

# Legislative Analysis



## COMPUTER CODING AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Phone: (517) 373-8080  
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

**House Bill 4974 as introduced**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Greg VanWoerkom**  
**Committee: Education**  
**Complete to 10-18-19**

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

### SUMMARY:

House Bill 4974 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 would remove a requirement instituted by 2018 PA 232 (SB 175) that by September 1, 2018, and yearly thereafter, a school district or PSA report the number of students who partially or fully fulfilled a foreign language requirement by completing a CTE program or curriculum, or visual or performing arts instruction, in the previous year.

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>

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

House Bill 4974 would result in a minimal cost savings for the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and school districts and PSAs.

MDE would no longer incur administrative costs to collect a report from districts regarding the number of pupils who partially or fully fulfilled one credit in a language other than English by completing comparable coursework in CTE or visual or performing arts.

School districts and PSAs would no longer incur administrative costs to track and comply with new reporting requirements.

Legislative Analyst: Jenny McInerney  
Fiscal Analysts: Samuel Christensen  
Jacqueline Mullen

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