

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE PASSES COMPUTER SCIENCE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT



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The House K-12 Education Committee passed on Tuesday a revised version of House Bill 8, which requires students to take a computer science course as a new graduation requirement.

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The House K-12 Education Committee passed on Tuesday a revised version of [House Bill 8](#), which requires students to take a computer science course as a new graduation requirement. While the initial version of the bill would have required the State Board of Education (SBE) to replace the current earth science graduation requirement with the new computer science requirement, the bill

sponsor, Rep. Erin Paré (R-Wake) revised the legislation following feedback from

NCASA and other education stakeholders to clarify that the computer science course would be a *standalone* graduation requirement. However, the latest version of the bill still requires the SBE to maintain the current 22 credits required for graduation by decreasing the number of required science credits from 3 to 2. As a result, the new computer science credit would not directly replace earth science, and students could still take earth science as one of their required elective credits. It is anticipated, though, that the State Board will remove earth science as a credit to make room for the new computer science credit, if the bill becomes law.

The bill sponsor further clarified in the proposed committee substitute (PCS), as summarized by legislative staff [here](#), that students could take the new high-school level computer science course in middle school as well as high school, although every middle school would still be required to offer an additional introductory-level computer science course as an elective for middle school students. The bill also includes an important change requested by NCASA for an exception to the computer science requirement for students with disabilities whose individualized education program (IEP) would prevent completion of the graduation requirement.

Because NCASA is aware that many school administrators still have concerns about the staffing required to implement these new requirements if the legislation is ultimately passed into law, NCASA has encouraged the bill sponsor and other legislators to assist local districts in hiring the new personnel this bill would require. The bill does provide a waiver from the new requirements for districts in the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, if they submit a signed notification to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) stating that no computer science course was available to students. If ultimately enacted into law, DPI would be required to submit a list of computer science courses fulfilling the graduation requirement by July 1, 2023, as well as a list of introductory courses to be published by January 1, 2025.

House Bill 8 passed the House K-12 Education Committee on Tuesday, February 12, and has since been referred to the House Committee on State Government. If passed in that committee, the bill will be sent to the House Rules Committee before a vote by the full House of Representatives and a repeat of the process in the Senate.

For a full list of other K-12 education legislation that was introduced or made progress this week, see NCASA's weekly [Education Legislation Tracking List](#).