



**Bucks County Intermediate Unit
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For Immediate Release:

Bucks IU Awarded Over \$900,000 in Grants to Expand Computer Science and STEM Education

February 11, 2019, Doylestown PA: The Bucks County Intermediate Unit (Bucks IU), an educational service agency supporting the schools of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, has been awarded state grant funding to support the creation of new computer science and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) initiatives in the county. The grant funding, totaling more than \$900,000, has been made available through [Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf's PAsmart program](#) and will allow the Bucks IU to support the local community in responding to the projected regional and statewide Pennsylvania labor force shortages specifically in the computer science and STEM job markets.

“The Bucks IU is both thrilled and honored to have been awarded these PAsmart advancing grants,” stated Dr. Lindsey Sides, a Bucks IU Supervisor and coordinator of these grant initiatives. “These grant funds will allow the Bucks IU to continue to expand our STEM programming for Bucks County students, teachers, and the community at-large.”

The first grant, totaling \$412,656, will support the creation of a **Mobile Fab (Fabrication) Lab** and related educational programs. The Mobile Fab Lab will serve as a platform for learning and innovation: a place to play, to create, to learn, and to invent by providing students with project-based, hands-on, STEM education.

Housed within a transit van, the Mobile Fab Lab will be equipped with coding and robotics materials, 3D printers, laser and vinyl cutters, and more. With the support of a highly-trained educator, the Mobile Fab Lab will travel throughout the county, providing a variety of programming to support week-long programs at schools, Saturday and summer programs for students living in homeless shelters, and summer camps.

The second grant, in the amount of \$484,689, will fund the **Computational Thinking in Action Program**, a collaboration between the Bucks IU, the University of Pennsylvania, Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18, ARIN Intermediate Unit 28, and Central Intermediate Unit 10. The Computational Thinking in Action Program will engage regional teams throughout Pennsylvania to create a middle school introductory course on computer science and a curriculum for an afterschool program in robotics and computer science.

This program also offers educators the chance to enroll in the University of Pennsylvania's 30-week Experiences in Applied Computational Thinking (EXACT) Program. Additional teachers will complete code.org's Computer Science Fundamentals and Discovery workshops, as well as two workshops led by University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education's Catalyst Center that are specifically designed to support computer science initiatives in their districts.

In addition, the Bucks IU is a partner in these funded PAsmart grants:

1. **The PA STEM Lending Library Coalition:** The Bucks IU is one of ten Intermediate Units across the state working to develop an online platform where teachers can be trained and approved to borrow codable items from their local Intermediate Unit's lending library.
2. **The Southeast Pennsylvania-Chief Science Officers (SEPA-CSO) Program:** This grant, awarded to the PA SEED Ecosystem, of which the Bucks IU is a founding member, will create a regional chapter of the International Chief Science Officer (CSO) program in local schools. Students in grades 7-12 from Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and

Montgomery county public schools will be elected by their peers to serve as computer science liaisons for their schools and communities. These CSOs will receive special leadership training, develop and promote computer science and STEM engagement opportunities in their schools and communities, and work together with the adult computer science and STEM leaders in their region.

For more information on the wide variety of current computer science and STEM programs from the Bucks IU, or these exciting future programs, please contact Dr. Lindsey Sides, Supervisor of STEM Programs at 215-348-2940 Ext. 1460 or email her at LSides@BucksIU.org.

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ABOUT THE BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT: (Strong)

With over 45 years of service, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit has established itself as an abundantly skilled, technology-rich, provider of high quality, cost-effective, instructional and operational services to public and private schools, school districts, charter schools, and our community. From an exceptional and broad foundation of specialty education support services we advocate for every child, while also offering a wide-range of programs, from cooperative purchasing to professional development courses, to nurture a stronger community. Visit our website at www.BucksIU.org or call us at 215-348-2940 for more information.