



August 17, 2022

To: State Committee on Computer Science

From: Tom Perkins, BASA
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Our organizations represent public boards of education, school district superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, business managers and other school business officials, and school principals from around the state. We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback as the draft report of the State Committee on Computer Science.

We support computer science (CS) education for Ohio's students. We agree that every Ohioan deserves the chance to succeed, get a good-paying job, raise a family comfortably and be secure in their future. We also agree that CS is one pathway for students to achieve these objectives.

However, some recommendations included in the Committee's report may have unintended consequences, which are summarized below.

Report Recommendation #2: The report recommends dedicating funding equal to at least 1% of the state's K-12 school funding formula to expand CS education in the state. The report goes on to note that these funds "should be supplemental to existing funding *but may be sourced from planned increases in K-12 budget funding overall*" (emphasis added).

- **Comment**: The new school funding formula (commonly referred to as the Fair School Funding Plan) has not been fully phased-in. This includes the DPIA funding for services provided to our most vulnerable students. For the Fair School Funding Plan to work, it must be fully funded.

- **Recommendation:** In order to ensure the Fair School Funding Plan is fully implemented, the funding provided to CS education should be in addition to the increased amount necessary to complete the phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan.

Report Recommendation #3: The report recommends requiring at least one computer science credit for high school graduation by 2030.

- **Comment:** This additional credit requirement would reduce the electives available to students. The result of this change is that students pursuing a particular curriculum leading to a chosen career path might not be able to avail themselves of all of the course opportunities in exploring and preparing for that career. The implementation of a new requirement will likely have negative effects on programs in other areas, such as the arts.

We are concerned that the addition of a CS semester requirement could require school districts to hire additional staff if they do not currently have faculty members who meet the requirements for validation in CS. Districts are already having a difficult time recruiting and hiring staff. Further, if currently eligible instructors already have full schedules, the only alternatives would be the hiring of additional teachers OR the reduction of already existing curricular offerings to make room for the CS requirement.

- **Recommendation:** State should consider incentivizing districts to offer CS courses rather than implementing new mandates. Further, before adding an additional requirement for graduation, we suggest taking this opportunity to evaluate all graduation requirements.

Report Recommendation #6: The report recommends that the state pay all costs associated with the professional development of CS teachers and to provide modest stipends for teachers who commit their personal time toward this endeavor.

- **Comment:** Without knowing the number of teachers needing additional professional development and coursework, it is difficult to discern whether the amount allocated for reimbursement in Appendix A will be sufficient to cover the costs for CS licensure/endorsement classes, testing and other professional development necessary to expand the number of qualified CS teachers statewide to meet the graduation mandate.

We agree with the Committee's findings that resources need to be provided for this program to be successful. The funding provided to CS education should be in addition to the increased amount necessary to complete the phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan.