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City of El Paso, UTEP and El Paso ISD Share Early Results of El Paso Computes Initiative

More than 250 teachers and 150 students have received computer science, AI education

EL PASO, Texas (January 6, 2026)—*El Paso Computes*, a collaborative initiative focused on expanding computer science, artificial intelligence (AI) and computational thinking education across K-12 schools, is making impact in the region, according to a new report by the City of El Paso, The University of Texas at El Paso and the El Paso Independent School District (El Paso ISD).

El Paso Computes is supported by a \$3 million investment from the City of El Paso and is designed to build long-term educational capacity by preparing teachers, strengthening educator preparation programs and expanding hands-on learning opportunities for students, particularly in underserved communities.

“El Paso Computes is an investment in our young people and in El Paso’s economic future,” said Mayor Renard U. Johnson. “By training teachers to bring coding, AI and computational thinking into classrooms across the city, we are preparing students for the careers and industries we are working to grow here at home. It also reflects our broader commitment to expanding opportunity for youth and ensuring more students can participate in the technology-driven economy.”

“Computer Science is one of our fastest growing majors at UTEP. We attribute that growth to early work with the K-12 schools — exposing students to coding and computing,” said UTEP President Heather Wilson. “El Paso Computes builds on this and exposes even more young people to computing by reaching even more teachers. We are grateful to our partnership with the City to make that happen.”

“El Paso Computes strongly aligns with El Paso ISD’s commitment to deliver academic excellence and opportunities for our students,” said El Paso ISD Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Brian Lusk. “We’re seeing firsthand how this program is supporting both teachers and students, empowering educators with new tools and inspiring students to build confidence and curiosity in technology driven learning.”

Program Progress and Early Outcomes

Since launch, El Paso Computes has made steady progress toward its three-year goal of preparing 750 teachers and reaching more than 20,000 K-12 students across the region. Highlights to date include:

- **Teacher Training and Certification**

- More than 287 current K-12 teachers and teacher residents across participating districts have engaged in El Paso Computes professional development and coursework.
- 64 educators have completed formal course requirements.
- 10 or more teachers have earned certification in 8-12 Computer Science.
- Faculty-led workshops have covered computational thinking, AI literacy, coding fundamentals, prompt engineering and responsible classroom use of AI.

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- **Educator Preparation and Curriculum**
 - UTEP has launched TED 4550: Computational Thinking for Educators, a required course now fully embedded in its teacher preparation curriculum.
 - All future teachers graduating from UTEP's College of Education will receive foundational training in computational thinking and computer science concepts.
- **Student Learning Opportunities**
 - Summer cybersecurity and artificial intelligence camps have served more than 190 middle and high school students in 2025, providing hands-on exposure to technology skills aligned with high-demand careers.
- **Building Sustainable Capacity**
 - 37 UTEP and EPCC faculty members have completed specialized training to strengthen instruction for future educators, helping ensure long-term program sustainability.

Measuring Impact and Looking Ahead

An independent evaluation of El Paso Computes found statistically significant gains in participating teachers' computer science and AI knowledge and confidence and willingness to teach these subjects. Educators also reported increased comfort using AI tools responsibly to support instruction and student learning.

While El Paso ISD is serving as the pilot district, El Paso Computes is designed to expand participation across school districts throughout the region. The City of El Paso, UTEP and education partners will continue scaling teacher training, certification pathways and student programming over the next two years.

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About The University of Texas at El Paso

The University of Texas at El Paso is America's leading Hispanic-serving university. Located at the westernmost tip of Texas, where three states and two countries converge along the Rio Grande, 84% of our 26,000 students are Hispanic, and more than half are the first in their families to go to college. UTEP offers 171 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs at the only open-access, top-tier research university in America.

About the City of El Paso

The City of El Paso is the largest metro area along the Texas-Mexico border which boasts a best-in-class, business-friendly operating environment while also offering a great living experience. Our region represents one of the largest manufacturing centers in North America and is recognized as globally competitive. This is largely due to El Paso's unique quality of possessing the largest bilingual and bi-cultural workforce in the Western Hemisphere. Our area creates an intersection of possibilities for economic development. As the sixth-largest city in Texas, El Paso is a top 20% U.S. performing economy and continues to experience positive economic growth by attracting new businesses and helping existing companies to grow. The City of El Paso is a reflective and future-focused organization that aims to create new employment opportunities in 21st-century industries, maintain a great quality of life, and facilitate business growth at the local and international levels.