

An Act to Expand Access to Computer Science Coursework (H.445/S.277)

Why does MA need to expand access to Computer Science coursework?

Massachusetts—home to a burgeoning technology and science sector—is experiencing rapid growth in jobs that demand advanced computer skills, but the demand for this labor has outpaced supply. Massachusetts has the highest concentration of tech jobs across all states, and one out of every three jobs created in the state are estimated to be in STEM fields.¹

Demand for computer and information technology professionals is growing at a rapid pace not only in the Commonwealth, but across the United States. Nationally, the median annual wage for computer and information technology occupations was \$91,250 in May 2020, while the median annual wage for all occupations was \$41,950.²

Improving diversity in the tech sector is an urgent priority for employers, yet Black, Hispanic/Latino and female students are underrepresented in computer science classes.

Exposure to CS in high school is a critical way to put more students on pathways to good careers, yet Massachusetts has gaps and inequities in access to CS. Urban high schools—which tend to serve high proportions of minority and low-income students—are less likely to offer foundational CS courses than rural and suburban districts, potentially exacerbating gaps in representation of people of color earning STEM degrees and breaking into technical, high-earning careers.

What would this bill do?

An Act to Expand Access to Computer Science Coursework (H.445/S.277) requires every public high school in Massachusetts to offer at least one foundational CS course by the start of the 2025–26 school year. The foundational CS course will include rigorous math or science concepts as outlined in standards issued by DESE.


BY THE NUMBERS

NATIONAL MEDIAN WAGE

MAY 2020

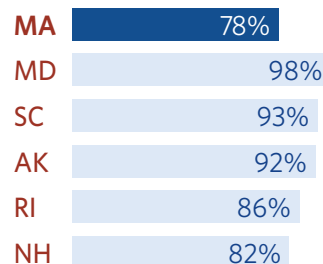
- **\$91,250** Computer and information technology occupations
- **\$41,950** All occupations

According to code.org, in the 2020–2021 school year:

 Only **5.8%** of MA high school students were enrolled in a CS course.

- Just **71%** of MA urban high schools offer a foundational CS class

HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING A FOUNDATION CS COURSE



STUDENT PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS COALITION MEMBERS



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ENDNOTES

1 MassTLC, S. F., CEO of. (2022, June 28). MassTLC Releases 2022 State of the Massachusetts Tech Economy Report. MassTLC. masstlc.org/masstlc-releases-2022-state-of-the-massachusetts-tech-economy-report/

2 Computer and Information Technology Occupations (CITO)," Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), last modified September 8, 2021, bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/home.htm