HOUSE BILL 8:
Computer Sci. Grad. Requirement.

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	**Date:**	March 8, 2023
Introduced by:	Reps. Paré, Torbett, Blackwell, Hardister	**Prepared by:**	Samantha Yarborough Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	Third Edition		

OVERVIEW: The 3rd edition of House Bill 8 would require the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish a computer science graduation requirement. It would also require public school units to offer computer science instruction to students in middle and high school.

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-12(9d) grants the SBE the power to develop exit standards required for graduation from high school. The statute requires the SBE to include successful completion of CPR instruction and a passing grade in a Founding Principles of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina course. Additionally, G.S. 115C-81.65 requires that the SBE include a passing grade in an Economics and Personal Finance course as a graduation requirement. S.L. 2020-78 requires that the SBE establish as a graduation requirement that each student complete one art credit between grades 6 and 12.

The SBE has established the Future-Ready Course of Study requiring 22 credits to graduate from high school, including:

- 4 English credits.
- 4 Mathematics credits.
- 4 Social Studies credits as follows: Founding Principles, Economics and Personal Finance, American History, and World History.
- 3 Science credits as follows: 1 physical science, Biology, and 1 earth/environmental science.
- 1 Health and Physical Education credit, including successful completion of CPR instruction.
- 2 Elective credits of any combination of the following: Career and Technical Education (CTE), Arts Education, World Language.
- 4 Elective credits from the following: CTE, ROTC, Arts Education, or any other subject area.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 1 would require the SBE to establish a computer science graduation requirement. The computer science course would not fulfill an English, mathematics, science, or social studies credit. When establishing the computer science requirement, the SBE would be required to maintain the 22 credits required for graduation by decreasing the number of required elective credits from 6 to 5. The requirement would begin with students entering the 9th grade in the 2024-2025 school year.

Students enrolling in a public high school in North Carolina after completion of the 11th grade would be exempt from the requirement. The SBE would not enforce the computer science graduation requirement for any student whose individualized education program (IEP) states that the student's disability would prevent the student from completing the requirement.

Section 2 would require the SBE to include computer science instruction in the standard course of study. Computer science would be defined as the study of computers and algorithmic processes, including their (i) principles, (ii) hardware and software designs, (iii) implementation, and (iv) impact on society.

Each public school unit (PSU) would be required to offer (i) an elective introductory computer science course to middle school students and (ii) a computer science course that fulfills the graduation requirement for high school students. The course fulfilling the graduation requirement could be offered to middle school students as well.

The SBE would be required to develop a list of approved courses to be offered to middle and high school students and post it on the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) website. The list of computer science courses fulfilling the graduation requirement would be published by July 1, 2023. The list of introductory courses would be published by January 1, 2025.

For the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years only, PSUs may receive a waiver of the computer science requirements if they submit a signed notification to DPI stating that no computer science course was available to students. This would also waive the graduation requirement for students entering 9th grade in the year the notice was submitted. DPI would be required to maintain a list of PSUs that submitted a notification.

Section 3 would extend the requirements of computer science instruction to all PSUs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: HB 8 would be effective when it becomes law.