



Amazon Funding Computer Science Education for 11 Elementary Schools in Pendergast District Schools Benefitting More Than 1,650 Students

Pendergast is part of Amazon Future Engineer's expansion to more than 5,000 schools nationwide

PHOENIX – February 9, 2021 — [Pendergast](#) District announced that Amazon is funding computer science education and teacher professional development for 11 elementary schools in the district, impacting more than 1,650 students from underserved communities and groups currently underrepresented in tech as part of its Amazon Future Engineer program. Pendergast is part of Amazon Future Engineer's expansion to more than [5,000 schools](#), nearly 1,000 of which are 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.

According to Pendergast Superintendent Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux, "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. This will mean incredible opportunities for our students and we are grateful to Amazon and BootUp for believing in our students."

Pendergast Board Vice-president and State Senator Martin Quezada has been a fierce advocate for STEAM education for Pendergast students and is looking forward to the "Amazon Future Engineer program which aims to bring high-quality computer science access to students from underserved communities and groups currently underrepresented in tech from childhood to career beginning this summer. We look to level the playing field for our students in order for them to excel. We can't wait to see what the future holds for our students with this amazing program."

"This opportunity will close equity gaps by ensuring computer science learning opportunities for students in under-served 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."

As part of the initiative, Amazon Future Engineer will be sponsoring [micro:bit](#) classroom packs for each district to further their students' exposure to hands-on computer science learning opportunities. BootUp will also support teachers with additional physical computing professional development to ensure they are set up to successfully integrate the technology into student learning and allow students to see their code in a more tangible, physical way.

Amazon's commitment to Pendergast ESD #92 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 Arizona, there are more than 100 schools participating in the Amazon Future Engineer program.