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S.B. 326
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Passed by the Senate

Primary Sponsors: Sens. Cirino and Ingram

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

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Highlights

- School districts and other public schools may incur significant costs to hire new teachers or contract with community colleges to meet the bill's requirement to offer one-half unit of computer science (CS) to high school students. These costs may begin in FY 2029 and will progressively increase before plateauing in FY 2033. Ultimately, new staffing costs may total in the tens of millions of dollars or more statewide, but will depend highly on how districts and schools implement the requirement.
- Districts and schools may also incur additional costs for curriculum and learning materials. These costs will depend on existing CS course offerings and other factors.
- Community colleges that partner with a school district to create a program that offers CS education to high school students may incur costs to do so. Similarly, expenditures may increase for Ohio CS Promise Program providers who are public entities if student participation in the program increases. Presumably, these costs will be offset by payments from districts and schools.
- The Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) may incur minimal costs to comply with various administrative responsibilities the bill requires.

Detailed Analysis

Bill overview

To receive a high school diploma from a public or chartered nonpublic school, a student must complete a minimum of 20 units of study in specific subject areas (one unit generally equates to a minimum of 120 hours of instruction), among other requirements. School districts are not required to offer computer science (CS) courses, but current law permits students to use

certain CS courses to satisfy curriculum requirements for graduation. Students may use one unit of advanced CS in lieu of algebra II or one unit of advanced CS to meet the requirement for one unit of advanced science. Students can also take CS courses as part of the five units of required electives.

The bill requires public and chartered nonpublic school students who enter grade 9 on or after July 1, 2029 (the class of 2033), to complete one-half unit of instruction in CS to graduate. The bill does not increase the overall minimum 20 units required but rather requires students to complete the CS one-half unit as one-half of an elective unit. If a student elects to complete a full unit of CS courses, the instruction will count as one of the following: (1) one science unit, (2) one elective unit, (3) one unit of math in lieu of algebra II, math 3, or the equivalent if the course is an advanced CS course, or (4) one unit of foreign language. The bill allows the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) and public and chartered nonpublic schools to exempt certain students from the CS graduation requirement. A school can exempt a student who completes, through the Ohio CS Promise Program, 75 cumulative hours of structured content in CS and artificial intelligence (AI), including 20 hours of programming content and the remaining hours on at least two topics from a specified list. Also, DEW can exempt a student from this requirement if the student either (1) receives a score of three or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) CS exam, or (2) completes 75 cumulative hours of structured content in CS and AI, as described above, but that is not offered by an Ohio CS Promise Program provider.

Beginning with the 2028-2029 school year (FY 2029), the bill requires traditional districts, joint vocational school districts (JVSDs), and community and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) schools to offer at least one-half unit of CS instruction in each building that serves students in any of grades 9-12 (hereafter, we refer to these as "high schools" for simplicity). Public schools are permitted to satisfy this requirement by partnering with a community college to establish a program offering at least a semester of in-person CS content, such as the Ohio Code-Scholar Pilot Program at Southern State Community College. In general, the bill requires districts and schools to offer CS classes in person, unless the school is an online high school.

The bill requires DEW to adopt a list of CS courses that can be used to satisfy the graduation requirement by July 1, 2027, using the recommendations of the State Committee on Computer Science as guidance. Also, DEW must issue a report annually on CS education in the state. This report must include certain information about the CS courses offered at each school, as well as demographic and grade-level data about students and instructors. Finally, the bill requires that Ohio CS Promise Program providers, some of whom are public entities, submit the number of content hours and topics addressed in each of their programs or courses to DEW for approval.

Fiscal effects

Current CS course offering and enrollment rates

The bill requires DEW to adopt a list of courses a student may take to satisfy the CS requirement. In so doing, it must use the recommendations of the State Committee on Computer

Science as guidance.[1] The State Committee recommended 17 courses as qualifying a student to meet a CS graduation requirement. Based on an LBO analysis of data in the DataOhio portal's Computer Science Course Enrollment dashboard, most public high schools offer at least one of these CS courses but a small percentage of students enroll in them. In FY 2025, 254 (26%) of Ohio's 995 public high schools did not offer a CS course. The table below breaks out the number and percentage of these high schools by the type of school and typology of traditional school districts. As the table shows, among traditional districts, rural schools have the largest number and share of high schools not offering a CS course. Community schools also have a large share not offering CS, at 50% of high schools.

Number and Percentage of Public High Schools Not Offering CS Courses by Type, FY 2025

School Type	Number of High Schools	Number Not Offering CS Course	Percent Not Offering CS Course
Rural school district	239	83	35%
Small town school district	206	43	21%
Suburban school district	157	22	14%
Urban school district	178	26	15%
Island school district	1	1	100%
Total traditional schools	**781**	**175**	**22%**
Community schools	140	70	50%
STEM schools	8	2	25%
JVSDs	66	7	11%
Grand total	**995**	**254**	**26%**

In FY 2025, of the approximately 570,600 students in grades 9-12 at traditional school districts, community and STEM schools, and JVSDs, there were roughly 26,200 enrollments in the State Committee's recommended CS courses according to the DataOhio portal dashboard. This number is equivalent to about 5% of high school students. However, it may overstate the number of unique students enrolled in CS courses since a student may have taken multiple CS courses.

Potential implementation costs

Teaching

Given relatively small participation in CS courses currently, school districts and other public schools are likely to need to upskill or hire a large number of teachers licensed to teach CS

[1] See the Report of the State Committee on Computer Science (PDF).

courses or make other arrangements permitted by the bill. The State Committee on Computer Science's 2022 report looked at how many full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers could be needed to fully staff Ohio districts for CS by benchmarking against Ohio's staffing level of health teachers (health carries a half-unit course requirement for graduation, the same as the bill's one-half unit CS requirement). At the time, there were about 4,600 FTE health teachers. As of late February 2026, approximately 1,300 teachers are certified to teach CS, suggesting that thousands of qualified CS teachers are needed.

