

**House Education Committee
Interested Party Testimony on HB 96
Code.org
February 26, 2025**

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of the Ohio Computer Science Advocacy Coalition's budget priorities: 1) adopting a computer science graduation requirement, 2) appropriating \$500k for the CS District Playbook, and 3) adding an extension of the computer science teacher licensure waiver to the budget. I will be focusing my testimony on the computer science graduation requirement, which was a consensus recommendation of the State Committee on Computer Science in 2022. My name is Julia Wynn, and I'm the Director of State Government Affairs for Code.org, a national nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to computer science education for every student in every state.

Technology and computing touches every aspect of our lives. In our world, learning about the Internet, algorithms, data analysis, and computational thinking is just as important as civics or algebra. But so far, our K-12 curriculum includes no foundational knowledge about these concepts. This is a serious gap - a gap of skills that are only becoming more relevant, not less, and are key to ensuring Ohio continues to be a target for innovation and investment. We must update graduation requirements to reflect the knowledge required to be responsible consumers and contributors in our tech-driven world. We must require students to learn computer science.

Ohio's workforce is urgently demanding these skills. Over 140 Ohio CEOs have [signed a letter](#) urging policymakers to prioritize computer science, citing its critical value in modern industries. The CEOs note that the prevalence of AI in the workforce makes learning computer science even more relevant than ever before. Over a quarter of jobs now require "highly digital" skills and [two-thirds of the 15 fastest growing jobs](#) are computer science or AI related. This subject is essential for career-readiness in an AI-driven economy.

But computer science is good for students too. [Studies have shown](#) that students who take computer science perform better on math and reading assessments, excel at problem solving, and are more likely to enroll in higher education. [Initial research](#) also shows being exposed to high quality computer science raises students' earnings and likelihood of being employed at 24.

Eleven states, including Ohio's neighbor Indiana, have realized these benefits and enacted computer science requirements. Ten more have filed legislation to do so this

session. In states with requirements, the percentage of female students in computer science skyrockets - a percentage that is otherwise dishearteningly low. For example, South Carolina's requirement resulted in more female students taking computer science in the first year than in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee combined. Black and Hispanic students are also often underrepresented in these courses. A graduation requirement continues to be the only policy that actually makes a difference in closing these gaps.

The proposed amendment - which will also be introduced as a standalone bill in both chambers next week - requires one unit of computer science, taken in any of grades 8-12, starting with the 2032 graduating seniors. There is significant flexibility built into the policy, which enables schools to implement the requirement with fidelity, including:

- a seven-year runway that allows plenty of planning time for schools
- allowing the course to be taken as a math, science, foreign language or elective, maximizing schedule flexibility and fitting it into existing requirements as much as possible
- allowing schools to offer computer science virtually if needed, or through a partnership with an ESC, and
- allowing CCP courses and programs provided by community colleges to count towards the requirement.

Ohio has 61% of high schools already offering computer science, and states with lower percentages have passed graduation requirements and were able to obtain sufficient teacher capacity to implement them. Nevada had only 57% of schools offering the subject when its requirement was passed, and within two years, it had 83% of schools offering the course. A similar two-year increase of 23% was seen in South Carolina. The [2022 Report of the State Committee on Computer Science](#) also pointed out that “...the most challenging barriers for CS expansion, including the shortage of teachers, may be impossible to remedy without a graduation requirement, as high schools hiring practices tend to closely follow state requirements.”

Computer science opens doors of opportunity for students. Passing this policy will not only ensure Ohio remains economically competitive, but will ensure every Ohio student - regardless of background - gains the digital skills necessary to be prepared for success. Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions.