



To: House Committee on Education  
From: Richard Donovan, Legislative Services Specialist  
Re: House Bill 4098  
Date: February 11, 2020

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Chair Doherty, Vice Alonso Leon and Helt, members of the committee:

On behalf of OSBA membership, including 197 school districts, 19 Education Service Districts, and 17 community colleges throughout the state of Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 4098.

During the 2019 session, this committee heard testimony in favor of House Bill 2967. That bill would have required computer science programming classes to be part of CTE education. Testimony in support of the bill detailed the many benefits of access to computer science and programming courses, especially for traditionally underserved student populations including students of color. On April 8, 2019, experts detailed some of these benefits to committee members, testifying that computer science drives wage and job growth, and that computer science makes up half of all projected jobs in STEM fields. Unfortunately, House Bill 2967 did not receive funding in 2019.

Currently there is very little access to any sort of computer science or programming courses in public schools. Very few schools have access to computer science educators. It is unclear how many, or few, of those courses are offered in districts that are made up of traditionally underserved student populations.

House Bill 4098 would require the Oregon Department of Education to study and draft a statewide, long-term strategic plan for computer science education across Oregon. The bill requires the plan place special consideration on students that may experience academic disparities, specifically referencing student groups listed in the Student Success Act, HB 3427. The creation of the plan, as detailed in the -1 amendments, would be collaborative across many groups, including the STEM council, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, and many other stakeholder groups.

The value of computer science education is well established. And lack of a statewide plan to deliver access to computer science education is well documented. HB 4098 will take a first step toward remedying this lack of access. I urge your support.