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Bill Analysis

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SUMMARY

Computer science as a graduation requirement

- Generally requires each student that first enters 9th grade on or after July 1, 2029, to complete one-half unit of instruction in computer science to graduate.
- Makes a one-half unit computer science course count as one-half of an elective unit under the high school graduation requirements.
- Permits a student to substitute a full-unit computer science course for certain other courses and requires the Department of Education and Workforce to develop guidance for those substitutions.
- Requires the Department to adopt a list of computer science courses that can be used to satisfy the graduation requirement by July 1, 2027.

Computer science as a course offering

- Beginning with the 2028-2029 school year, requires school districts, community schools, STEM schools, and college-preparatory boarding schools to offer at least one-half unit of computer science in each high school building.
- Requires that each computer science course be of "high quality" and meet or exceed state curriculum requirements and standards.
- Prohibits a prerequisite requirement as a condition of enrolling in a computer science course.
- Requires that each computer science course be offered in an in-person classroom setting, except for courses offered by online high schools, but establishes a method by which a district or school may request to temporarily offer a virtual or distance course if unable to offer in person due to lack of capacity or resources.

Annual report on computer science education in the state

- Requires the Department to publish an annual report on computer science education in the state.

Miscellaneous related provisions

- Permits a student to participate in the Ohio Computer Science Promise Program if the student wishes to take additional computer science courses beyond those offered through the student's resident district or school.
- Requires Computer Science Promise Program providers to submit the number of content hours and topics addressed in each of their programs or courses to the Department.
- Permits a public school to partner with a community college to establish a program, such as the Ohio Code-Scholar Pilot Program, under which the college offers computer science courses to the school's students.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Summary

The bill requires (1) high school students to complete one-half unit of computer science instruction and (2) all public high schools to offer one-half unit of computer science instruction. Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce to publish an annual report on computer science education. Finally, the bill addresses the Computer Science Promise Program and permits community colleges to partner with public schools to satisfy both the offering and graduation requirements established by the bill.

Computer science as a graduation requirement

The bill requires any public or chartered nonpublic school student who enters 9th grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2029, to complete one-half unit of computer science instruction, taken in any of grades 8-12. It must include instruction in evolving areas of computer science, such as artificial intelligence, including an understanding of what it is, how it works, and its impact on society. For each student who completes one-half unit of computer science, that one-half unit must count as one half of an elective unit. If a student elects to complete a full unit of instruction in computer science, the unit must count as one of the following:[1]

1. One science unit, except that only a unit of advanced computer science may be used as a substitute for an advanced science that is not biology or life science;
2. One elective unit;

[1] Under current law, computer science is not considered a core subject. Rather, it is an elective and may be used to satisfy only one Algebra II/Math III or equivalent, or an advanced science credit. A computer science course cannot satisfy any of the physical science or life science requirements.

3. If the unit is advanced computer science, one unit of math in lieu of algebra II, math 3, or the equivalent; or
4. One unit of foreign language.[2]

Exemptions

The bill specifically exempts from the computer science requirement any student who was enrolled in high school in a state without a computer science requirement who transfers to an Ohio high school as a senior.

The bill also permits a public or chartered nonpublic school to exempt a student who demonstrates competency in computer science and artificial intelligence by completing 75 cumulative hours of structured content in computer science and artificial intelligence instruction offered by a provider approved under the Ohio Computer Science Promise Program, so long as that instruction includes at least 20 hours of programming content and the remaining hours on at least two of the following topics:

1. Artificial intelligence;
2. Networks and the internet;
3. Data and analysis;
4. Computing systems; and
5. Impacts of computing.

Finally, the bill permits the Department to exempt a student if the student demonstrates competency by doing either of the following:

1. Receiving a score of three or higher on an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam in computer science; or
2. Completing 75 cumulative hours of structured content in computer science and artificial intelligence instruction that meets the same specifications that would qualify a student for an exemption by a school, except that the instruction is not offered by an approved provider under the Computer Science Promise Program.[3]

Guidance for course substitutions

The bill requires the Department to develop and publish guidance for high schools to use regarding the use of computer science courses in lieu of a unit of science or a unit of foreign language.[4]

List of satisfactory courses

Not later than July 1, 2027, the bill requires the Department to adopt a list of courses, including College Credit Plus courses, a student may take to satisfy the computer science

[2] R.C. 3313.603(C)(10)(a).

[3] R.C. 3313.603(C)(10)(c) and (d).

[4] R.C. 3313.603(C)(10)(a).

requirement. In so doing, it must use the recommendations of the State Committee on Computer Science as guidance. The list must include only courses that satisfy the bill's requirements, including that the course must meet or exceed the Department's standards and curriculum for instruction in computer science. For each approved course, the Department must include the course name, description, and corresponding course code.

