## Education Committee

# SB 5088

**Brief Description**: Awarding credits for computer science.

**Sponsors**: Senators Wellman, Palumbo and Mullet.

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### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires, by the 2022-23 school year, each school district that operates a high school to provide an opportunity for students to access an elective computer science course that is available to all students.

- Authorizes school districts, beginning in the 2019-20 school year, to award academic credit for computer science to students through competency examinations.

- Requires graduation course requirement rules of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to include provisions for: competency testing in lieu of courses required for graduation; competency testing in lieu of electives; or the demonstration of specific skill proficiency or understanding of concepts through work or experience.

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**Hearing Date**: 3/25/19

**Staff**: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

**Background**:

Credits Required for Graduation and Application of Pre-High School Credit.
Among other duties, the State Board of Education establishes high school graduation requirements or equivalencies for public school students. Beginning with the graduating class of 2019, graduating students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the State Board of Education (SBE).

Academic credit earned before high school can be applied to graduation requirements. If requested by the student and his or her family, a student who completed high school courses before attending high school must be given high school credit that is applied to fulfilling

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graduation requirements. To qualify for this credit, the academic level of the course must exceed the requirements for grades 7 and 8, and other specified criteria must be met.

Waivers for Course Requirements.
Limited waiver and exemption provisions for graduation requirements have been established in statute. For example, graduation requirement rules of the SBE must include authorizations for school districts to waive up to two credits for individual students based on unusual circumstances. Additionally, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with certain state agencies, is required to adopt rules to implement graduation course requirements. These rules must include, as the SPI deems necessary, provisions for granting equivalencies for, temporary exemptions from, and special alterations to, the graduation course requirements established in statute. These rules may also include provisions for competency testing in lieu of courses required for graduation, or demonstration of specific skill proficiency or understanding of concepts through work or experience.

**Summary of Bill**:

Access to Elective Computer Science Course.
Beginning no later than the 2022-23 school year, each school district that operates a high school must provide an opportunity for students to access an elective computer science course that is available to all students. School districts are encouraged to consider community-based or public-private partnerships in establishing and administering the elective course.

Earning Computer Science Credit through Competency Examinations.
Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, school districts may award academic credit for computer science to students through the completion of a competency examination. School district boards of directors that elect to award credit through this authorization must develop written policies that include:
- a course equivalency approval procedure;
- procedures for awarding competency-based credit for skills learned partially or wholly outside of a course; and
- an approval process for computer science courses taken before attending high school.

Waivers for Course Requirements.
Rules adopted by the SPI for implementing graduation course requirements must conform to new and modified requirements. The rules must now include provisions for:
- competency testing in lieu of courses required for graduation;
- competency testing in lieu of electives, including computer science electives; or
- the demonstration of specific skill proficiency or understanding of concepts through work or experience.

**Appropriation**: None.

**Fiscal Note**: Available.

**Effective Date**: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.