The CSTA Leadership Cohort: Advocacy, Leadership, Community

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Goals of the Leadership Cohort Program

• Identify computer science teacher leaders in each state
• Provide them with the advocacy skills needed to achieve policy changes that will improve K-12 computer science education
• Provide them with professional development to enhance their leadership capacity and build their confidence
• Provide them with resources and information to help them communicate effectively across multiple stakeholder groups
• Help to build a supportive community of educators who are creating and sharing strategies for successful advocacy at the local, regional, and state level
Agenda

- Key advocacy issues
- Building advocacy capacity
- The Leadership Cohort
- Cooperation across the whole community

What Are The Issues

- What is CS?
- Are there courses available to students?
- Is it an academic course?
- Does it count toward graduation?
- Who can teach it?
- Are they adequately prepared to teach it?
Who Are the Stakeholders

- Students
- Parents
- Principals
- Administrators (district level)
- Administrators (state level)
- Colleges and universities
- Business and industry
- Policy makers (state and federal level)

Why We Need Advocacy

- The attention now being paid to STEM education in K-12 is unprecedented but CS is largely ignored
- Policy makers need to understand that CS is part of 21st Century STEM and critical for scientific, economic, and social reasons
- Educational policy makers need to be pushed to make CS part of the K-12 equation
- Advocacy is a community effort and we need community intervention focused on a common mission and common goals
- Teachers are on the front lines and we need to inform, engage, and inspire them
Educators as Advocates

- Post secondary faculty often lack understanding of the complexities of policy in the K-12 space
- Despite their critical role, K-12 teachers often see themselves as powerless against the multiple bureaucracies
- There is an incredible pool of leadership, knowledge, commitment that can be tapped
- Educator advocates at all levels need:
  - an understanding of the policy landscape
  - to know how to identify the stakeholders
  - a consistent message and a common "ask"
  - a toolkit of advocacy resources

The Leadership Cohort

- A cohort of 53 teacher leaders in 34 states
- Missing states are: Alaska, Delaware, D.C, Florida (chapter doing advocacy work), Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey (chapter doing advocacy work), Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia
- Provided with leadership and advocacy training (via workshops and webex meetings)
- Supported by the CSTA Advocacy Toolkit
- Sustained by a strong and supportive community
- Working within the current possibilities in their states (starting where they are at)
Some Recent Accomplishments

• Had CS declared a required course in a PA school district
• Had an entire computer science strand added to the annual state computing conference in OH
• Working with state department of education staff to improve standards and rigor in CS courses
• Represented K-12 CS education in two major Capitol Hill events
• Interviews with reporters leading to supportive articles in multiple large newspapers
• Provided on-the-ground intelligence, organization, and advocacy efforts to improve the proposed Texas CS standards
• Involved industry representatives in a major city-wide CS careers day for computer science
• Multiple state and city proclamations to support CSEd Week in multiple stages
• Convinced school to add AP CS course for first time

Resources Created

  • http://csta.acm.org/Research/sub/CSTAResearch.html
• The New Educational Imperative (white paper)
  • http://csta.acm.org/Communications/sub/Documents.html
• Ensuring Exemplary Teacher (white paper)
  • http://csta.acm.org/Communications/sub/Documents.html
• Policy Maker’s Brochure
  • http://csta.acm.org/Advocacy_Outreach/sub/Info_PolicyMakers.html
• Also several briefing sheets on key issues
Expanding the Community

• SIGCSE members can play a key role in expanding our advocacy capacity by:
  – Developing a better understanding of the key policy issues
  – Understanding the importance of a single consistent message/ask
  – Developing relationships with Leadership Cohort members in your state
  – Sharing recommendations of K-12 CS teacher leaders in your state so we can make them part of the community
  – Taking the leadership role in states where K-12 CS is so underrepresented that we cannot find teacher leaders
  – Offering to share your advocacy successes and strategies as a guest on a Leadership Cohort webex meeting
  – Sharing advocacy resources you have developed with CSTA for dissemination to the Leadership Cohort

Contact Information

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