

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Inland Empire Mayors Cyber Cup Crowns 2026 Champions and Launches Year-Round Cybersecurity Pathway for Regional Students

538 students. 53 teams. 7,861 challenges solved. The marquee event of a continuous, year-long pipeline now connecting Inland Empire students directly to the region's top cybersecurity employers.

INLAND EMPIRE, CA. April 27, 2026. The 8th annual Inland Empire Mayors Cyber Cup, hosted by the Inland Economic Growth & Opportunity Collaborative (IEGO), wrapped today with a region-wide awards ceremony marking the start of something bigger: a year-round cybersecurity pathway for Inland Empire students and educators. Curriculum, practice platforms, mentorship, and direct exposure to regional employers now run continuously from September through May, with the Mayors Cup as the marquee event in a yearlong cycle of skill-building.

This year's competition drew **538 students across 53 teams, supported by 35 coaches**. Together they logged **7,861 cybersecurity challenges** on the program's training platform, including more than **4,000 solved outside the school day**. And **67% of all participants were brand new to cybersecurity**.

"This isn't just an event anymore. It's an ecosystem, designed to continuously build skills, confidence, and connections to real opportunity. Talent is everywhere. Opportunity should be too."

Reg Javier, Interim CEO, IEGO

A Year-Round Pathway

Educators and students now have continuous access to **MetaCTF training, learning labs, and curriculum-aligned resources** throughout the entire school year, with on-ramps to nationally recognized competitions, including Hack The Box and CyberPatriot. The shift is backed by infrastructure: in November 2025, IEGO launched the **Inland Empire Cybersecurity Awareness Fund** in partnership with the Inland Empire Community Foundation to sustain training, expand awareness across schools and small businesses, and give the broader community a direct way to invest in the regional talent pipeline.

Meeting the Region's Future Employers

Before the trophies were awarded, students sat in on a fireside chat with three of the Inland Empire's most senior cybersecurity decision-makers, the people who will be reviewing their résumés in three to five years: **Kenneth Buerchele**, VP and CIO of Eisenhower Health; **Patrick Voon**, CISO of Loma Linda University Health; and **Gabriel Sirlopu**, Professor of Computer Information Systems at Chaffey College, U.S. Air Force veteran, and founder of TechCatalyst. Hosted by Michael Contreras, the panel pulled directly from the realities of regional defense work.

"Cybersecurity is not just for tech people. It's not about being technical; it's about being curious and having that critical thinking, that analytical mentality."

Gabriel Sirlopu, Chaffey College and TechCatalyst

"I am an educator, and I'm a lifelong learner. I never stop learning, and you have to. Otherwise, you're going to be left behind."

Patrick Voon, CISO, Loma Linda University Health

"Eisenhower receives millions of emails a month from outside the organization. Ninety-six percent of everything that comes in the door is a threat in one way or another. The students competing today are the ones we'll need on the wall tomorrow."

Kenneth Buerchele, VP and CIO, Eisenhower Health

2026 Champions

- **High School (1st):** The Final Christian Meglio, **Great Oak High School (Temecula)**, back-to-back champions; perpetual trophy returns to the City of Temecula. **2nd:** DogBytes (Oak Hills HS); **3rd:** Team 2 (Chaparral HS).
- **Middle School (1st):** LMS GoldenKnights (Landmark MS); **2nd:** Cyber Pumas 2 (Palm MS); **3rd:** BVMS Cyber Matrix (Bella Vista MS).
- **College (1st):** Chaffey Computers (Chaffey College); **2nd:** SBVC (San Bernardino Valley College); **3rd:** RCC TechnoNecromancers (Riverside City College).
- **Best New Teams:** Chaffey College Cybercats (College), BVMS 127.0.0.1 boys (Middle School), TC CyberStorm (High School).
- **Cyber Champion Award:** Vertical IT Solutions (accepted by CEO Kody Bakos). **Cyber Aware Company of the Year:** TechCatalyst (accepted by Gabriel Sirlopu).

