

OLBCF: BLACK PAPERS



A Public Policy Brief

Theme: Education, Workforce Development

Bill/Policy: “Require Students to Complete a High School Computer Science Course,” SB 326

Status: Referred to Senate Education Committee

Date: March 2026 | **Lead:** Yassah Tommy

THE QUICK CLIP

Senate Bill 326 would require all Ohio public high schools to include a one-year computer science course as a graduation requirement for students who enter the 9th grade on or after July 1, 2029. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that students develop foundational computing knowledge and digital skills that are increasingly vital for success in college, careers, and a technology-driven economy. By expanding access to computer science education, the bill aims to improve students’ readiness for workforce opportunities, particularly in high-growth STEM fields.¹

THE STATE HOUSE BREAKDOWN

- **Current Status:** **Referred to the Senate Education Committee on 11/18/2025**
- **Before SB 326:** Ohio public schools are not explicitly required to have a computer science course offered and required. Reports indicate that between 2023 and 2024, 61% of Ohio schools had a computer science program established in their curriculum, but these classes were not required and, in some cases, were considered electives.²
- **After SB 326:** SB 326 mandates that all Ohio public high schools include one unit of computer science as a graduation requirement. Schools must submit a list of these classes by July 1, 2027. The bill requires the computer science course to be held in person; if it is offered virtually, schools must notify the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and submit an alternative proposal. Additionally, schools may collaborate with community colleges to provide computer science as a full-year course.³
- **The "Why":** Senator Jerry Cirino (R) and Senator Catherine D. Ingram (D) cite that, as AI and technology become more prevalent in the workplace, Ohio public school students need to learn computer science to prepare them effectively for their careers. Gaining skills in this area enhances students' critical thinking, logic, and creativity, providing valuable assets for their professional growth. The bill also aims to prepare students for college and future careers while increasing local talent, according to the sponsors.⁴

THE IMPACT ON OHIOANS

How this could affect our families, friends, and community.

- **Economic & Social Stakes:** A 2024 longitudinal study examining the impact of high school computer science courses found that requiring such coursework could benefit students overall. This report found that high school students who have taken a computer science course are 2.6% more likely to be employed by the age of 24 and increase their annual earnings by about 8%.⁵ While evaluating results, this study also showed that these increases were more substantial for historically underserved populations such as female, low-income, and Black students.⁶

- **The Disparity:** Requiring computer science for high school graduation could broaden access to popular career paths and help decrease disparities in STEM involvement. For Black students especially, universal exposure to computing education might help bridge opportunity gaps, boost college enrollment in tech fields, and enhance long-term job prospects.
- **Real World Impact:** Students in rural communities or underserved districts, who often lack access to such resources, would have the opportunity to participate in computer science classes at their schools. These classes teach students about computer software, effective use of AI, and how to create websites and projects. Such skills build a solid foundation in technology and academics, leading to opportunities in higher education. A student with no prior interest in computer science or STEM may develop an interest after taking this class. They might then choose to major in a related field in college, apply these technical skills to trade, or start their own business.

ANALYSIS & REFLECTION

- **Community Concerns and Fiscal Context:** Our *State of Black Ohio: Voters' Voice* pilot findings show that Black Ohioans want stronger public schools and clearer accountability for where education dollars go.⁷ Participants called for practical improvements that make learning real and accessible: multiple paths to graduation (CTE, apprenticeships, industry credentials), after-school supports and tutoring, safe transportation, clear and fair graduation rules, extra help for low-wealth districts, and transparency when public dollars leave a district. Strong schools build strong futures—and strong voters.⁸ SB 326 can support that vision if its implementation includes teacher capacity, consistent course quality, and equitable statewide access.

The fiscal analysis of SB 326 estimates that implementing it for one year will cost roughly \$18–\$19.5 million.⁹ This includes \$4 million in grant funding to certify teachers in computer science, \$1–\$1.5 million if a school collaborates with a community college, and \$14 million for teacher payments in districts without current computer science classes.¹⁰ Ohio's K–12 education received \$11.14 billion in funding in fiscal year 2025.¹¹ Of this, \$1.095 billion was allocated to voucher programs, with \$775.8 million (70.9%) spent on traditional and expansion EdChoice vouchers.¹² In the context of Ohio's overall K–12 spending, SB 326's projected implementation cost appears relatively modest. This comparison highlights the importance of aligning budget priorities with workforce readiness outcomes for all students.

DIRECT ACTION: THE PROACTIVE RESPONSE

How to move from reacting to leading.

- **Immediate Action:** Reach out to your local legislator by phone or contact them to show your support for this bill and encourage its passage.
- **Community Action (30 mins):** Share this brief with a neighbor, parent group, educator network, or community organization to inform others about the bill and its intended outcomes.
- **Deep Dive:** Watch committee hearings on The Ohio Channel, and consider submitting written or in-person testimony to the Senate Education Committee. OLBCF can help community members prepare testimony.”
- **Track the Bill:** Use the Ohio Legislature website to track SB 326 and receive updates on hearings, amendments, and votes.

References

- ¹ Ohio General Assembly. *Senate Bill 326 (136th General Assembly): To require school districts to offer and students to complete at least one high school computer science course*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Legislature. https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/api/v2/general_assembly_136/legislation/sb326/00_IN/pdf
- ² Code.org Advocacy Coalition. (2025). *State of computer science education 2025: Ohio*. Seattle, WA: Code.org. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sOaSkqxy1M5WFu8abUTd0ZSZCBONOfj/view?usp=sharing>
- ³ Ohio Legislative Service Commission. *Analysis of House Bill 326, 136th General Assembly*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Legislative Service Commission. <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=26947>
- ⁴ Jerry C. Cirino and Catherine D. Ingram. “Sponsor Testimony on Senate Bill 326.” Testimony before the Ohio Senate Education Committee, February 10, 2026. <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb326/committee>
- ⁵ Liu, Jing, Cameron Conrad, and David Blazar. “High School Computer Science Impacts College Majors and Increases Earnings.” May 1, 2024. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/high-school-computer-science-impacts-colleg-majors-and-increases-earnings/>
- ⁶ Liu, Jing, Cameron Conrad, and David Blazar. “High School Computer Science Impacts College Majors and Increases Earnings.”
- ⁷ *2025 State of Black Ohio Report*, Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation (OLBCF), PDF download, https://www.olbcfoundation.org/_files/ugd/1c834b_dcb15b7e03b9422b861d13c641905a22.pdf
- ⁸ *2025 State of Black Ohio Report*, Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation (OLBCF)
- ⁹ Ohio Legislative Service Commission. *S.B. 326, 136th General Assembly: Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement*. Prepared by Patrick Campbell, Budget Analyst. Version: As Introduced. Primary Sponsors: Senators Jerry C. Cirino and Catherine D. Ingram. Ohio Legislative Service Commission, 2026. <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=27280>
- ¹⁰ Ohio Legislative Service Commission. *S.B. 326, 136th General Assembly: Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement*
- ¹¹ Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. *Overview of School Funding*. Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/Overview-of-School-Funding>
- ¹² Ohio Legislative Service Commission. *Current Ohio Facts: School Choice Programs* (November 2025). Ohio Legislative Service Commission, Columbus, OH. <https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/organizations/legislative-service-commission/files/current-ohio-facts-school-choice-programs-november-2025.pdf>