned Computer Science Equity Grant funds are being used to expand learning opportunities in Grades K-12 to ensure that all students have access to computer science coursework that is aligned to rigorous state standards and emerging labor market needs.
- 2. One hundred percent of funds used for professional learning to train and retrain teachers of Grades K-12 will be used to make teachers more proficient in computer science.
- 3. One hundred percent of funds used to supply classrooms with materials and equipment are related to the teaching and learning of computer science.
- 4. One hundred percent of funds used to recruit K-12 students focuses on learners who are underrepresented in the computer science labor market.

#### Targets:

1. Mid-year virtual check-in with ISBE by January 31 of each year. Contact ISBE at standards@isbe.net.

- a. Provide data on student enrollment by grade levels and demographics on a template provided by ISBE.
- b. Provide a summary of progress toward meeting goals.
- c. Provide new course implementation data on template provided by ISBE, if applicable.
- d. Evaluate effectiveness thus far of implementation activities aligned to program objectives and student outcomes.
- e. Determine next steps based on data to improve or continue with objectives.
- f. Provide a timeline of all professional development activities planned and concluded. Include name and date of event, attendee names, title and content area, and grade level(s). Share agenda, if applicable.
- 2. End-of-year report due to ISBE on August 31 of each year, via email to ISBE at standards@isbe.net.
  - a. Provide data on student enrollment by grade levels and demographics on a template provided by ISBE.
  - b. Provide a summary of progress toward meeting goals.
  - c. Provide new course implementation data on template provided by ISBE, if applicable.
  - d. Evaluate effectiveness thus far of implementation activities aligned to program objectives and student outcomes.
  - e. Determine next steps based on data to improve or continue with objectives.
  - f. Provide a timeline of all professional development activities planned and concluded. Include name and date of event, attendee names, title and content area, and grade level(s). Share agenda, if applicable.
- 3. In addition to the mid-year and end-of-year check-ins with ISBE:
  - a. Year 1: Planning (FY 2024) 100 percent of the planning process will take place during the planning year.
  - b. Year 2: Implementation (FY 2025) At least 50 percent of the implementation plan should be completed and reported appropriately to ISBE.
  - c. Year 3: Implementation and Planning for Sustainability (FY 2026) At least 90 percent of the implementation plan will be completed and reported to ISBE.

# Performance Standards:

- 1. All planned learning activities and opportunities for Grades K-12 must equal or exceed 75 percent alignment with the program objectives of the grant to deliver quality computer science programming that is aligned to rigorous state standards and emerging labor market needs.
- 2. Professional learning to train and retrain teachers of Grades K-12 must equal or exceed 75 percent alignment with the program objectives of the grant to deliver quality computer science programming and must focus on the result of more proficient teachers of computer science.
- 3. Materials and equipment purchased to support implementation of computer science must equal or exceed 75 percent.
- 4. Recruitment of K-12 students focuses on learners who are underrepresented in the computer science labor market.

# **Deliverables and Milestones**:

- 1. Mid-year virtual check-in by January 31 of each year, with ISBE will include, at a minimum, discussion of:
  - a. Summary of progress toward accomplishing each program objective with supporting data or data representations to include an assessment of program quality and recommendations for improvement and sustainability.
  - b. Summary of program impact and recommendations based on data for future programming and engagement of K-12 students in computer science education.

- 2. A final report must be submitted electronically by August 31 of each year, to ISBE at standards@isbe.net. It should include:
  - a. Summary of progress toward accomplishing each program objective with supporting data or data representations to include an assessment of program quality and recommendations for improvement and sustainability.
  - b. Summary of program impact and recommendations based on data for future programming and engagement of K-12 students in computer science education.
  - c. Consideration of the importance of program sustainability and details of how computer science learning will continue after the grant concludes.
  - d. Program review of effectiveness to include data points that measure the success of programming and student growth in computer science learning.

# **Funding Information**

# Introduction:

Eligible applicants must meet the criteria for funding. Funding for competitive state grant awards is on a payment schedule pending budget approval and the filing of expenditure reports in the Financial Reimbursement Information System (FRIS). Funding will be routed through school districts.

