Computer Science Pathway at Osage CSD

* Osage, IA, near the Minnesota border, with about 1,000 students.
* One of relatively few IA districts to require computer science for high school graduation, starting with the class of 2022.
* What spurred this?
We felt our students need to be exposed to Computer Science and given opportunities to see CS as a viable pathway for HS and career options as it is a growing field with over 3,500 job openings in Iowa that pay excellent salaries. If kids do not try something, they do not know if they like it or not. OSAGE gives them ALL the Opportunity to see if they like it or not. It is a course many really like and they continue on the pathway taking more offerings.
* What did the August 2018 Computer Science Incentive Fund grant allow Osage to do?
It allowed Osage to train ALL staff by bringing speakers and presenters to us, educating staff, and breaking down stereotypes that CS is hard and only for certain people to teach. It allowed us to also send staff to conferences to learn the skills and gather resources needed to implement with fidelity. The grant was key in us moving forward as budgets are tight and it allowed us ability to do things that helped educate staff and move us ahead.
* What additional investment have you made in Osage?
Computer Science lends into a new ESPORTS team who recently competed for a state title in Overwatch and we lost to urban school Davenport 3-1. 30 students are actively participating in our ESports Club with several getting college scholarships recently. We continue to look for more business partnerships with our Iowa Big North Program in the technology sector. Osage Community Schools also completed a 13 million dollar addition/renovation project
* What difference has this made in the district in terms of how students, teachers and even parents think about the value of computer science, and who should take it?
It has opened up the world of opportunities from jobs and careers that parents and students did not know existed. It created an awareness of how computers work and students and staff being creators of the content, while problem solving instead of relying on others. Many realize their own potential as they get continuous exposure in many classes with many cross- curricular and interdisciplinary projects occurring imbedding technology.
* All teachers have received computer science training, and all students are benefiting starting in kindergarten.
* K-5 students learn Computer Science Fundamentals through Code.Org.
* 6th, 7th and 8th graders study computer science each year, mostly CS Discoveries
* In high school, all students take Intro to Computer Science 1. But they also can take Intro to Computer Science 2, AP Computer Science Principles, Computer Science Independent Study, and Game Design 1 and 2.
* Do you get inquiries from other districts asking how you have done this?
Yes! We have shared info with many districts and hosted many tours and learning visits to share how we did this. We are a small rural school and if we can do it, so can your district.
* Any plans related to computer science for 2020-21?
We will continue to add courses as students interest continues to increase and our goal of finding a small start up tech business to come Osage with students who are ready to work there is another goal.