

## New Federal Law Means Computer Science Is Officially Part of STEM

By Jackie Zubrzycki on October 9, 2015 5:09 PM

The [STEM Education Act of 2015](#), which expands the definition of STEM—an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—to include computer science programs, was signed into law yesterday.

The bill that became the STEM Education Act was introduced in the House of Representatives by Lamar Smith, a Republican from Texas, and Elizabeth Esty, a Democrat from Connecticut, both members of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

The new law does not add funding, but it does expand the kinds of STEM programs that can be run and funded by federal government agencies to include computer science.

It also makes people who are pursuing a master's degree and those with a background in computer science eligible for [Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarships](#), which support science and math graduates and professionals who hope to teach.

The STEM Education Act of 2015 also instructs the National Science Foundation to continue to fund out-of-school and informal education programs in STEM subjects. That's a boon for museums, nature centers, and other organizations that offer informal science programming.

As we've reported, something about the acronym STEM seems to invite additions: Advocates and educators have added everything from [art](#) to religion to reading to create STEAM and STREAM schools. But this addition has implications for which programs can be funded and who can apply for STEM programs WITHOUT adding a letter to the acronym. (I guess STECSM doesn't have much of a ring to it.)

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