

March 22, 2024

Chair Kunesh and Members of the Senate Education Finance Committee:

On behalf of the nearly 200 technology-enabled companies that comprise the membership of the Minnesota Technology Association, we urge you to pass SF4259 and provide funding for computer science educator training and capacity-building in Minnesota.

Look across Minnesota and it's clear that nearly every industry is impacted by digital technology. Whether in agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, finance, retail, transportation, education, or the arts, understanding computers and how to use them to solve problems is an important skill for our current and future workforce. Computer science coursework provides an essential foundation to students – not only for careers in technology, but for every career in today's world.

But sadly, Minnesota continues to rank **LAST** in the nation in terms of the percentage of high schools offering computer science coursework, at just 28%. To our south, Iowa's commitment to CS education is showing, with 84% of its high schools now offering coding classes. To our west, North Dakota recently passed legislation making computer science a graduation requirement for all students. While other states recognize the importance of preparing students for the technology-enabled jobs of the future, Minnesota falls further behind.

The time to act is now. The recently completed MN State Strategic Plan for Computer Science establishes a road map for CS education success for Minnesota school districts and a key component is funding for teacher training and district capacity-building. A relatively modest investment of \$8 million can jumpstart this initiative and lay the groundwork to successfully educate our next generation of technology creators, not simply users.

We thank you for your leadership on this important investment in Minnesota's future.

Sincerely,



Jeff Tollefson
President & CEO
Minnesota Technology Association