

March 11, 2025

Dear Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee:

Thank you for accepting testimony on HB 96.

My name is Kelly Gaier Evans, and I am here today both on behalf of the Ohio STEM Learning Network and Battelle Education, as well as on behalf of the Computer Science Education Advocacy Coalition, which includes a diverse group of organizations dedicated to policy solutions that expand computer science learning opportunities for all Ohio students.

Members of the coalition include Battelle, the Ohio STEM Learning Network, Code.org, CSTA Ohio, Montgomery County ESC, OhioX, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, College Board, PLTW; Cleveland State University, Sherwin-Williams, Microsoft and more.

I am writing to express our strong support for the Governor's proposed continuation of \$4 million annually under the Ohio Department of Higher Education's budget for the Teach Computer Science Program. In today's increasingly competitive global economy, computing skills have become essential across all industries. To maintain America's technological leadership and ensure Ohio students are prepared for high-wage, high-demand careers right here at home, we must equip them with these critical skills.

In addition to supporting the Teach Computer Science Program, we respectfully urge you to consider the following amendments to strengthen Ohio's computer science education and economic competitiveness:

- Extend the computer science teacher licensure waiver through 2032 to address the current shortage of qualified teachers (HC\_136\_0488).
- Enact a computer science graduation requirement to ensure every Ohio student has the fundamental computing skills employers need (HC\_136\_0489).
- Fund a Computer Science District Playbook to provide districts with a practical, cost-effective framework for implementing computer science curricula (HC\_136\_0490).

As a representative of the Computer Science Advocacy coalition, I'd like to focus on the critical need for the Computer Science District Playbook and the need to extend the computer science teacher licensure waiver.

Even as we work to ensure our teachers have the knowledge to expand computer science education, many school districts lack the practical tools and roadmaps to efficiently implement these programs. This creates unnecessary costs, delays, and inconsistent outcomes.

A public-private partnership of:



Having worked in computer science education for over a decade, I've seen firsthand that successful implementation requires addressing systems-level challenges. School leaders consistently tell us that competing priorities and limited resources make it difficult to launch effective computer science programs, despite strong interest from parents, students, and local employers.

The Computer Science District Playbook would provide a fiscally responsible solution to these challenges. The proposal would select a diverse set of school districts representing rural, urban, and suburban communities across Ohio. This approach recognizes that one-size-fits-all mandates don't work - local districts need customizable implementation strategies that respect their unique circumstances and resources.

These selected districts would collaborate to develop practical, field-tested approaches to expanding computer science access. The resulting playbook would provide all Ohio districts with:

- Ready-to-implement course progressions with corresponding course codes (in EMIS)
- Efficient staffing and scheduling practices to maximize existing resources
- Straightforward guidance on necessary technical assets and software
- Cost-effective professional development strategies
- Clear pathways aligned with workforce needs and local industry
- Implementation guidance for the Computer Science Promise program

This approach leverages local innovation rather than top-down mandates, creating a comprehensive, Ohio-specific guidebook available to all districts by June 30, 2027.

We are also asking for an amendment to extend the computer science teacher licensure waiver until 2032. We are asking for this extension for two reasons. One, it allows 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 they work towards their CS licensure. Second, extending through 2032, provides school districts with stability as they create system wide plans to upskill teaching staff.

By supporting these amendments, you'll help ensure that Ohio students in every community - from our smallest rural towns to our largest cities - have access to the skills they need for high-paying jobs, while providing Ohio businesses with the skilled workforce they need to compete and grow.

Thank you for your commitment to Ohio's students and economic future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Gaier Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Gaier Evans

Kelly Gaier Evans  
Director, Ohio STEM Learning Network