The total available funding is \$3 million subject to availability. Priority points will be given to BPC Grant programs that focus on the enhancement of computer science programs in K-12 schools.

Entities with an approvable budget that are awarded are eligible to receive up to \$330,000 a year. Awards will be determined based on the final application score.

Grant awards will be made based on application score and are subject to availability to funds. Higher-scoring applications will have priority for awards until funding is exhausted.

#### **Cost Sharing or Matching:**

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement.

Eligible applicants must meet the eligible criteria for funding. Awards are distributed on a monthly payment schedule and routed through awarded entities via eGMS pending budget approval and the filing of expenditure reports in FRIS.

#### Indirect Cost Rate:

The federal Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 requires that grantees be provided the opportunity to seek indirect cost reimbursements based on negotiated indirect cost reimbursement rates. Rates are determined and applied as follows.

#### Local Education Agencies

• Local Education Agency (LEA) indirect cost rates are developed in accordance with a delegation of authority agreement between ISBE and the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The plan includes both a restricted and unrestricted rate for each individual LEA. Both the restricted and unrestricted LEA rates are published annually on the <u>ISBE Indirect Cost Rate Plan webpage</u>. In the past, only the restricted rate was allowed when budgeting indirect cost reimbursements.

LEAs have the ability to seek indirect cost reimbursement at the published unrestricted rate for any program other than those identified as restricted by ED.

• Newly organized LEAs, ROEs, ISCs, area vocational centers, charter schools, university laboratory schools, and governmental entities formed by a joint agreement among LEAs utilize either the statewide average of LEA unrestricted or restricted indirect rates as appropriate, depending on program.

• LEAs that jointly administer federal program(s) utilize either the approved unrestricted or restricted indirect cost rates for the administrative district of the joint program as appropriate, depending on program.

#### Non-LEAs

• Programs eligible for an unrestricted indirect cost rate; not-for-profit entities; community-/faith-based organizations; and other non-LEA, non-university subgrantees utilize rates negotiated through the Governor's Office of Management and Budget centralized process in which they will have the option to:

o Select the 10 percent de minimis rate.

o Submit documentation supporting a rate determined through negotiation with their federal cognizant agency.

o Negotiate a rate.

Non-LEA, non-university grantees may initiate the unrestricted indirect cost rate negotiation process through the <u>GATA Grantee Portal</u>.

• Federal programs requiring the use of a restricted indirect cost rate not-for-profit entities, community/faith-based organizations, and other non-LEA subgrantees shall utilize the 8 percent default rate described at 34 CFR 76.564.

• Colleges and universities will be limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8 percent or other indirect cost rate calculated by their cognizant federal agency, whichever is less, for grants administered by ISBE.

Costs associated with Fiscal Support Services (2520), Internal Support Services (2570), Staff Support Services (2640), Data Processing Services (2660), and Direction of Business Support Services (2510) charged to the Educational Fund are properly budgeted as indirect costs.

#### **Funding Restrictions**:

This grant has an unrestricted indirect cost rate.

## **Reporting Requirements**

Periodic financial reporting should be completed annually via the IWAS system. Programmatic reporting should be completed annually via electronic submission in a manner specified by ISBE. Additional reporting requirements are included in the milestones and deliverables section of this request for proposals.

# **Content and Form of Application Submission**

**Instructions**: Each application must be submitted in the format outlined below to be considered complete. A complete application will include all required components (the numbered items below) and signatures when mentioned. Please use the checkboxes in front of the numbers as a checklist when assembling your completed application. It is advised to attach a copy of the completed checklist with the application.

- □ 1. Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance (Attachment 1): Include the name, address, and telephone and fax numbers of the entity; email, name, and telephone number of the contact person; Federal Employer Identification number; DUNS number; SAM CAGE Code; and all other listed information. The Application page must be signed by the official authorized to submit proposals.
- □ 2. Program Narrative (Attachment 2) maximum five pages: Follow the specifications found under "Program Narrative Requirements" below. Each proposal must include responses to each item in the order in which they are presented.
- □ 3. Objectives and Activities (Attachment 3) maximum five pages: Include all planned activities; a timeline for activities, including beginning and completion date; the person(s) responsible; and the evaluation measures and components.
- $\Box$  4. **Proposal Evaluation Design (Attachment 4)** maximum five pages: Use the form provided to complete the cost effectiveness and sustainability components of the proposal to provide details of how the tangible benefits of costs measure total effectiveness of program and outline steps that will be employed to evaluate the program.
- $\Box$  5. State Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 5): The budget MUST be submitted on this form. No other budget form will be accepted. District budgets MUST be signed by the district superintendent. Other applicants should have the authorized official sign the form. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits should be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services, and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.
- □ 6. Budget Narrative (Attachment 6): The Budget Narrative MUST include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the State Budget Summary and Payment Schedule. The Budget Narrative should also include subcontract information, if applicable.

# **Program** Narrative Requirements

Program narratives should include responses to each section in the Review Criteria section on the next page in the order they are presented. For specific evaluative criteria in each section, applicants are advised to review the evaluation rubric beginning on the next page.

# **Review Criteria**

# Application Review and Selection Process

The selection of the grantees will be based upon the overall quality of the application. The scoring is based upon the following criteria:

- Need is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose.
- Capacity is defined as the ability of an entity to execute the grant project according to the project requirements.
- Quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a service, project, or product that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program.
- Sustainability is defined as evidence provided in the form of additional funding and other resource streams that will support the program after the grant funding concludes.
- Cost Effectiveness (Budget), Impact, and Evaluation are defined as the overall impact and evaluation in the use of grant funds (expenditures) toward resources aimed at supporting and sustaining the program over time and alignment and impact of those expenditures with the goals of the grant program.

Proposals that score under 60 points will not be funded.

# Tiebreaker

In the event of a tie, the applicant with the higher amount of priority points will be given priority.

# **Priority Points**

Priority points will be given for proposals that intend to serve a:

- 1. Majority of learners or teachers with gender or racial/ethnic identities that are underrepresented in the computer science labor market. (See Section 2- 3.196(d) of the School Code.)
- 2. School or district that does not currently offer any computer science coursework and is able to accommodate 12.5 percent or less of the high school student body in the program for a given school year.
- 3. School or district that does not currently offer computer science coursework that is accessible and appropriate for students at each grade level for Grades 9-12.
- 4. School or district that does not currently offer advanced coursework opportunities (e.g., dual credit, honors, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate) for computer science.

# **Evaluation** Criteria

These overall criteria are built into the rubric below. The attachment number in the parentheses following the criteria lists the portion of the proposal that will be used to determine if the criteria has been met. The points for each criterion section as well as the individual criteria are also included in the rubric.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer scores and comments by contacting the ISBE Standards and Instruction Department at <a href="mailto:standards@isbe.net">standards@isbe.net</a>.

Not Provided	Very Limited	Somewhat Limited	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
0	1	2	3	4	5
Proposal requirements are absent.	Proposal provides very few details to meet the project outcomes.	Proposal is unclear and lacks enough evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides moderate detail and conveys potential to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides good detail and strong evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal exceeds expectations and provides a solid plan to meet project outcomes.

