FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 4, 2015

PREPARE FOR THE “HOUR OF CODE” IN ALABAMA
Alabama Celebrates the Importance of Computer Science Education Next Week

Montgomery, Ala. – Teachers and school systems statewide are hosting Hour of Code (HoC) events next week to celebrate Computer Science Education Week in Alabama, December 7-11.

More than 600 local Alabama HoC-related events have been planned (see full schedule of events at https://hourofcode.com/us/events/all/us/al).

“The Hour of Code is a global movement reaching tens of millions of students in 180+ countries,” said Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates in a news release from Code.org. “Learning to write programs stretches your mind and creates a way of thinking about things that I think is helpful in all domains. We encourage all schools and teachers to take the first step and do an #hourofcode … no experience required.”

“We are proud to be a part of this partnership to positively impact the lives of students,” said State Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice. “Computer science education provides a real opportunity for students to prepare for successful futures. Research indicates that computer-related careers are some of the most in-demand and fastest-growing areas in America. This year’s Hour of Code celebration should energize Alabama’s computer-savvy students and teach them about the many great opportunities that exist through the study of computer science.”

HoC is “propelled by teachers,” said Laura Kline, Product and Marketing Manager for CODE.org in a recent interview. What began as an awareness campaign to get teachers interested and possibly excited about teaching computer science has now “taken on a life of its own” according to Kline. In its third year, the “Hour of Code” surpassed its national 2015 goal of 75,000 teacher registrations in the first week. Teachers and education leaders can visit CODE.org/learn to view and share 2015 tutorial videos and also to find more resources for HoC activities.

In October, Kline was a guest on a webinar hosted by Dr. Jeff Gray, Computer Science Professor at The University of Alabama, where she provided many suggestions and strategies for planning and implementing an HoC activity for teachers who may have never done such an event before. This webinar is available online at http://tinyurl.com/HoC-AL-webinar.

In November, the 2015 HoC campaign kicked off with the international release of the first of two different tutorial videos based on two very popular themes: Minecraft and Star Wars. “A lot of work goes into building the tutorials for HoC,” said Kline. “Last year, we partnered with Disney, which created a tutorial video using the popular characters from the movie Frozen.

Use the following weblink to review this information: https://code.org/learn

“It makes me so proud to see Alabama diving head first into teaching and expanding computer science,” said Kline. “Southern states like Alabama have really made computer science a high priority.”

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THE “HOUR OF CODE” IN ALABAMA
2015 Celebration – December 7-11

Dr. Jeff Gray, referenced earlier, is one of ten members of the Education Advisory Board at Code.org and has been serving as a K-5 Code.org workshop trainer. He also collaborates with the A+ College Ready program, a division of the A+ Education Partnership, to help raise awareness and bring computer science training opportunities to Alabama teachers.

A+ College Ready and The University of Alabama are in the final year of a National Science Foundation project that is training 50 high school teachers on a new College Board AP exam in computer science. Dr. Gray also taught over 1,100 teachers nationally by offering the Alabama training online, which was supported by Google in both 2014 and 2015 (see http://www.apluscollegeready.org/blog/cs4al-media-day-june-23-at-the-university-of-al/).

A+ College Ready has a “long-standing commitment to promoting computer science professional development and implementation across the state of Alabama,” according its President, Mary Boehm.

In addition to Dr. Gray, K-5 teachers can also receive training from Lisa Molyneux (Mobile County Public Schools) who covers the southern part of Alabama and Mississippi.

To learn more about this innovative initiative, visit HourOfCode.com or contact one of the following individuals:

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