Get Involved

Every competitor receives the 2026 Mayors Cup Challenge Coin. Learning labs remain open through the end of May. Businesses, civic leaders, and community members who want to support the next cohort can contribute to the Inland Empire Cybersecurity Awareness Fund, sponsor a school, or host a student through work-based learning. *Talent is everywhere. With this program, opportunity is too.*

About the Inland Empire Mayors Cyber Cup

The Mayors Cyber Cup is a regional cybersecurity competition and year-round talent development program produced by the Inland Economic Growth & Opportunity Collaborative (IEGO) in partnership with synED, regional community colleges, K–12 districts, chambers of commerce, and industry leaders across the Inland Empire. The program aligns with the California Department of Education's vision to expand computer science access in every classroom.

Website: <https://iemayourscup.com>

Fund: https://inlandempire.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/list/event?event_date_id=2848
















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2026 INLAND EMPIRE MAYORS CYBER CUP

SECURE OUR FUTURE
POWERED BY IEGO

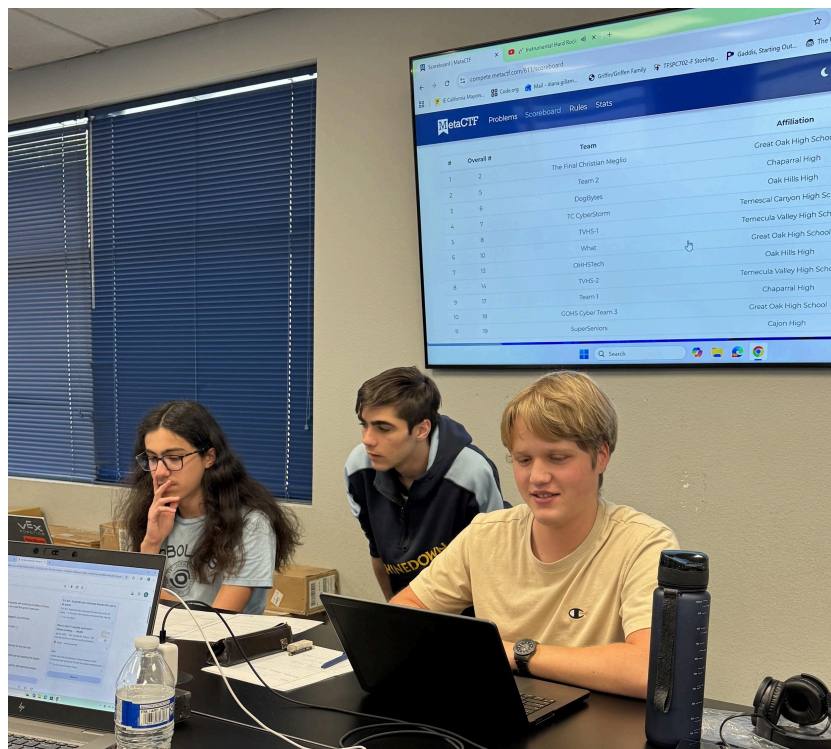
DIVISION	1ST PLACE	2ND PLACE	3RD PLACE	BEST NEW TEAM
 COLLEGE	 Chaffey Computers Chaffey College	 SBVC San Bernardino Valley College	 RCC TechnoNecromancers Riverside City College	 Chaffey College Chaffey Cybercats
 HIGH SCHOOL	 The Final Christian Meglio Great Oak High School	 DogBytes Oak Hills High School	 Team 2 Chaparral High School	 TC CyberStorm Temescal Canyon High School
 MIDDLE SCHOOL	 LMS GoldenKnights Landmark Middle School	 Cyber Pumas 2 Palm Middle School	 BVMS Cyber Matrix Bella Vista Middle School	 BVMS 127.0.0.1 Boys Bella Vista Middle School



MAYORS CUP TROPHY WINNER!



CITY OF WINNING TEAM: TEMECULA

Temescal Canyon High School - Lake Elsinore, CA

Coach: Diana Gillam

Team Name: TC CyberStorm

Competitors (left to right): Hunter Ishisaka, Calvin Burdick, and Fabian Schuler