#### Selection criteria and point values are as follows:

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Section 1: Need	
Need is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose.	
20 Points	Possible Points
	Possible Politis
1.1 The proposal describes the local need for development or enhancement of	
computer science programs by describing specific local student population (including demographics) and how the program will meet the	
needs/interests of all students, including special populations (e.g., English	
learners, special education students, minority students, and gifted students).	
(Attachment 1)	5
1.2 The proposal outlines the applicant's staffing needs to implement the	
program, including a detailed explanation as to the need for additional	
staff to be hired or contracted.	
(Attachment 1)	5
1.3 The proposal clearly outlines the professional learning needs of the	
educators who will deliver computer science instruction and how those	
needs will be addressed.	
(Attachment 1)	5
1.4 The proposal clearly identifies resources needed to implement the program	
(e.g., facilities, equipment, supplies, software, technology, curriculum,	
resource guides, text, or manuals). (Attachment)	5
	3
Section 2: Capacity	
Capacity is defined as the ability of an entity to execute the grant project according to	
the project requirements.	
	D 111 D 1
25 Points	Possible Points
25 Points         2.1 The proposal identifies the applicant's capacity to meet all programmatic needs	Possible Points
25 Points 2.1 The proposal identifies the applicant's capacity to meet all programmatic needs identified in subsection (a). If the applicant does not currently have the internal	Possible Points
<ul> <li>25 Points</li> <li>2.1 The proposal identifies the applicant's capacity to meet all programmatic needs identified in subsection (a). If the applicant does not currently have the internal capacity to meet a specific need, the proposal must include a plan of how the applicant</li> </ul>	Possible Points
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Section 3: Quality Quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a service, project, or	
product that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program. 20 Points	Dessible Deints
-	Possible Points
3.1 The proposal describes specific objectives or goals of the instructional plan,	
including the name of any instructional programs, the number of	
courses expanded or newly offered at each site, information on providers or	
instructors, the role of each partner at each site, and the number of students expected	
to be enrolled.	_
(Attachment 1)	5
3.2 The proposal contains evidence that demonstrates the knowledge, skill, and	
experience of the educators or contracted entities that will deliver computer science	
instruction, or the proposal cites a plan to prepare educators through quality	
professional development.	
(Attachment 1)	5
3.3 The proposal provides evidence of the program's alignment to the Illinois	
Computer Science Learning Standards as specified in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix	
D.	
(Attachment 1)	5
3.4 The proposal clearly provides details of the timeline for delivery of services,	
including progress reporting required as specified in Section 700.70; professional	
learning activities; equipment or supply purchases; and new or enhanced course or	
program planning and implementation.	
(Attachment 1)	5
Section 4: Sustainability	
Sustainability is defined as evidence provided in the form of additional funding and	
other resource streams that will support the program after the grant funding concludes.	
15 Points	Possible Points
4.1 The proposed includes provisions for funding and other resources to sustain a	
long-term computer science program that continues after the grant period ends,	
including information on additional funding or other resource streams.	
(Attachment 4)	5
4.2 The proposal includes evidence of community or stakeholder involvement or	5
engagement to support and assist in sustaining the program.	5
(Attachment 4)	5
4.3 The program includes a three- to five-year sustainability plan with	
forecasted budget considerations that provides details on how the program will	
continue after the grant period concludes, including funding for educator salaries,	
supplies, software, technology, or maintenance.	F
(Attachment 4)	5
Section 5: Cost-Effectiveness (Budget), Impact, and Evaluation	
Cost Effectiveness (Budget), Impact, and Evaluation are defined as the overall impact	
and evaluation in the use of grant funds (expenditures) toward resources aimed at	
supporting and sustaining the program over time and alignment and impact of those	
expenditures with the goals of the grant program.	
20 Points	<b>Possible Points</b>
5.1 The proposal provides details on how each budgeted item supports proposed goals,	
objectives, activities, and outcomes.	
(Attachment 5)	5
	5

5.2 The proposal describes a process to measure and evaluate cost effectiveness and impact and a process to drive budgetary decisions toward program improvement over	
time.	
(Attachment 5)	5
5.3 The program plan includes a detailed budget with projected costs assigned to	
appropriate function or object codes	
(Attachment 5)	5
5.4 The proposal includes a process to measure and evaluate the impact the program	
has on student achievement and the impact of each partnership on the success and	
sustainability of the program and the alignment activities.	
(Attachment 5)	5

Priority Points	
Priority points will be given for proposals that intend to serve a:	
20 Points	Possible Points
6.1 The proposal shows evidence that the majority of learners or teachers with gender	
or racial/ethnic identities who are underrepresented in the computer science labor	
market. (See Section 2- 3.196(d) of the School Code.)	
(Attachment 1)	5
6.2 The proposal lists the computer science coursework that is currently offered and	
shows evidence that the school or district is able to accommodate 12.5 percent or less	
of the high school student body in the program for a given school year.	
(Attachment 1)	5
6.3 The proposal shows evidence that school or district that does not currently offer	
computer science coursework that is accessible and appropriate for students at each	
grade level for Grades 9-12.	
(Attachment 1)	5
6.4 The proposal shows evidence that school or district that does not currently offer	
advanced coursework opportunities (e.g., dual credit, honors, Advanced Placement, or	
International Baccalaureate) for computer science.	
(Attachment 1)	5