The Department must make the list available on its publicly accessible website and update the list on a regular basis to respond to educational and industry trends.[5]

Computer science as a course offering

Beginning with the 2028-2029 school year, the bill requires school districts and other public schools (community schools, STEM schools, and college-preparatory boarding schools) to offer at least one-half unit of computer science instruction in each school building that enrolls students in any of grades 9-12.[6] Each computer science course must (1) be of "high quality" as determined by the Department and (2) meet or exceed the Department's standards and curriculum for instruction in computer science.[7]

Course catalogs and parental notice

Each district or school must list the course as an option in the school's course catalog. Those offering computer science courses for the first time must proactively notify parents of the new course offering.[8]

No prerequisites

The bill prohibits the Department, a school district, or a school from requiring a student to complete a prerequisite prior to enrolling in a computer science course.[9]

In-person setting and action plan

The bill requires courses to be offered in an in-person traditional classroom setting, unless the school is an online high school, but provides a method by which a district or school that is unable to do so may offer a virtual or distance course. A district or school that is not an online high school and which makes every effort to offer an in-person course but is unable to obtain the teacher capacity or resources to do so effectively, may offer a virtual or distance course option by submitting an alternate plan (or action plan) for approval to the Department.[10]

The bill requires any district or school that is unable to offer an in-person course by the 2028-2029 school year to submit an action plan to the Department explaining why it was not possible to offer an in-person course and detailing how it plans to meet the bill's requirements.

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[5] R.C. 3313.603(C)(10)(b).

[6] R.C. 3314.6034(B), 3314.03, 3326.15, and 3328.22.

[7] R.C. 3313.6034(E).

[8] R.C. 3313.6034(C).

[9] R.C. 3313.6034(I).

[10] R.C. 3313.6034(C).

The action plan may include offering a virtual course either through the district or school or through a regional partnership such as through an educational service center. A school that submits a plan to offer only a virtual course must describe why it was not feasible to offer the course in person and include a timeline in which the district or school will begin offering the course in person. The plan must address how the school will adjust planning or resources to successfully comply with the bill's requirements.

Plans must be submitted to the Department not later than June 30, 2028, and June 30 of each year thereafter that a plan is necessary. The bill requires the Department to review the plan and either approve it or request additional changes.[11]

Annual computer science report

Beginning July 1, 2028, the bill requires the Department to publish an annual report on computer science education in the state for the prior academic year. The report must contain, at least the following information:

1. The names and course codes of computer science courses offered in each school, including course description, whether the course is a one-half unit or one-unit course, and whether the course is offered in person or virtually;
2. The number and percentage of students who enrolled in each computer science course, disaggregated by gender, race and ethnicity, special education status, English learner status, free and reduced-price meals eligibility, grade level (except where a category contains fewer than ten students);
3. The number of computer science course instructors at each school, disaggregated by certification or license as applicable, gender, race and ethnicity, and highest academic degree completed, if available;
4. Whether each course is offered in an in-person traditional classroom setting or by a virtual or distance course option.

The report must also provide the number of online and in-person computer science offerings and any identified correlation between course format and student participation in courses. Not later than June 30 of each school year, the Department must post this data on a publicly accessible dashboard, disaggregated by school and aggregated at the state level.[12]

Other provisions

Computer Science Promise Program

The bill permits a student to participate in the Computer Science Promise Program if the student wishes to take additional computer science courses beyond those offered through the student's resident district or school.[13]

[11] R.C. 3313.6034(D).

[12] R.C. 3313.6034(F) and (G).

[13] R.C. 3313.6034(H).

The bill requires providers under the program to submit the number of content hours and topics addressed in each of their programs or courses to the Department.[14]

Community college partnership

The bill permits a public school to satisfy the offering requirement (and students to satisfy the graduation requirement) by partnering with a community college to establish a program offering at least one semester of in-person computer science content to the school's students. The bill provides that the Ohio Code-Scholar Pilot Program qualifies as such.

Instruction offered under this type of program serves to satisfy the public school's requirement to offer a computer science course, if the instruction is provided on site at the public school, is available to all students, and meets or exceeds state computer science standards. Likewise, the program may be used by a student to satisfy the computer science graduation requirement, provided the instruction meets or exceeds state computer science standards. To use the program to satisfy the graduation requirement, the public school must annually certify to the Department that the instruction meets the bill's requirements.[15]

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	11-12-25
Reported, S. Education	06-10-26
Passed Senate (33-0)	06-10-26

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[14] R.C. 3322.20.

[15] R.C. 3313.6035.