



Testimony on House Bill 170  
Roger Archbold, Senior State Alliance Manager  
Microsoft  
The Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee  
May 16, 2017

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 170.

My name is Roger Archbold I am a Senior State Alliance Manager for Microsoft. My role at Microsoft allows me the opportunity to talk to K-12 Education stakeholders across the country on primarily two topics. The first is big Data in Education, the second is the need for STEM programs.

As we all know, the landscape of employability has greatly shifted in the past few years. The type of worker required and the skills most valued by the marketplace have migrated towards careers in science, technology, math and engineering. Even outside of STEM career fields, Information Worker (IW) skills are becoming increasingly critical for employment in a variety of industries. Fifty percent of jobs today require some level of technology skills and that number is expected to increase to at least 77% in the next decade.

Microsoft applauds the vision and hard work that has been put into HB170. It is a critical piece of legislation. Microsoft has long supported the practice of making a computer science credit count towards graduation requirement. This bill is a job well done.

I would encourage and recommend that this committee goes above and beyond just computer science by offering industry recognized certifications as part of this legislation. The IT jobs of today and the future are on two tracks. The first track is computer science, developing the linear thinking ability and to be able to program or code. The second track is about career ready jobs, IT training that results in industry recognized certifications. This is where the vast majority of IT jobs are located, these jobs pay above average wages and are growing rapidly.

Microsoft's Imagine Academy program, which is offered in 21 states currently, provides a centralized approach on teaching these valuable skills and provides students with a credential that they can present to an employer showing mastery of that technology. These credentials are tracked and can be shared, in a way that respects individual privacy, with stakeholders in the Education community, folks like yourself.

Microsoft Imagine Academy is a turn key solution that provides all the resources and materials needed for teachers in the classroom. The Imagine Academy program allows training and certifications on a wide variety of technology including Microsoft skills but also skills like Java and Python.

In traveling and talking with states across the country, one of the largest challenges all states face is the ability to have teachers skilled up to be able to teach computer science, providing flexibility for math teachers to teach computer science is a big step towards addressing that shortfall. However, working with industry to provide a

turn key approach that helps the teachers effectively and quickly get up to speed with the latest technologies to provide an immediate impact for students is critical.

Finally, another key to success that I have seen across the country is for these programs to be successful, at least initially, is to offer these programs in a coordinated fashion at the state level with schools opting in for participation, with a coordinator from the departments of education. I am a believer in local control, and that the local schools and teacher know best for their students. However, when IT skills or Computer Science skills are offered, working with industry and being able to provide the resources that only happen from the critical mass is a requirement.

In summary, Microsoft supports HB 170, but we encourage you to include language that supports career ready, and industry recognized certifications for the schools, teachers and students of Ohio.

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For additional information on the Microsoft Imagine Academy program and usage case studies in North Carolina and others, please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/education/itacademy/Pages/index.aspx>  
<http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies/Case Study Detail.aspx?CaseStudyID=4000010804>

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<sup>i</sup> US Bureau of Labor  
Statistics <sup>ii</sup>  
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