

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5088

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Awarding credits for computer science.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Palumbo and Mullet.

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

Background: 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 2013, the Legislature directed school districts to approve AP Computer Science as a math or science equivalent. In 2015, SHB 1813 directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt computer science learning standards.

Non-School Courses. If requested by a student or their family, a student who has completed high-school-level courses before attending high school must receive credit towards high school graduation requirements so long as:

- the course was taken with high school students; or
- the course is similar or equivalent to a course offered at a high school in the district.

Students who complete high school courses in these circumstances do not have to take an additional competency examination or perform additional assignments to receive the credit.

Competency Examinations. In current rules issued by OSPI, districts may grant credit based on student demonstration of proficiency or competency of certain subjects, per the district's written policy. In 2018, the Legislature directed OSPI to review available and appropriate options for various competency-based assessments. In addition, current rules require districts to adopt written policies to grant graduation credit for alternative learning experiences, non-high school courses, work experience, and challenges. Credit based on competency testing may be granted in lieu of enrollment or taking specific courses.

Summary: Computer Science Elective. Beginning no later than the 2022-23 school year, each district that operates a high school must provide the opportunity to access an elective computer science course that is available to all high school students. Districts are encouraged to consider community-based or public-private partnerships to establish and

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administer a course, but any such course must be aligned to the state learning standards for computer science or mathematics.

Competency-Based Credit. Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, districts may award academic credit for computer science based on completion of a competency examination. Any such competency exam must be aligned with the state learning standards for computer science or mathematics and course equivalency requirements adopted by OSPI.

Districts that award this credit must develop a written policy that addresses equivalency approval, skills learned partially or wholly outside the classroom, and computer science courses taken before high school. In addition, OSPI must create rules that address competency testing in lieu of graduation requirements and electives.

Prior to the use of any competency examination used to award computer science academic credit, OSPI must review the exam to ensure its alignment with the state learning standards for computer science or mathematics and course equivalency requirements adopted by OSPI.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	96	1	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019