

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

I fully support HB 1398. The components of this bill are essential to ensure that all students have a foundational understanding of computer science necessary for the 21st Century and beyond. This foundational skill directly benefits students in being choice ready. Computing is a foundational skill for K–12 students. It develops students' computational and critical thinking skills and teaches them how to create—not just use—new technologies. Computing skills are increasingly valued in every sector, including agriculture, design, and manufacturing jobs. These open jobs will continue to grow, and without the necessary skills to fill them, our students will get left behind. But this goes far beyond just preparing students for jobs. While not every student will become a computer scientist or even pursue a STEM career, all will benefit from learning fundamental CS concepts and practices. Multiple studies show that students learning computer science in primary school perform better in reading, math, and science. Computer science education promises to significantly enhance student preparedness for the future of work and active citizenship. With North Dakota as a leader in education, let's not fall behind at this critical juncture. It is the time for our continued growth mindset that allows cross-curricular learning for a future that also holds digital literacy as equally important as responsibility. I ask for your full support of HB 1398. Thank you for your efforts in providing students in North Dakota with the foundational computer science instruction that they need.

Sincerely,

Richard Smith
Resident of Stark County
Born, raised, and educated in North Dakota
Husband of a North Dakota Native
Father of 3 North Dakota children