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ISD 271

SF2255
Supporting Budget Funding for Computer Science

Chair Kunesch and members of the Senate Education Finance Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to submit this letter in support of funding for computer science in the state budget. My name is Amy Kienberger, and I teach at New Code Academy in the Bloomington school district. I firmly believe that computer science is as essential as reading and writing if we want Minnesota students to be not just consumers of technology but producers and innovative leaders.

I am concerned that the current proposed budget does not continue state support for computer science. It is incredibly important for Minnesota to maintain at least \$1 million in funding for this subject. Throughout the last decade of my teaching career, I have witnessed computer science transform students and invigorate them in new ways. I have specifically seen success with students who have been pushed through the system and have low reading levels yet can code a robot to save the planet. I have included letters from some of my students detailing how computer science has benefited them.

“My name is Mason (8th grade) and I am a student at New Code Academy. I’ve joined New Code because I’ve been interested in coding for a very long time and that it is very important in future careers a lot of paths are open for me as someone who knows about coding. I am concerned that the current proposed budget does not continue state support for computer science. It is incredibly important that Minnesota maintains at least \$1 million in funding for this subject because I think it’s important as computer science also leads you into other paths like cybersecurity or even more physical ones like engineering. Creativity is a very important aspect for everyone in this state. Computer science can provide pathways and opportunities for many people. The funding for computer science can provide a lot of learning experiences for younger kids and job opportunities for kids coming out of high school and college and a lack of funding could risk important jobs that are in the field of computer science not having as many people or as much work

being put into them and could bring into risk of cyber security dangers or losing those important fields.”

“My name is Hidayat (7th grade). Computer science is important because it helps you understand how the technology you use every day—like phones, apps, and video games—actually works. Learning to code can be fun and creative, allowing you to build your own games, websites, or even AI chatbots. It also teaches problem-solving skills that can help in school and in real life. Plus, computer science is used in almost every career, from fashion and music to medicine and space exploration. If you enjoy being creative, solving puzzles, or making cool things with technology, computer science can open up endless possibilities for your future!”

“Thank you for letting me share my letter in support of funding for computer science education in the state budget. My name is Jacob Rabenhorst (8th grade), I am a student at New Code Academy which is in Bloomington, Minnesota, ISD 271. Computer science education is important for so many reasons, for me it is important because I feel it has helped me with my problem solving and critical thinking skills. These are skills that carry over into many areas of my life. I feel it is an important skill for everyone to learn as every person will use computer, critical thinking and problem solving skills in their lives either for college, career or for personal reasons. Computer science has expanded the way I think about and view the world. It is a new language, at first it is challenging and now after being enrolled in New Code Academy for the past 4 years, I feel like the skills I have learned have prepared me for high school, college and a career in the future. I think it would be sad to lose computer science education as Minnesota was making progress after having been ranked as one of the lowest in the country with the amount of courses offered in computer science to high school students. Minnesota can and should do better. Minnesota ranks in the top for overall education, so we as a state should want to rank in the top for computer science education as well, but by cutting the budget that will not happen. We as students deserve better. Please consider funding computer science education, my future depends on your decision.”

“My name is JJ Jallah (8th grade). I absolutely need computer science to stay because it has transformed my life. Coding has become so effortless and enjoyable for me. I still remember being 10 years old and not even knowing the word 'computer science' existed, let alone what it meant. Now, it's my world, my passion. I've come so far coding faster and better, with no struggles and I can't imagine losing something that brings me so much joy and growth.”

“My name is Carrie Onu (8th grade). Computer science is important because it helps children with how to deal with challenging things and creating stuff and because its fun.”

If Minnesota chooses not to invest in these essential skills for our students, they might be overwhelmed by AI and smartphones. Without the right tools and knowledge about how these systems function, they may miss the chance to engage with technology in meaningful and positive ways that contribute to our society.

My students and I thank you for accepting our comments. We genuinely believe in the importance of boosting support for computer science, and we kindly urge you to restore at least \$1 million in funding to the state budget.