



# NEWS RELEASE

## Utah State Board of Education

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[www.schools.utah.gov](http://www.schools.utah.gov)

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### CyberStart America Competition Begins in Utah

SALT LAKE CITY – Governor Gary R. Herbert today announced the state’s participation in CyberStart America - an innovative, online cybersecurity talent search and competition sponsored by the National Cyber Scholarship Foundation and SANS Institute. Utah high school-aged students are encouraged to explore their aptitude for cybersecurity and computer science by participating in the program, and to win prizes and recognition for their schools, and scholarships for themselves.

The CyberStart America program is a series of 100% online challenges that allow students to act as cyber protection agents, solving cybersecurity-related puzzles and explore related topics such as code breaking, programming, networking, and digital forensics. The program can be assigned as part of homework, can form the basis of an extracurricular club, or students can just try it on their own.

Participating students and their teachers do not need knowledge or experience in information technology or cybersecurity to take part. Everything they need can be learned in the game. The program is free for schools and students, and all Utah students in grades 9-12 are invited to participate. Building on the success of last year’s Girls Go CyberStart program, this year CyberStart Game is open to all high school students, and anyone who reaches level 5 in Game will qualify for the national competition to

win scholarships. To encourage participation of young women and JROTC cadets, specific communities have been established for those groups, offering additional support and community-specific awards within the overall scholarship competition.

The National Cyber Scholarship Foundation anticipates awarding scholarships worth a total of \$2 million for use at any accredited college to 600 high-scoring students across the nation who participate in the competition in 2021, with students able to compete for state-specific and community-specific prizes as well as national championship status. There will also be incentives for Utah high schools to encourage more students to reach the qualifying level in CyberStart Game, including exclusive access to additional cybersecurity education resources and recognized cyber skills mastery badges for their students.

Complete details may be found at [www.cyberstartamerica.org](http://www.cyberstartamerica.org). High school students may register for the program beginning October 30, and may begin playing the CyberStart Game at 10 p.m. MST, November 15. They may continue playing, and invite their friends to join them, through February 28, 2021. Students will be informed that they qualify for the CyberStart National Scholarship Challenge Round (the “Nationals”) as soon as they have achieved sufficient progress, but they are allowed to continue playing and learning in order to build more skills that will be useful to them in the Nationals. To see the types of challenges students will face in the games, visit <https://go.cyberstart.com>.

In a pilot test of CyberStart America last school year, targeted to young women, 93 students from Utah high schools participated and 5 succeeded in reaching the national finals. With CyberStart America now open to boys as well as girls, Utah hopes to triple the number of students participating and reaching the scholarship round.

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