

**Senate Education Finance Committee
SF 2255 - Governor's Ed Finance Bill
Computer Science Teachers Association**

Chair Kunesh and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SF2255. Specifically, we would like to address computer science education and urge you to maintain current levels of funding of \$1 million (\$500,000 per fiscal year) to support a computer science specialist and grants to school districts at MDE.

I am testifying on behalf of the Minnesota chapter of the Computer Science Teacher Association, here on behalf of our colleagues, but most importantly, our students.

In an increasingly technology-powered world, our students need to be equipped with the skills to be creators of new technologies, not just consumers. We want Minnesota students to be leaders in engaging with new technologies, solving state and global problems, and using computing collaboratively and creatively to build things we haven't even imagined yet. We absolutely cannot do this unless we invest now in expanding access to high quality computer science education in Minnesota schools.

But it's not just the future engineers and programmers that benefit from early access to computer science education. Citizens interact with the products of computer science in every aspect of their lives from banking to medical records, to how they get their news and even how they vote. The impact of technology on daily life will only grow by the time our current kindergarteners graduate from high school.

Minnesota is 48th in terms of access to Computer Science education in our K-12 school system, but we are making progress! Providing grants to districts helps empower teachers like ourselves to expand computer science access to Minnesota students including those in urban cities, rural areas, and tribal lands.

Since Minnesota is so far behind other states in CS education, teachers often transition into teaching computer science from other disciplines and are frequently the only one providing this instruction at their schools. Having a dedicated person at MDE has meant these teachers have state level support for professional development, standards guidance, and access to resources and grants. Without a dedicated person at the department of education, computer science education in Minnesota will be far less organized and standardized and teachers and students will miss out on valuable opportunities.

Teachers in Minnesota want to expose more of our students to computer science skills and the benefits the subject offers them, but we can't make real progress without state support. Please consider our request to, at a minimum, maintain current funding levels for computer science education in Minnesota. Let's make our state and our students leaders in using computer science to solve problems.