

May 9, 2023

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee.

Thank you for the time to share written proponent testimony on House Bill 33 in support of the computer science budget language and funding.

I want to first start by expressing my gratitude to the 134th General Assembly for their foresight in creating a state plan for Computer Science education as a part of the last biennium budget. As the facilitator of the state committee to create that statewide plan, I had the privilege of working with 26 members from across industry, higher education, K-12 educators, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. We met regularly for almost a year to put together the state plan released in the fall of 2022.

One of the key figures that stands out to me from our committee's work comes from JobsOhio: Ohio employer demand for CS talent is nearly 4.8 times the current supply in Ohio. JobsOhio estimates this gap will widen by approximately 11,000 jobs each year over the next decade.

With the robust work of the state CS committee in mind, I urge you to support the computer science education amendments. We are requesting to restore computer science funding in the state operating budget to fund the Teach Computer Science Grants, the Computer Science Promise and the Computer Science Council.

According to the [2022 State of Computer Science](#) report for Ohio, in the 2020-2021 school year, only 48% of Ohio high schools offered a foundational Computer Science course. When we look at that number broken down by geography, we see that 57% of our suburban schools and 55% of our rural schools offer a foundational computer science course. Not great. Yet the picture is even more alarming when we see that only 22% of our schools in urban regions are offering a foundational computer science course.

The lack of Computer Science education is an issue of national security. To protect our communities, industries, and governments from cybersecurity threats requires an educated populace. Our education system must prepare all students with foundational computer science skills.

The Teach Computer Science Grants will upskill current teachers and provide professional development so that they may teach Computer Science. Funding these grants directly to practitioners will get more teachers in the field teaching computer science and will prioritize school districts that are underserved or do not have a computer science course.

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We need more teachers who are prepared to teach Computer Science. There is a clear shortage of qualified Computer Science teachers in Ohio. This workforce bottleneck makes it even more difficult for our schools to offer computer science.

Funding alone does not solve the problem. We also are asking for an amendment to extend the waiver on CS licensure until 2025, allowing teachers who hold a teaching license to teach Computer Science if the school determines they have appropriate content knowledge. This will allow teachers to start and continue teaching Computer Science (with appropriate professional learning) while Ohio creates new Computer Science teacher licensure bands. This recommendation was included in the licensure recommendations as written in the state plan by the state CS committee.

While we work to upskill teachers in schools across Ohio, funding the Computer Science Promise gives students the opportunity to take computer sciences courses if their school district does not offer them at no cost to the student. The funding will help schools cover the costs of outside computer science courses.

Finally, funding the Computer Science Council will support computer science in afterschool programs, summer camps, and educational enrichment partnerships in all 88 counties.

Putting these recommendations from the state plan into action is a huge step forward to ensuring Ohio is prepared to meet the needs of our future workforce and keep our assets safe.

Thank you for your time and support of Computer Science education and please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,



Kelly Gaier Evans
Director, Ohio STEM Learning Network