

## COMPUTER CODING AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

**House Bill 4326 as introduced**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Greg VanWoerkom**  
**Committee: Education**  
**Complete to 3-8-21**

Analysis available at  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

### SUMMARY:

House Bill 4326 would amend the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements under the Revised School Code to allow computer coding to qualify as a language other than English for the purposes of the Merit Curriculum language requirement.

Now and under the bill, a district or public school academy (PSA, or charter school) must ensure that a student has earned a certain number of credits in various disciplines before awarding a high school diploma. Among those is the requirement that a student receive two credits that are age-appropriate in a language other than English between kindergarten and 12th grade, beginning with the class of 2016. Recent legislation<sup>1</sup> has allowed one credit of that requirement to be met in whole or in part by completing a department-approved career and technical education (CTE) program or by completing visual or performing arts instruction (that is in addition to the one credit of visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts that is also required to receive a high school diploma).

Under the bill, computer coding would be considered to be a language other than English. This would allow a student to complete all or part of the foreign language requirement by taking a course or courses in computer coding.

Additionally, the bill refers to a shift in testing in high school math and science from “the ACT or SAT examinations, as applicable” to using the SAT examination to assess math and the “applicable state assessment” to assess science. This reflects the use of the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) to measure student performance relative to the Michigan Academic Standards in science. The move to the M-STEP was planned for spring 2020 but was not implemented due to the cancellation of testing. The M-STEP science test will be operational for spring 2021.<sup>2</sup>

MCL 380.1278a

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 PA 208 (HB 4465) allowed this for students graduating in 2015-2020.

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billanalysis/House/pdf/2013-HLA-4465-35409EB4.pdf>

2014 PA 293 (HB 5793) extended that ability to students graduating in 2021.

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billanalysis/House/pdf/2013-HLA-5793-0B22D18C.pdf>

2018 PA 232 (SB 175) extended the ending year to 2024.

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/billanalysis/House/pdf/2017-HLA-0175-DB2D6B57.pdf>

2020 PA 158 (SB 171) removed the deadline entirely.

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/billanalysis/House/pdf/2017-HLA-0175-DB2D6B57.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Guide\\_to\\_State\\_Assessments\\_622260\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Guide_to_State_Assessments_622260_7.pdf)

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or on school districts, intermediate school districts (ISDs), or public school academies (PSAs).

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.