House Education Policy Reported Substitute for HB332

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5   A BILL

6   TO BE ENTITLED

7   AN ACT

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9   Relating to public K-12 schools; to amend Sections

10   16-46B-1, 16-46B-2, and 16-46B-7, Code of Alabama 1975, to

11   expand the definition of computer science; to require all

12   Alabama public school students to complete an approved

13   computer science course as a requirement for graduation; and

14   to provide standards for approved computer science courses.

15   BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

16   Section 1. Sections 16-46B-1, 16-46B-2, and 16-46B-7,

17   Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

18   "§16-46B-1

19   For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms

20   shall have the following meanings:

21   (1) BOARD. The State Board of Education.

22   (2) COMPUTER SCIENCE. The study of computers and

23   algorithmic processes, including their principles, their

24   hardware and software designs, their implementation, and their

25   impact on society, and their emerging technologies, including,

26   but not limited to, artificial intelligence. Content should

27   focus on teaching students how to create new technologies, not

28   simply how to use technology.

29   (3) COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSES AND CONTENT. Courses that

30 teach computer science either as a standalone course

31 implementation in middle and high schools, or, for elementary

32 school, integrated into other content areas.

33   (4) DEPARTMENT. The State Department of Education.

34   (5) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Includes grades kindergarten to

35 six, inclusive.

36   (6) HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING. Professional

37 development activities that satisfy all of the following:

38   a. Clarify the conceptual foundations of computer

39 science.

40   b. Teach research-based practices, including hands-on

41 and inquiry-based learning.

42   c. Are intended for existing teachers, with or without

43 previous exposure to computer science.

44   (7) HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROVIDERS.

45 Institutions of higher education, nonprofits, or private

46 entities that have successfully designed, implemented, and

47 scaled high quality, evidence-based computer science

48 professional learning for teachers and recommended by the

49 superintendent and approved by the board.

50   (8) HIGH SCHOOL. Includes grades nine to 12, inclusive.

51   (9) MIDDLE SCHOOL. Includes grades seven and eight.

52   (10) PUBLIC SCHOOL. Includes public K-12 elementary

53 schools, middle schools, and high schools.

54   (11) SUPERINTENDENT. The State Superintendent of

55 Education."

56   "§16-46B-2

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57 (a)(1) Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, each

58 public high school shall offer at least one authentic computer

59 science course from a department-approved list.

60 (2) Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, each public

61 middle school shall offer instruction in middle school

62 computer science courses approved by the department.

63 (3) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each public

64 elementary school shall offer instruction on the basics of

65 computer science and computational thinking.

66 (b) A computer science course or instruction in

67 computer science offered by a public school shall satisfy all

68 of the following:

69 (1) Be of high quality, as defined by the department.

70 (2) Meet or exceed the standards and curriculum

71 requirements, as they relate to authentic computer science,

72 established by the board in the state course of study for

73 digital literacy and computer science pursuant to Section

74 16-35-4 and be on the approved list of computer science

75 courses.

76 (c) A computer science course offered by a public high

77 school should be offered through an in-person setting and

78 shall be offered as a virtual or distance learning course

79 option only when an in-person classroom setting is not

80 practicable. A rationale for using the virtual or distance

81 learning option shall be included in the annual report.

82 (d) Beginning with public school students who will

83 graduate during the 2030-2031 school year, the department

84 shall ensure that all approved computer science courses and

85 content that meet graduation requirements pursuant to Section

86 16-46B-7, shall include, but not be limited to, instruction in

87 the concepts of computer science as defined in Section

88 16-46B-1.

89   (e) The enforcement of this section shall comply with

90 Section 16-1-11.1."

91   "§16-46B-7

92   (a) Before June 30, 2020, and in accordance with

93 Section 16-35-4, the department shall identify approved

94 computer science courses that may fulfill one unit of academic

95 credit for any mathematics or science course for high school

96 graduation.

97   (b) Beginning with the graduating class of 2021, for

98 the purposes of high school graduation requirements and

99 satisfying mathematics or science freshman admission

100 requirements for a public institution of higher education

101 physically located in this state, as determined by the

102 institution of higher education, a computer science course

103 successfully completed under subsection (a) shall be

104 equivalent to either of the following:

105   (1) One mathematics course credit.

106   (2) One science course credit.

107   (c)(1) Beginning with the graduating class of 2031, all

108 public school students shall demonstrate digital literacy by

109 earning at least one credit in a department-approved, high

110 school level computer science course. This requirement shall

111 not result in an increase in the number of credits required

112 for graduation.

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113 (2) Each computer science credit earned shall count as

114 a college and career readiness indicator and may fulfill any

115 one of the following, as determined by the local

116 superintendent of education:

117 a. One mathematics course credit.

118 b. One science course credit.

119 c. One career and technical education course credit.

120 d. One elective credit.

121 (3) Mathematics course credits and science course

122 credits may only be replaced by department-approved computer

123 science courses if the public school student is on the

124 standard diploma pathway, which requires the completion of

125 both four mathematics course credits and four science course

126 credits."

127 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October

128 1, 2025.