



September 18, 2019

Announcing MSON's Think Tank on Computational Thinking

Equipping our high school students with skills in computer science often feels as urgent and important as teaching them to write. Yet many schools, even those with computer science programs, are unsure which courses to teach, which skills to emphasize, and in what sequence. Many struggle to include a diverse cohort of students with varied backgrounds and interests in their courses and to make computer science feel relevant to real-world problems.

Funded through its Innovation Fund, a grant from the Malone Family Foundation, the Malone Schools Online Network is convening a Think Tank on Computational Thinking to address these challenges for MSON Schools, Malone Schools, and beyond. The Think Tank will draw on expertise across MSON's member schools and beyond, bringing in advisors from higher education, industry, and the non-profit computer science education communities.

With national leader in K-12 computer science curriculum Doug Bergman as chair and supported by MSON's Executive Director, the Think Tank will:

- 1) Develop an introductory (9th grade) yearlong Computational Thinking course for MSON (to be taught in 2019-20) that will also be adaptable at individual MSON school sites with the following characteristics:
 - a. Interdisciplinary (incorporating projects from different disciplines)
 - b. Diverse and open (exciting to a range of students, especially young women, with the goal that they continue in Computer Science courses)
 - c. Project-based
- 2) Develop recommendations for a 4-year high school sequence in Computational Thinking.

MSON will circulate the group's conclusions widely and aim to help the overall independent school community and beyond.

Think Tank Members

- Chair: Doug Bergman, Computer Science Department Chair, Porter-Gaud School (SC)
- J.D. DeVaughn-Brown, Computer Science teacher, Chadwick School (CA)
- Page Lennig, Director of Technology, Waynflete School (ME)
- Graig Marx, Science Department Chair, Winchester Thurston School (PA)