Some districts may be able to use teachers already on staff to teach CS courses, either by shifting staff from courses that the CS unit may be used in lieu of or potentially by reducing other curricular offerings. However, CS course teachers must be appropriately licensed to teach them. Existing teachers may be able to receive the credentials necessary to teach CS courses through the state-funded Teach CS Program. This program provides grants for coursework, materials, examinations, stipends, and performance-based incentives to increase the number of teachers qualified to teach CS through various pathways, including a supplemental license, endorsement, and continuing education for existing teachers. H.B. 96 of the 136th General Assembly appropriates $4.0 million in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 from the GRF for the program.

In addition, 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 a semester of in-person CS content to the school's students. The instruction must be provided onsite at the public school. The cost to districts for this option will depend on implementation decisions by districts and schools and contract negotiations with the colleges. Community colleges that opt to partner with a school district to create a program that offers CS courses to school students will incur some costs, which presumably will be offset by payments from districts and schools. The bill specifically states that courses taught in the Ohio Code-Scholar Pilot Program at Southern State Community College meet the graduation requirement under this provision. This program is supported by Fund 5AO0 ALI 1956H2 with appropriations of $1 million in FY 2026 and $1.5 million in FY 2027. Also, the completion of an approved College Credit Plus (CCP) course in CS fulfills the graduation requirement. CCP courses can be completed at no cost to the student; districts cover the cost through a transfer of their state foundation aid to the corresponding college.

As described above, students can skip the required CS course if they meet certain conditions, including completing 75 hours of approved instruction offered by an Ohio CS Promise Program provider. The Ohio CS Promise Program lets grades 7-12 students take one CS course per year that their school does not offer, at no cost to the student, and receive high school credit. School districts and other public schools arrange payments with approved providers for participating students. In FY 2026, two providers are public entities: Cuyahoga Community College and the Fairfield County Educational Service Center. Few students currently participate in the program. According to DEW surveys of providers, no students participated in FY 2025 (with four of five providers responding) and four students have participated thus far in FY 2026 (with five of seven providers responding). However, the bill's exemption may increase student participation. If so, expenditures may increase for the public providers, which presumably will be offset by payments from districts and schools. Administrative workload for these providers may increase to submit the required CS course information to DEW.

Three school districts, Dublin City, Upper Arlington City, and the Tolles Career and Technical Center, offered an IB CS course in FY 2025, totaling 34 course enrollments. The DataOhio portal does not indicate how many districts offered an AP CS course.

Ultimately, some districts and schools may not be able to fully implement the bill's requirement by redirecting and upskilling existing staff, contracting with a community college, or leveraging the CS Promise Program or AP and IB classes, and, thus, may need to hire new teachers to teach CS courses. The number of new teachers required will vary by district and school. As a point of reference, the statewide average entry level teacher salary in FY 2025 was $42,233 according to data collected by the State Employment Relations Board. Fringe benefit costs represent 40.7% of salaries, for total salary and benefit costs averaging about $59,400 per beginning teacher. Personnel costs will be greater for more experienced or educated teachers. The overall costs of the requirement may be significant, potentially reaching into the tens of millions of dollars or more statewide. For example, the following scenario focused on hiring additional teachers illustrates the potential cost. If, hypothetically, the districts and schools with the 254 buildings currently not offering a CS course each hired one teacher for each of those buildings, the additional salary and benefits cost would be around $15 million statewide ($59,400 per teacher x 254 teachers). Ultimately, the costs for districts and schools will depend on how they and their students fulfill the bill's requirements using the various options available.

Any new costs are likely to be phased in over time as progressively more high school students in the classes of 2033 and onward complete the CS one-half unit, with CS course enrollment reaching a plateau in FY 2033. In FY 2025, the 26,200 course enrollments were spread out roughly evenly among each of grades 9-12.

Districts and schools have two years before the offering requirement takes effect at the start of FY 2029. Those that are not online high schools and are unable to offer the courses in an in-person traditional classroom setting may offer a virtual or distance course by submitting an alternate plan (or action plan) for approval to DEW. The virtual or distance course may be offered through the district or school or through a regional partnership such as through an educational service center. The plan must explain why it was not possible to offer an in-person course and detail how the district or school plans to meet the bill's requirements.

Curriculum modifications

Some school districts and other public schools may incur costs to update their high school curriculum and purchase learning materials, such as textbooks and computers, to implement the bill's changes, the amount of which will depend on existing CS course offerings, local implementation decisions, and course choices made by students. School districts and other public schools may use the CS model curriculum that the State Board of Education adopted in September 2022 to inform any necessary CS curriculum updates.[2] DEW also provides on its website links to various additional curriculum resources on the subject.[3]

[2] See Ohio's Standards and Model Curriculum: Computer Science (PDF).

[3] See DEW's Resources for Computer Science website.

DEW administrative and reporting costs

DEW may incur minimal costs to carry out a number of administrative and reporting duties. Under the bill, DEW must:

- Develop and publish guidance for high schools to use regarding the use of CS courses in lieu of a unit of science or a unit of foreign language.
- As noted above, adopt, by July 1, 2027, a list of courses a student may take to satisfy the CS requirement, publish the list on its website, and periodically update it.
- Review and approve or recommend changes to action plans for districts and schools that are unable to offer in-person CS courses.
- Publish, beginning July 1, 2028, an annual report on CS education in the state, including data on CS courses offered and their settings, enrollment in those courses, and their instructors on a publicly available dashboard. DEW likely would leverage the existing Computer Science Course Enrollment dashboard on the DataOhio portal for this purpose.