



Testimony

Senate Education Committee

HOUSE BILL NO. 1398

March 15, 2023

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee. The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is a membership organization led by business executives – joined by economic development, chamber of commerce, and higher education leaders – to advance and advocate for shared strategic economic development opportunities for the Red River Valley region and for North Dakota.

The Valley Prosperity Partnership strongly supports HB1398, which would require the integration of cybersecurity into K-12 classwork (not as a stand-alone course) and mandate a computer science class as a graduation requirement (after 2025).

Having basic computer literacy skills can help children develop advanced skills and create pathways to higher wage occupations. Employers in all sectors of the economy want their workers to have basic computer skills as their organizations become ever more dependent on computers.

Communication today is mostly digital. Staying safe online is one of the most important things that young people can learn about technology. The internet is a part of modern life that contains a lot of hidden dangers, and an adult can't always be there to keep an eye on their activities. The widespread adoption of e-learning in education and the proliferation of social media has increased cyberattacks; cybercriminals are finding more opportunities to defraud people and steal sensitive information.

Educating students in the basics of cybersecurity – many who cannot imagine life without a smartphone – not only protects their identity, but it literally could save their life. Teaching students about cybersecurity from a young age protects not only them, but also our communities, schools, companies, and countries from digital threats and attacks.

The VPP strongly supports HB1398's intention to increase understanding of cybersecurity at all grade levels and the need for a required computer science class prior to graduation.

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