Senate Bill 249

By: Senators Dixon of the 45th, Anavitarte of the 31st, Burns of the 23rd, Harbin of the 16th, Hickman of the 4th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Part 2 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to competencies and core curriculum under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to provide that, beginning in the 2031-2032 school year, a computer science course shall be a high school graduation requirement; to provide for certain computer science courses to be substituted for units of credit graduation requirements in certain other subject areas; to provide for such exception; to revise legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Part 2 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to competencies and core curriculum under the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-149.3, relating to requirements for computer science education, as follows:

"20-2-149.3.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Education in computer science is a critical need for the students of Georgia ~~for the twenty-first century~~; and

(2) ~~Less than 0.5 percent of high school graduates have taken a computer science course;~~

~~(3) There are thousands of unfulfilled computer science jobs in the state; and~~

~~(4)~~ The ~~logical~~ critical thinking skills taught by computer science are ~~now very~~ valuable in many noncomputer science jobs, as technology has become embedded in most professions.

(b) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) 'Computer science' means the study of computers, algorithmic processes, coding, artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, and ~~logical~~ critical thinking, including computer principles, their hardware and software designs, their implementation, and their impact on society.

(2) 'Computer science courses and content' means high school courses that teach computer science as stand-alone implementations and middle school courses that provide instruction in computer science in stand-alone implementations or by being embedded in other subjects and focus on how to create and understand technology, rather than by simply using technology.

(3) 'High-quality professional learning' means professional development activities that:

(A) Clarify the conceptual foundations of computer science;

(B) Teach research based practices, including hands-on and inquiry based learning; and

(C) Are intended for teachers with or without prior exposure to computer science.

(4) 'High-quality professional learning providers' means institutions of higher education in this state, local school systems, nonprofit organizations, or private entities that have successfully designed, implemented, and scaled high-quality professional learning for teachers and are approved or recommended by the State Board of Education in coordination with the Department of Education.

(5) 'Offer' means providing a course taught by a computer science teacher:

(A) Who is onsite at the physical location of the school; or

(B) Who is not onsite at the physical location of the school but conducts the course through virtual means with a proctor onsite at the physical location of the school.

(c)(1) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year:

(A) Each local school system shall provide that at least one high school in its school system offer a course in computer science;

(B) Each local school system shall provide that all middle schools in its school system offer instruction in exploratory computer science;

(C) Each state charter school that serves high school students shall offer a course in computer science;

(D) Each state charter school that serves middle school students shall offer instruction in exploratory computer science;

(E) Each local school system may provide that all elementary schools in its school system offer instruction in exploratory computer science; and

(F) Each state charter school that serves elementary school students may offer instruction in exploratory computer science.

(2) Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, each local school system shall provide that at least 50 percent of the high schools in its school system offer a course in computer science.

(3) Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, each local school system shall provide that all high schools in its school system offer a course in computer science.

(4)(A) Beginning in the 2031-2032 school year, each local board of education shall require all students, as a condition of graduation from high school, to complete a course in computer science or a career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) course embedded with computer science which meets the requirements provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

(B) The course required in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph may be earned by students in any of grades eight through 12 and shall:

(i) Meet or exceed the content standards and any other requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education for such courses;

(ii) Be made available in a traditional classroom setting, a blended learning environment, or an online or other technology based format that is tailored to meet the needs of each participating student; and

(iii) Not increase the number of credits required for graduation.

(C)(i) Except as provided in division (ii) of this subparagraph, a full-credit computer science course that meets the requirements provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph shall be eligible to satisfy the course required in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and one unit of credit graduation requirement for one of the following:

(I) One unit of math credit; provided, however, that such unit of credit shall not be a substitute for Algebra: Concepts and Connections or its equivalent, Geometry: Concepts and Connections or its equivalent, or Advanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections or its equivalent;

(II) One unit of science credit; provided, however, that such unit of credit shall not be a substitute for any biology or physical science requirements;

(III) One unit of CTAE credit;

(IV) One unit of Modern Language or Latin credit;

(V) One unit of Fine Arts credit; or

(VI) One unit of elective credit.

(ii) A student may be permitted to earn more than one unit of credit graduation requirement by completing more than one computer science course that implements a minimum course of instruction based on content standards prescribed by the State Board of Education and which is separate and distinct from such other computer science course completed by such student, and such student may be permitted to use

multiple units of credit to offset other graduation requirements as provided in this subparagraph; provided, however, that a student shall not be permitted to offset more than one unit of math credit and one unit of science credit; and, provided further, that there shall be no limit to the number of offsets permitted for units of CTAE or elective credits.

(D)(i) Except as provided in division (ii) of this subparagraph, a full-credit CTAE course embedded with computer science that meets the requirements provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph shall be eligible to satisfy the full-credit course required in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and one unit of credit graduation requirement for one of the following:

(I) One unit of CTAE credit; or

(II) One unit of elective credit.

(ii) A student may be permitted to earn more than one unit of credit graduation requirement by completing more than one CTAE course embedded with computer science that implements a minimum course of instruction based on content standards prescribed by the State Board of Education and which is separate and distinct from such other computer science course completed by such student, and such student may be permitted to use multiple units of credit to offset other graduation requirements as provided in this subparagraph.

(E) The Department of Education shall establish, and the State Board of Education shall approve, the minimum criteria by with a CTAE course embedded with computer science may be approved.

(d) The Department of Education shall ensure that the Georgia Virtual School operated pursuant to Code Section 20-2-319.1 has sufficient capacity to enable schools to utilize computer science courses to meet the needs of such schools as a result of this Code section.

(e)(1) Subject to appropriations, grants shall be provided to eligible entities to deliver professional development programs for teachers providing instruction in computer science courses and content.

(2) Eligible entities shall include local school systems, consortia of local school systems, local charter schools, state charter schools, and high-quality professional learning providers working in partnership with local school systems.

(3) Criteria for grant awards to eligible entities pursuant to this subsection shall include:

(A) The number of teachers in a local school system that require training and the number of teachers in a local school system that have already received training; and

(B) The willingness of local school systems to make available their teachers who have received training in computer science courses and content to provide computer science instruction in another local school system or systems.

(4) The Department of Education shall submit a report on December 1 of each year to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and the chairperson of the House Committee on Education. Such report shall include the number of teachers trained, the number of schools offering training, the number of students served and the demographics of such students, and a list of the eligible entities that provided the training.″

SECTION 2.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.