February 9, 2020

Dear Honorable Chair Doherty and Members of the Education Committee,

I write to you today as an educational researcher, university faculty member, former high school computer science teacher, and parent in support of the HB 4098 legislation that will establish a statewide plan for K-12 computer science education. Given the long-standing inequities in computer science in Oregon, I believe HB 4098 is critical in supporting the development of a long-term strategic plan around K-12 computer science education.

Please, consider the following:

- **Computer Science for All approach** will support the creation of a state plan to center equitable and inclusive learning opportunities for students. Historically, girls, students of color, and low-income students have been historically absent from computer science learning opportunities in schools, more so than any other discipline. For instance, in 2018, only 24% of 762 Advanced Placement Computer Science test-takers in Oregon were girls, and only 9% were students of color. This is a tremendous equity issue for Oregon's schools.
- **Currently, Oregon is the only state nationwide that has no established statewide education policies** that encourage or support students in learning computer science. HB 4098A defines computer science education and supports schools in providing students learning opportunities in computer science, a critical step in highlighting the state's investment in giving Oregon students access to this high-status knowledge.
- **Careers in computer science are rapidly growing and offer many economic opportunities** for students who either pursue computing or apply this knowledge in other fields. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, computer science is the fastest growing area of STEM occupations, and related jobs pay typically pay much higher than occupations with similar education levels.
- **This initiative builds strategically on a National Science Foundation-sponsored project, CS For Oregon**, which is supporting 46 teachers across two cohorts so that they are prepared to teach the *Exploring Computer Science* course to high school students. The CS for Oregon project is co-hosted by Portland State University, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University, Cascades. The CS for Oregon project is part of the larger, CS for All initiative, a national network of states, districts, and other organizations working on policies and practices needed to bring CS into the core curriculum of K-12 education.

As an Education Professor who has studied equity and access in Computer Science Education for 20 years, I know that without inclusive computer science courses in schools, Oregon's students are being left behind and are ill-prepared for 21st century jobs and lacking knowledge of the digital infrastructure of today's society. Developing a state plan for computer science education will provide access and broadened participation for Oregon's children in schools.

The HB 4098 legislation marks a desperately needed commitment in providing K-12 school opportunities for students, particularly historically underrepresented students, to be the future creators of computing innovations and technologies. I hope you will support HB 4098.

Thank you for your time and support for HB4098.

Sincerely,

Joanna Goode
Sommerville Knight Professor