

Ohio Computer Science Advocacy Coalition

Senate Higher Education Committee

May 15, 2025

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HB 96 - Proponent

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

My name is Julia Wynn and I'm the Director of State Government Affairs at Code.org, a national nonprofit focused on expanding access to computer science and AI education. Today I am speaking on behalf of the Ohio Computer Science Advocacy Coalition, a diverse group of organizations representing industry, K-12 education, higher education, and the nonprofit sector that recognizes the value of computer science both for Ohio students and the state's economy.

We strongly urge you to maintain the Governor's and House's proposed \$4 million annually for the Teach CS Program, which supports efforts to increase the number of teachers teaching computer science, and expand existing teachers' knowledge.

Computer science helps prepare our students for success, fill in-demand jobs, and position Ohio as a leader on career-aligned education. In our digital world, understanding concepts like the Internet, data analysis, algorithms, and AI will be just as important for students as learning civics or algebra. Computing jobs are growing at a rate of 10x other jobs, and these jobs are in every industry - manufacturing, agriculture, finance and more. In conversations with ODHE, JobsOhio has identified increasing computer science talent production as a top priority. Further, in conversations around workforce supply and demand specific to Ohio, computer science has again emerged as a top priority. But not only is computer science relevant for career-readiness, it teaches students critical thinking and creative problem-solving, which will help them navigate any challenge they encounter.

Although increasingly critical, computer science is still a newer subject that continues to require state support. Many schools need an incentive to prioritize this over other required subjects. With [61% of high schools](#) currently offering the subject, Ohio trails almost all its neighboring states, including West Virginia (78%), Indiana (91%), Kentucky (76%) and Pennsylvania (75%). Rural and small schools struggle the most to offer computer science. While 98% of large high schools offer computer science, only 47% of small schools and 56% of rural schools do. These schools often don't have the resources to allocate to teachers to add new endorsements, despite how important it is that more students access these in-demand skills. Although we can't pay teachers more for certain subjects in high demand, we can as a state incentivize teachers to become qualified in computer science by supporting training and certification costs.

Under the last budget's appropriation, Teach CS reached hundreds of teachers in its first year, with more expected to be impacted as reporting continues. But as you can see from the statistics, the work is not done. The state has an interest in investing in computer science teacher capacity because the more students that can graduate with computer science skills, the more economically competitive Ohio becomes and the stronger our 21st century workforce pipeline is. Computer science is an issue of regional competitiveness with almost all of our neighboring states funding computer science and 35 states nationally doing so. The \$8 million appropriated for this program is a critical downpayment in Ohio's future. Until Ohio's access to the subject has

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caught up with peers and is no longer uneven across the state, it's in Ohio's best economic interests to continue to fund computer science. Thank you for your consideration.

Computer Science Advocacy Coalition Members

