NATIONAL CYBERWATCH CENTER PARTNERS WITH MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO HOST COOL CAREERS IN CYBER SECURITY FOR GIRLS STATEWIDE

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COOL CAREERS IN CYBER SECURITY FOR GIRLS GOES STATEWIDE

The National CyberWatch Center is excited to partner with Cyber Development, Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development to expand the Cool Careers in Cyber Security for Girls Workshops to three additional locations in Maryland.

Despite the gains of the last twenty years in the representation of women in STEM fields, their numbers still lag behind their male counterparts. Researchers have found that until third grade an equal number of boys and girls show interest and feel confident in learning science and technology. However, these numbers continuously decrease for girls throughout middle school and into high school. Various explanations for the significant decrease in girls' interest in science and technology through their school years have been posed.

The **Cool Careers in Cyber Security for Girls Workshop** sponsored by the National CyberWatch Center draws on research that that indicates recruiting and retaining girls to the science and technology fields should include targeted programs to educate women and minorities about STEM career choices.

Many women and minorities have had limited exposure to computing in grade school and high school, especially if they come from lower-income households and communities. A new National Research Council report indicates that general IT Fluency skills and concepts will also be needed by all citizens if they are to be competitive in the modern world. Enrichment programs should emphasize team projects and diverse real-world examples of technology applied in content areas and curricular material should address major societal and/or environmental problems. Mentoring and role models in the career choices has also shown success in recruitment and retention.

Through the National Science Foundation, the National CyberWatch Center K-12 Division has offered an *Annual Careers in Cyber Security for Girls Workshop since 2005*. Girls are presented a cyber crime scenario, and the elite all girl CSI teams use a variety of clues to solve it, while also learning about the plethora of career options in Cyber Security from women in business and government throughout the state. The event is held during the weekday to allow students who would otherwise not have the chance to attend such an event. Schools must be able to pick up and drop off students at their home school location during regular school hours. Therefore, the

radius of attendance for schools is limited to 60 miles of the event. This has limited the number of counties that have participated in the past. A mechanism to offer similar events in other Maryland locations, specifically, western, southern and the eastern shore, will help cover additional students throughout the state.

The event has grown from 30 students in a classroom setting to over 300 in 2013.

For more information on the Annual Cool Careers Event visit
http://www.edtechpolicy.org/cyberk12/c3workforcecareers.html or contact Dr. Davina Pruitt-Mentle at dpruitt@edtechpolicy.org .