

Senate Bill 179

By: Senators Dixon of the 45th, Gooch of the 51st, Cowser of the 46th, Kennedy of the 18th,
Ginn of the 47th and others

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to provide that, beginning in the 2031-2032
3 school year, a computer science course shall be a high school graduation requirement; to
4 provide for certain computer science courses to be substituted for units of credit graduation
5 requirements in certain other subject areas; to provide for such exception; to revise legislative
6 findings; to increase the allowable charge per student per semester for each Georgia Virtual
7 School course from \$250.00 to \$350.00; to require local school systems to allow the
8 representatives of certain organizations to speak with students during school hours; to require
9 certain organizations to provide notice; to require local school superintendents to provide
10 approval of certain activities by certain organizations during school hours; to require local
11 school superintendents to provide written explanation for denial of certain activities; to
12 provide for legislative intent; to provide for a definition; to include certain online schools in
13 the definition of "private school"; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws;
14 and for other purposes.

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

16 **SECTION 1.**

S. B. 179

17 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and
18 secondary education, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-149.3, relating to
19 requirements for computer science education, as follows:

20 "20-2-149.3.

21 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

40 (A) Clarify the conceptual foundations of computer science;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

70 (4)(A) Beginning in the 2031-2032 school year, each local board of education shall
71 require all students who will graduate in 2037 or later, as a condition of graduation
72 from high school, to complete a course in computer science or a career, technical, and
73 agricultural education (CTAE) course embedded with computer science which meets
74 the requirements provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

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

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

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

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

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

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

91 (II) One unit of science credit; provided, however, that such unit of credit shall not
92 be a substitute for Biology or an equivalent, Physical Science, Physics, Chemistry,
93 Earth Systems, Environmental Science, or an advanced placement or international
94 baccalaureate course;

95 (III) One unit of CTAE credit;

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

97 (V) One unit of Fine Arts credit; or

98 (VI) One unit of elective credit.

99 (ii) A student may be permitted to earn more than one unit of credit graduation
100 requirement by completing more than one computer science course that implements
101 a minimum course of instruction based on content standards prescribed by the State
102 Board of Education and which is separate and distinct from such other computer
103 science course completed by such student, and such student may be permitted to use
104 multiple units of credit to offset other graduation requirements as provided in this
105 subparagraph; provided, however, that a student shall not be permitted to offset more
106 than one unit of math credit and one unit of science credit; and, provided, further, that
107 there shall be no limit to the number of offsets permitted for units of CTAE or elective
108 credits.

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

114 (I) One unit of CTAE credit; or

115 (II) One unit of elective credit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

148

SECTION 2.

149 Said chapter is further amended in Code Section 20-2-319.1, relating to the Georgia Virtual
 150 School, by revising paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b) as follows:

151 "(2) The local school system shall pay to the department costs for tuition, materials, and
 152 fees directly related to the approved course taken by a student in its school system
 153 through the Georgia Virtual School; provided, however, that in no event shall the amount
 154 of tuition charged to and paid by the local school system on behalf of such student exceed
 155 ~~\$250.00~~ \$350.00 per student per semester course; and provided, further, that, if a student
 156 participates in courses through the Georgia Virtual School that are in excess of the
 157 maximum number of courses a student may be enrolled in during a school day, such
 158 student shall be subject to the cost of tuition not to exceed ~~\$250.00~~ \$350.00 per student
 159 per semester course.

160 (3) Students in home study programs and private schools in this state may enroll in
 161 courses through the Georgia Virtual School at no cost, if appropriations are provided for
 162 such purpose in accordance with paragraph (1) of this subsection. If appropriations are
 163 not provided or if appropriations are provided but have been expended for such purpose,
 164 students in home study programs and private schools in this state may enroll in courses
 165 through the Georgia Virtual School based on availability of slots; provided, however, that
 166 such students shall be subject to the cost of tuition not to exceed ~~\$250.00~~ \$350.00 per
 167 student per semester course."

168 **SECTION 3.**

169 Said chapter is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

170 "20-2-324.10.

171 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'patriotic society' means a youth organization
 172 listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society that promotes good
 173 citizenship, civic education, and patriotism, including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts

174 of America and its affiliated Georgia groups and councils and the Girl Scouts of the United
175 States of America and its affiliated Georgia groups and councils.

176 (b) To encourage local school systems to facilitate access for students to participate in
177 citizenship, civic, and patriotic activities provided by a patriotic society, each local school
178 system shall allow representatives of a patriotic society the opportunity to speak with
179 students to promote good citizenship, civic education, and patriotism during school hours.

180 (c)(1) To speak with students during school hours pursuant to this Code section, a
181 patriotic society shall submit a written request to a local school superintendent proposing
182 a date and time to visit a school. Such notice shall be submitted at least 30 days before
183 the proposed date and time.

184 (2) Such notice shall also include the purpose of the visit, the amount of time the
185 patriotic society will be on school grounds, and the speakers and representatives of such
186 patriotic society who will be in attendance.

187 (3) Within seven days of receiving the request, the local school superintendent shall
188 provide verbal or written approval or denial of the specific date and time requested by the
189 patriotic society. If the local school superintendent denies such request, the local school
190 superintendent shall provide, in writing, a comparable, alternative date and time for the
191 patriotic society to visit.

192 (4) If the local school superintendent denies the request and does not provide an
193 alternative date and time, the local school superintendent shall provide the patriotic
194 society with a written explanation of the reasoning for such denial without an alternative
195 date and time.

196 (d) It is the intent of the General Assembly that if any provision of this Code section is
197 found invalid by a court of law, this Code section shall be void and repealed in its entirety."

198

SECTION 4.

