

## **Amazon Funding Computer Science Education for 60 Elementary Schools in Houston Independent School District Benefitting More Than 32,000 Students**

*Houston Independent School District part of Amazon Future Engineer's expansion to more than [5,000 schools](#) – more than ever before – nationwide*

*Funding from [Amazon Future Engineer](#) delivers teacher professional development and curriculum, including virtual opportunities, from [BootUp PD](#) – a nonprofit professional development provider specializing in elementary school education – that focuses on high-quality computer science concepts, practices, and standards for teachers and students*

*[Amazon Future Engineer](#) program aims to bring high-quality computer science access to students from underserved communities and groups currently underrepresented in tech from childhood to career*

Houston, TX—September 15, 2020 — Amazon and the Houston Independent School District today announced that Amazon is funding computer science education and teacher professional development for 60 elementary schools in the district, impacting more than 32,000 students from underserved communities and groups currently underrepresented in tech as part of its Amazon Future Engineer program. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is part of Amazon Future Engineer's expansion to more than 5,000 schools, 1,000 of which will be elementary schools.

Amazon is working with [BootUp PD](#), a nonprofit professional development provider specializing in elementary school education, to bring computer science to each school. BootUp PD's typically in-person professional development sessions adapt well to a virtual model and provide teachers with the tools they need to bring engaging coding lessons to their students both on-screen and in-person. High-quality computer science education for elementary school students during their school day is a critical piece of Amazon's "childhood to career" approach because it helps bridge equity skill gaps at an age when students are just beginning to formulate ideas about their futures.

"I want to thank Amazon for providing HISD students with the opportunity to participate in the Amazon Future Engineer program," HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. "This forward-thinking and innovative curriculum will develop tomorrow's highly qualified tech professionals for careers in coding, artificial intelligence, machine learning and other 21<sup>st</sup> century fields."

"I am pleased to see Amazon Future Engineer continue to invest in our school districts, said Mayor Sylvester Turner. "Early exposure to computer science skills teaches our HISD students to solve problems and think critically. These skills will help them succeed in the classroom and beyond and will be instrumental in building the next generation of innovation and technology talent."

"We've been incredibly impressed with the stories we hear of elementary school teachers going above and beyond to keep their young students engaged, learning and smiling, especially during these difficult times," said Jeff Wilke, CEO Worldwide Consumer, Amazon. "As students from across the country begin school – whether virtually or in person – we are confident that Amazon Future Engineer's focus on younger students in need will be a helpful tool for teachers as they prepare all of their students for a bright future."

"This opportunity will close equity gaps by ensuring computer science learning opportunities for students in underserved communities throughout the nation," said Clark Merkley, BootUp PD's Executive Director. "It is the first ongoing national sponsorship focused on implementing sustainable, district-wide computer science. We're extremely proud to be a part of something that will have a measurable, positive impact for decades to come."

Amazon's commitment to HISD is part of its \$50 million investment to increase access to computer science/STEM education across the country, primarily through [Amazon Future Engineer](#). In addition, Amazon has donated more than \$20 million to organizations that promote computer science/STEM education. Already in Texas, there are more than 200 high schools and more than 150 elementary schools participating in the Amazon Future Engineer program.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Amazon employees are volunteering virtually in Amazon Future Engineer classrooms, talking to the students about the importance of their own computer science education. Amazon Future Engineer also launched the [Amazon Cyber Robotics Challenge](#) – a free, virtual, first of its kind coding competition that teaches students the basics of computer science in the context of a real-life industry challenge. To learn more about what Amazon is doing in response to COVID-19 for communities, employees, partners, and customers, check out the [Amazon Blog: Day One](#).

### **About Amazon Future Engineer**

Amazon Future Engineer intends to inspire, educate, and prepare children and young adults from underrepresented and underserved communities to pursue computer science. The program is part of Amazon's \$50 million investment in computer science and STEM education. In addition, Amazon Future Engineer has donated more than \$20 million to organizations that promote computer science and STEM education across the country. Each year, Amazon Future Engineer aims to inspire 550,000 K-12 students across more than 5,000 schools to explore computer science through elementary school curriculum, middle and high school courses, and teacher professional development; awards 100 students with four-year \$10,000 scholarships, as well as offers guaranteed and paid Amazon internships to gain work experience; awards \$25,000 Amazon Future Engineer Teacher of the Year Awards, and forms unique partnerships with trusted institutions to bring new coding experiences to students.

### **About BootUp Professional Development**

BootUp PD is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit specializing in district-wide elementary computer science initiatives that focus on creativity and problem-solving. Since 2015, BootUp has worked with almost 300 elementary schools in ten states, directly impacting over 150,000 students. BootUp prepares teachers to facilitate open-ended coding projects that are project-based and personally meaningful in the free platforms Scratch and ScratchJr. Students are empowered with creative and interactive curricula that allow them to explore their personal interests through coding with design, music, animation, games, or stories. Applications are being accepted at: [www.afebootup.smapply.org](http://www.afebootup.smapply.org).

### **About Houston Independent School District**

The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh largest in the United States, with 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with more than 27,000 employees.

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