
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 887 (Berman) - Pupil instruction: high schools: computer science courses: California Computer Science Demonstration Grant Program: reporting

Version: July 17, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill establishes a voluntary California Computer Science Demonstration Grant Program and a corresponding California Computer Science Demonstration Grant Program Working Group (Working Group) for the purposes of expanding computer science course access to eligible public high schools and collect data on computer science course enrollment.

Fiscal Impact:

- The bill's establishment of the program along with the Working Group would be funded with private sources, therefore it would not result in additional costs to the state. However, at the expiration of the pilot program and to the extent private funding is no longer available, there could be Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures for the participating high schools to continue to offer computer science courses. The amount of these costs is unknown and would depend on the number of schools and the number of courses that they are offering.
- Any costs to the California Department of Education (CDE) are expected to be minor and absorbable.

Background: Existing law requires the Instructional Quality Commission to consider developing and recommending to the State Board of Education, on or before July 31, 2019, computer science content standards for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12 pursuant to recommendations developed by a group of computer science experts.

Existing law provides that if a school district requires more than two courses in mathematics for graduation from high school, the district may award a student up to one mathematics course credit for successfully completing a "category C" approved computer science course.

Existing law requires the California State University, and requests the University of California, to develop guidelines for high school computer science courses that may be approved for the purposes of recognition for admission.

AB 130 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021) establishes the Computer Science Supplementary Authorization Incentive Grant Program for the purpose of providing one-time grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support the preparation of credentialed teachers to earn a supplementary authorization in computer science and provide instruction in computer science coursework. It authorizes LEAs to

use grant funding to pay teachers' costs of coursework, books, fees, and tuition, as applicable, and requires applicants to provide a 100% match of grant funding, which may be in the form of release time or substitute teacher costs.

Proposed Law: This bill establishes the California Computer Science Demonstration Grant Program as a pilot program for the following purposes:

1. Increasing the number of public high schools offering a computer science course to increase student access to computer science education.
2. Increasing the computer science course access of pupils eligible for free or reduced-price meals, as specified, and pupils that are underrepresented in the field of computer science.
3. Reporting disaggregated data on the number of students who enroll in each new computer science course that results from the pilot program and submitting an interim report and a final report to the Legislature.

This bill establishes the California Computer Science Demonstration Grant Program Working Group which shall include non-profit organizations and private industry stakeholders with relevant expertise and experience in computer science education.

This bill requires the California Computer Science Coordinator to serve as a member on the Working Group.

The bill specifies that the pilot program shall be administered by a funding entity or entities. If there are multiple funding entities, the bill requires each funding entity to determine how funds that it contributes to the pilot program will be spent, provided that the expenditure completely aligns with the purposes of the pilot program. It also requires each funding entity to coordinate with each other to implement the purpose of the pilot program and submit one interim report and one final report to the Legislature.

This bill authorizes only public high schools that do not offer any computer science course to be eligible to voluntarily participate in the pilot program. The bill provides that the schools shall comply with applicable federal and state laws to protect individual privacy, including but not limited to, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

This bill requires the funding entity or funding entities, in coordination with the Working Group, to select public high schools to participate in the pilot program from the eligible high schools that apply to participate. It requires the Working Group, when selecting public high schools to participate in the pilot program, to consider geographic diversity and prioritize selecting participants with the goal of increasing the computer science course access of pupils eligible for free or reduced meals, as specified, and pupils that are underrepresented in the field of computer science.

This bill authorizes the allowable expenses to include the following: educator recruitment, professional development training, examinations and industry certifications, incentives for school districts to increase access to computer science courses,

incentives for educators who successfully complete professional development and teach computer science courses, and administrative costs.

This bill requires the funding entity or funding entities, in coordination with the Working Group, to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program and also submit an interim report on or before August 1, 2027, and a final report on or before July 1, 2028, to the respective Senate and Assembly Committees of Education and any other relevant policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, as specified.

This bill provides that the pilot program shall be funded through contributions, gifts, grants, in-kind donations, and donations from the funding entity or entities. The bill specifies that the Working Group shall not be funded by the state.

This bill requires the CDE, on or before June 30, 2028, and annually thereafter, to publicly post the following course-related data for grades 9 to 12, inclusive on its internet website, disaggregated at the state, county, school district, and school levels, for computer science courses that are submitted and certified by LEAs as part of the annual Fall 2 submission to California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS): the names and course codes of computer science courses that pupils are enrolled in at each school and the number and percentage of pupils who enrolled in each computer science course, disaggregated as specified.

Related Legislation: AB 2097 (Berman, 2024) would have required the governing board of an LEA and a charter school maintaining any of grades 9 to 12, to adopt a plan to offer at least one course in computer science education beginning with the 2026-27 school year and across all high schools by the 2028-29 school year, as specified. AB 2097 was held on the Suspense File in this Committee.

AB 1054 (Berman, 2023) was substantially similar to AB 2097 and held on the Suspense File in this Committee.

Staff Comments: This bill establishes a pilot program to increase the number of computer science courses available to students who are historically underrepresented in the field of computer science. A private funding entity would administer the pilot program, while the Working Group would be comprised of nonprofit organizations and private industry stakeholders with relevant expertise and experience in computer science education. The funding entity, in coordination with the Working Group, would select eligible schools that apply for the pilot program and provide grant funding to the high schools that are selected and support educator recruitment, professional development, examinations and industry certifications, and incentives.

According to the author, “Thirty-two states already require every high school to offer a computer science course. Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee go even further requiring a computer science course for high school graduation. California has fallen behind these other states when it comes to prioritizing access to computer science education, exacerbating educational inequities and diversity gaps.

“In response to state cost considerations, AB 887 would be a creative step toward increasing access to computer science for all, by allowing public high schools, who

would otherwise have no access to computer science, to participate in a pilot program. The purpose of the pilot program would be to increase the number of public high schools offering computer science and increase access to computer science education for socioeconomically disadvantaged students and students that are underrepresented in the field of computer science. It is time to restore California as a leader and take action to increase access to computer science education, and begin closing the current gender and diversity gaps.”

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