March 13, 2023

Re: HB 1398; Support

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Code.org is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding access to computer science courses for all students. **Code.org fully and emphatically supports HB 1398.**

The components of this bill are essential to ensure that all students have a foundational understanding of computer science necessary for our modern world. 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. In addition to the more than 1,500 currently open computing jobs in North Dakota, 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. Today, just 44% of high schools in North Dakota teach computer science and only 15 schools offered an AP Computer Science course in 2019–2020.

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.

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,

Sean Roberts
Vice President of Government Affairs, Code.org
www.code.org