

News Release

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State eyes model academic standards in computer science

MADISON — The potential of computer science to drive job growth and innovation calls for elementary and secondary schools to prepare all students with foundational knowledge in the subject.

To meet this need, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is requesting public comment on whether the state should develop model academic standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in computer science. The [public comment survey](http://dpi.wi.gov/computer-science) can be found online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/computer-science>.

“We welcome public input on the best way to ensure our kids have a foundation in computer science that prepares them to be college and career ready,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “We think standards would help us improve access and equity in computer education, but want public input before moving forward.”

Model academic standards are written goals for teaching and learning that will tell students, parents, educators, and citizens what students should have learned at a given point in time.

Customarily, clear standards in a subject area help ensure that schools offer students the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for success in that subject. In Wisconsin, model academic standards serve as a guide for planning curriculum and lessons and are voluntary for all schools: public and private.

“If we determine that computer science standards are needed, Wisconsin experts in the field along with teachers, college and university faculty, business and industry leaders, and policymakers will help us develop model standards that integrate computer science across the PK-12 curriculum,” Evers said.

Computing occupations make up two-thirds of all projected new jobs in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Additionally, some data show that demand for computing jobs in Wisconsin is more than three times the average demand rate for other jobs. However, student access to coursework is uneven across the state. Most recent Advanced Placement (AP) data show just 381 students took the AP computer science exam (2015 graduates) compared to more than 6,800 who took AP calculus exams and more than 3,300 who

Public Input Survey

An online survey has been created to gather public input to determine the need for computer science academic standards in Wisconsin and whether to continue the revision process. Visit: <http://dpi.wi.gov/computer-science> and click on the computer icon to take the survey.

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took AP statistics. Currently, fewer than one in five Wisconsin high school students who took AP computer science were students of color. Only one in 10 were female.

Wisconsin has taken some steps to improve computer science education to ensure that appropriately licensed educators teach computer science courses, expand opportunities for educators to gain computer science certification, and offer provisions for computer science coursework to be counted as a mathematics credit to meet public high school graduation requirements.

Model academic standards for computer science would be the first set of standards developed under a transparent process involving the State Superintendent's Standards Review Council. The body is being formed to provide the state superintendent with recommendations on which standards need review and to monitor the review and revisions process. That process will include opportunities for public comment on draft standards. The state currently has [model academic standards](#) across 27 subject areas.

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_78.pdf.