

For Immediate Release
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Survey Shows AFA's CyberPatriot Having Big STEM Impact

Survey highlights success of CyberPatriot in attracting students to STEM and cybersecurity careers

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Air Force Association's CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Education Program today announced the [results](#) of its survey of middle and high school students, assessing their growth in cybersecurity knowledge and career interest through participation in the program. Results indicated that after participating in the CyberPatriot program, the majority of students felt more confident in their knowledge of cybersecurity principles and more inclined to pursue STEM and cybersecurity careers.

The poll, conducted by the CyberPatriot Program Office, included responses from 641 students who competed in the 2013-2014 season of the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition. Results were paired with students' answers to the same questions assessing knowledge and perceptions prior to the season's start.

CyberPatriot's annual competition aims to motivate the next generation of cyber defenders by increasing awareness of and practical techniques for protection of personal information in today's cyber-enabled society.

Before the competition, only 14 percent of the participants surveyed answered that they possessed "a lot of knowledge" or "an advanced understanding" of basic cybersecurity principles. After the competition, students assessed their knowledge far stronger, with that number jumping to 70 percent.

Students assessed their knowledge of cybersecurity career opportunities as markedly improved by their CyberPatriot experience. While 85 percent of respondents said their pre-CyberPatriot understanding represented "no knowledge" or "very little knowledge" of the career opportunities, post-CyberPatriot numbers skewed in a favorable direction, with 94 percent believing they now had "some," "a lot," or "strong" understanding of career options.

Additionally, the "very unlikely" characterization to pursue a STEM education or career dropped from 12 percent pre-competition to just 1 percent after the competition. The increase of "very likely" responses went from 41 percent to 60 percent.

"CyberPatriot is addressing the STEM education challenge our nation faces – and using a fun and engaging competition to draw more young students to pursue STEM education and vital STEM careers," said Bernie Skoch, CyberPatriot National Commissioner. "It is gratifying to see that this survey validates our innovative approach in changing perceptions about the outstanding STEM and cyber opportunities that exist."

The survey also illustrated an increase in positive perception of how welcoming cybersecurity is to women. Complete results are available at www.uscyberpatriot.org or from the CyberPatriot Program Office at info@uscyberpatriot.org.

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- ADVOCATE for aerospace power and STEM education.
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