

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5299

C 307 L 21
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Allowing the use of computer science credits for the purpose of graduation requirements.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Kuderer, Hunt, Mullet, Nguyen and Wilson, C..

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
House Committee on Education

Background: High School Graduation Requirements. Washington State students must meet various requirements to graduate high school and receive a diploma. Students must:

- complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the State Board of Education;
- complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP);
- meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway; and
- satisfy any local requirements.

Of the 24 credits, 17 credits are considered foundational. All students must take three credits each of both math and science.

Computer Science. Computer science generally refers to the science that entails the theory and methods of processing information in computers, as well as the design of computer hardware, software, and applications.

In 2019, the Legislature instituted a requirement that beginning no later than the 2022-23 school year, each school district that operates a high school must, at a minimum, provide an opportunity to access an elective computer science course that is available to all high school students. Districts may also award academic credit for computer science based on student completion of a competency examination that is aligned with state learning standards.

School districts are required to approve advanced placement (AP) computer science courses as equivalent to high school mathematics or science, and must denote on a student's

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transcript that AP computer science qualifies as a math-based quantitative course for students who take the course in their senior year.

High School and Beyond Plan. All high school students must have a HSBP. Each HSBP must be initiated in seventh or eighth grade with a career interest and skills inventory. The plan must be updated to reflect high school assessment results, and must identify available interventions and academic support for students who have not met the high school graduation standard.

All plans must include, among other items, an identification of career and educational goals, identification of dual credit opportunities, and a four-year plan for course taking. Decisions on whether a student has met HSBP requirements are made at the local level.

Summary: To meet graduation requirements, a student may substitute a computer science course aligned to state computer science learning standards as an alternative to either a third-year mathematics or a third-year science course if:

- prior to the substitution, the school counselor provides the student and the student's parent or guardian with written notification of the consequences of the substitution on postsecondary opportunities;
- the student, the student's parent or guardian, and the student's school counselor or principal agree to the substitution; and
- the substitution is aligned with the student's HSBP.

A student may use the permitted substitution only once.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	75	23	(House amended)
Senate	46	2	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 25, 2021