
TO: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 1189 – Public Schools – Mathematics Credit – College Preparatory Computer Science or Computer Programming Course

DATE: April 2, 2024

POSITION: Oppose

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose **HB 1189**, which authorizes a student to satisfy one credit of the three-credit mathematics graduation requirement by completing an advanced placement computer science course or a college preparatory computer science or computer programming course. The student must be concurrently enrolled in or have previously completed Algebra II.

We do not oppose the bill based on the merits of the proposed subject matter but on the grounds that the legislative requirement would be duplicative of current regulatory requirements and run counter to the process that is entrusted to the State Board, MSDE, and LEAs.

To be awarded a high school diploma, Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.03.02.03 requires students entering 9th grade beginning in the 2021-22 school year to earn one credit of computer science, engineering, or technology education that includes the study of computers and algorithmic processes or the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities.

COMAR 13A.04.12.01 includes language that requires a student to enroll in a mathematics course each year in high school and allows a student to select a mathematics-related course for graduation credit, which includes AP Computer Science and a locally designed computer science course. Currently, students are not required to take Algebra II as a prerequisite. If this legislation passed, this requirement would contradict MSDE's work towards differentiation and student choice for math courses and pathways.

Under the guidance of the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin, MSDE leads a statewide *Launch Years Initiative* task force. This group endeavors to redefine the role of mathematics in students' lives, emphasizing its potential as a path forward rather than a barrier to navigate. By Summer 2024, the task force is charged with collecting and using data to develop recommendations to improve alignment of mathematics content, courses, pathways and related educational policies. Ultimately, all students should have access to math pathways that:

- Are aligned with their college and/or career goals;
- Are relevant to their personal interests and lived experiences;
- Have the individualized supports that they need to succeed;
- Are equitably and authentically accessible; and
- Enable them to transition into their desired postsecondary pathway.

This work includes:

- Defining modern math pathways, including modern PreKindergarten-12 math content and instructional materials;
- Policy advocacy including recommendations and revisions if necessary;
- Centering experiences of communities historically underserved by traditional mathematics education (e.g., Black and Latinx communities and communities experiencing poverty);
- Strategic communications with interested parties; and
- Continuous improvement with a focus on equitable impact.

Requiring Algebra II as a prerequisite to computer science contradicts the outlined mission, goals, and work of Maryland's Launch Years Initiative. It would potentially limit students' access to diverse, meaningful, and modern academic pathways. In addition, it would unnecessarily complicate the initiative's immediate task of improving alignment of mathematics content, courses, pathways, and related educational policies.

In partnership with teachers, supervisors, parents, institutes of higher education, and other stakeholders, MSDE and the State Board will continue to undertake significant review of mathematics pathways and content through the Launch Years Initiative. In this process, MSDE will be certain to include our critical partners in the General Assembly.

The State Board requests that the committee consider this information on HB 1189. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and Government Relations, at Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or at 410-767-0504 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.