1   HB329

2   BYRD8J4-1

3   By Representatives Faulkner, Collins, Baker, Hulsey, Colvin

4   RFD: Education Policy

5   First Read: 22-Jan-26

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4   SYNOPSIS:

5   Under existing law, completion of a computer

6   science course is not required for graduation from an

7   Alabama public K-12 school.

8   This bill would require all Alabama public

9   school students to complete an approved computer

10   science course in order to graduate.

11   This bill would provide standards for approved

12   computer science courses.

13   Also under existing law, computer science is

14   defined as the study of computers and algorithmic

15   processes.

16   This bill would also expand the definition of

17   computer science to include the study of certain

18   related technologies.

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21   A BILL

22   TO BE ENTITLED

23   AN ACT

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

26 16-46B-1, 16-46B-2, and 16-46B-7, Code of Alabama 1975, to

27 expand the definition of computer science; to require all

28 Alabama public school students to complete an approved

29 computer science course as a requirement for graduation; and

30 to provide standards for approved computer science courses.

31 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

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

34   "§16-46B-1

35   For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms

36 ~~shall~~ have the following meanings:

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

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

39 algorithmic processes, including their principles, their

40 hardware and software designs, their implementation, ~~and~~ their

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

42 but not limited to, artificial intelligence. Content should

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

44 simply how to use technology.

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

46 teach computer science either as a standalone course

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

48 school, integrated into other content areas.

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

50   (5) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Includes grades kindergarten to

51 six, inclusive.

52   (6) HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING. Professional

53 development activities that satisfy all of the following:

54   a. Clarify the conceptual foundations of computer

55 science.

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

57 and inquiry-based learning.

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

59 previous exposure to computer science.

60 (7) HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROVIDERS.

61 Institutions of higher education, nonprofits, or private

62 entities that have successfully designed, implemented, and

63 scaled high quality, evidence-based computer science

64 professional learning for teachers and recommended by the

65 superintendent and approved by the board.

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

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

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

69 schools, middle schools, and high schools.

70 (11) SUPERINTENDENT. The State Superintendent of

71 Education."

72 "§16-46B-2

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

74 public high school shall offer at least one authentic computer

75 science course from a department-approved list.

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

77 middle school shall offer instruction in middle school

78 computer science courses approved by the department.

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

80 elementary school shall offer instruction on the basics of

81 computer science and computational thinking.

82 (b) A computer science course or instruction in

83 computer science offered by a public school shall satisfy all

84 of the following:

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

86   (2) Meet or exceed the standards and curriculum

87 requirements, as they relate to authentic computer science,

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

89 digital literacy and computer science pursuant to Section

90 16-35-4 and be on the approved list of computer science

91 courses.

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

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

94 shall be offered as a virtual or distance learning course

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

96 practicable. A rationale for using the virtual or distance

97 learning option shall be included in the annual report.

98   (d) Beginning with public school students who will

99 graduate during the 2031-2032 school year, the department

100 shall ensure that all approved computer science courses and

101 content that meet graduation requirements pursuant to Section

102 16-46B-7, shall include, but not be limited to, instruction in

103 the concepts of computer science as defined in Section

104 16-46B-1.

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

106 Section 16-1-11.1."

107   "§16-46B-7

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

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

110 computer science courses that may fulfill one unit of academic

111 credit for any mathematics or science course for high school

112 graduation.

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

114 the purposes of high school graduation requirements and

115 satisfying mathematics or science freshman admission

116 requirements for a public institution of higher education

117 physically located in this state, as determined by the

118 institution of higher education, a computer science course

119 successfully completed under subsection (a) shall be

120 equivalent to either of the following:

121   (1) One mathematics course credit.

122   (2) One science course credit.

123   (c)(1) Beginning with the graduating class of 2032, all

124 public school students shall demonstrate digital literacy by

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

126 school level computer science course. This requirement shall

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

128 for graduation.

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

130 a college and career readiness indicator and may fulfill any

131 one of the following, as determined by the local

132 superintendent of education:

133   a. One mathematics course credit.

134   b. One science course credit.

135   c. One career and technical education course credit.

136   d. One elective credit.

137   (3) Mathematics course credits and science course

138 credits may only be replaced by department-approved computer

139 science courses if the public school student is on the

140 standard diploma pathway, which requires the completion of

141 both four mathematics course credits and four science course

142 credits."

143   Section 2. This act shall become effective on October

144 1, 2026.