

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 892
Public Schools—Mathematics Credit—
Computer Science or Computer Programming Course**

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

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1:00 p.m.

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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 892, legislation that would authorize a public school student to satisfy one of their four mathematics credit requirements for graduation by completing either a computer science or computer programming course if allowed by their local board of education.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland’s public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

One of the primary responsibilities of educators is to prepare our students for their futures, particularly their future careers. In the rapidly changing world in which we live, it is imperative that our young people be provided the skills, knowledge and abilities that will allow them to master jobs and opportunities that may as yet be conceived. One surefire way of doing this is to increase their access to the STEAM fields—science, technology, engineering, art and math—and to help them develop the mindset and thinking skills they will need to master the jobs found in the knowledge-based economy of today and tomorrow.

MSEA has been supportive of legislative efforts to increase elementary and secondary students’ access to computer science and computational thinking, exemplified by our support for the Securing the Future: Computer Science Education for All Act of 2018 (Chapter 358).¹ We have rebuffed previous efforts to permit computer science and computer programming to be used as a substitute for foreign language, citing that any such substitution should remain in a like subject discipline area. We suggested, instead, that a computer course could be exchanged for a STEM-related course. This legislation calls for just such an exchange. One word of caution must accompany our stated support. Much care should be taken to ensure that such an exchange be in keeping with the college entry requirements of the University of Maryland system as well as the state’s other colleges and universities so as to not jeopardize a student’s future prospects to continue their postsecondary training in a Maryland-based institution of higher education.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 892.

¹ http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/chapters_noln/Ch_358_hb0281T.pdf (Accessed February 29, 2020)