



May 11, 2023

To: Members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Re: HB 33 State Operating Budget for FY 24 & 25

Dear Members of the Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

I am writing today as a father, technology business owner, and engaged citizen in the State of Ohio, to express my strong support for the expansion of computer science education in Ohio's K-12 curriculum and to implore you to restore computer science funding in the state operating budget at \$24 million over the biennium.

The job statistics in the computer science field are compelling. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment in computer and information technology occupations will grow by 11% from 2021 to 2031, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. In addition, these jobs typically offer high salaries and career growth opportunities.

Computer science is more than just coding. It encompasses problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. Students who study computer science are not only learning how to program, but they are also developing skills that can be applied to a wide range of careers, including healthcare, finance, and engineering.

Furthermore, computer science education is essential for fostering innovation and economic growth. Companies and industries need skilled individuals who can develop new technologies and drive progress forward. By ensuring that our students are equipped with the necessary skills, Ohio can remain competitive and continue to attract businesses and investment.

I started my career in the technology industry almost 30 years ago, working via a high school internship program for Intel Corporation in Hillsboro, Oregon. After high school, I attended college briefly in Virginia before diving headfirst into adult life and the emerging technology industry. As fate would have it, that dive landed me in Columbus, Ohio- a place more commonly known to me as "somewhere between here and Chicago."

Over the last 20 years I have made Columbus my home, building multiple technology businesses and leading engineering teams on highly technical projects. Along the way I have forged partnerships with students and faculty at places like The Ohio State University and Dublin City Schools' Emerald Campus. These partnerships have created a pipeline for talent and allowed me to reimagine the way I hire, train, and build teams to support the technical needs of my businesses.

Last summer, at OSA Technology Partners (a block away from the Ohio Statehouse) we hosted 6 high school students for a 9-week technical training and certification prep program. This program was in partnership with Governor Dewine's Office of Workforce Transformation, High School Tech Internship Program, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio.

This summer, 4 engineering student interns from The Ohio State University are working alongside the core OSA team. Without a doubt, the students who have encountered computer science at an early age hold a competitive advantage over the students who have not.



I find it both inspiring and ironic that as I write this letter, that same company that gave me my first start in technology, is now making the largest single private-sector investment in Ohio history.

Inspiring because of the proximity we all have to such a vital component of future prosperity in Ohio (and across the United States.) Ironic because as the momentum is building all around us, towards more investment in computer science, this committee is considering a significant reduction in that very same thing.

Investing in computer science education is not just a smart decision for our students, but it is also a sound investment in the future of our state's economy. As Ohio strives to compete in the global market, we must prioritize the development of our young people and equip them with the skills necessary to succeed in the digital age.

I urge the Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee to support the expansion of computer science education in Ohio's K-12 curriculum.

Sincerely,

Dustin Leggans

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dustin Leggans".

Founder & CEO, OSA Technology Partners
Chairman, OhioX CEO Council - Columbus

P.S. Paragraphs #2-4 above provided courtesy of ChatGPT. The statistic is real.