



March 17, 2021

Joint Education Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and Members of the Joint Education Committee:

The College Board, as a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success, welcomes the opportunity to share comments with this committee in support of Raised Bill 1033, a bill that would allow computer science count as a STEM credit for high school graduation requirements.

An education in computer science and coding—the tools with which the future is being built—has been out of reach for too long for too many students across the country.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with Connecticut to help bring computer science coursework to even more students, in every corner of the state, through this bill. One of the ways the College Board is already doing this work is through our newest AP course—AP Computer Science Principles (AP CSP). The AP CSP course changes the invitation to computer science education by engaging traditionally underrepresented students. We believe that providing a more diverse group of students with access to computer science courses is imperative to increasing access to the computer science field's high-paying, fast-paced jobs and to drive innovation, creativity, and competitiveness.

We also want to share the latest [research](#) findings for AP CSP that we think will underscore the importance of the state's efforts to expand computer science access.

- The College Board finds students who took AP CSP in high school were more than 3 times as likely to major in computer science in college, compared to similar students who did not take AP CSP.
  - These results held true for female, Black, Hispanic, and first-generation college students.
  - In fact, Black students who took AP CSP then majored in computer science at higher rate (nearly 20%) than students from any other racial/ethnic group.
- AP CSP students are nearly twice as likely to enroll in AP Computer Science A (CSA)—a more programming-focused course—than students who did not take AP CSP, thus notably reducing AP CSA race/ethnicity enrollment gaps.
- Black students who take AP CSP are three times more likely to take AP CSA, virtually the same share as Asian CSP students, who have long led AP CSA participation.



- AP CSP may serve as a stepping stone to other advanced STEM coursework. For the class of 2019, more than half of the students who took AP CSP were taking their first AP STEM course. The number of Black, Hispanic, and first-generation students was even higher.

While we are pleased with the success we've seen with AP CSP across the nation, there is still significant room for growth in Connecticut. Based on College Board 2019-20 school year data, there are:

- 19 high schools that only offered AP Computer Science A.
- 43 high schools that only offered AP Computer Science Principles
- 39 high schools that offered both AP CSA and AP CSP.

While AP Computer Science course access continues to expand, the state has seen solid growth in the percentage of students participating in AP Exams:

- AP CSP has seen an 158% increase from when the exams were first administered in 2017 to the most recent administration in May 2020.
- Female public school examinee participation in AP CSP has seen a 183% increase.

We also want to point out that 16 Connecticut high schools received an AP CS Female Diversity Award. Schools receiving the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have achieved either 50% or higher female exam taker representation in one of or both AP computer science courses, or a percentage of female computer science exam takers that meets or exceeds that of the school's female population.

- 1 high school received both awards.
- 3 high schools received a CSA award.
- 12 high schools received a CSP award.

In closing, we would like to reiterate our support for Raised Bill 1033 and look forward to working with you, along with districts and schools to expand access to and participation in computer science courses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley Gibson".

Ashley Gibson  
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College Board  
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