

June 30, 2006

Texas State Board of Education  
Mrs. Geraldine Miller, Chair  
William B. Travis State Office Building  
1701 N. Congress Avenue  
Austin, TX 78701

Mrs. Miller:

I am writing to you to express my support for **the addition of computer science as an option for the fourth year science credit for both the recommended and distinguished achievement high school graduation programs**. My support specifically pertains to proposed amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 74, Curriculum Requirements--§74.61(i)(1)(B).

Please allow me to explain my stance.

- As a former school superintendent who was fortunate enough to have a four-year course sequence in computer science, I have seen first-hand the positive effects of having four years of computer science. We had high school students go on to successful college and professional careers as a result of having more computer science courses.
- As a faculty member in the Computer Information Systems (CIS) Department at my college, I again see first-hand the implications of students having additional coursework in computer science before arriving at college. There seems to be a direct correlation between those students who have more formal exposure to computer science in high school and those students who are more successful in college.
- Last semester, one of my students researched the gender “digital divide” that is apparent in our CIS courses. She learned that women (and minorities) are severely underrepresented in computer science courses, not only at our college but in colleges and universities throughout the nation. In order to remain competitive with other countries in the world, we need more people in the computer science field, and especially more females and minorities. China and India each are graduating hundreds of thousands of computer science majors every year. My student found numerous research studies that learned that high school students have a higher propensity to continue on with their studies in computer science if they are given sufficient support (e.g., adequate curriculum) while in high school. Students typically do not enter the computer science field if they have not had formal exposure to computer science while in high school.
- As the elected Computer Science Representative on the Board of Directors for the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), I have seen the positive outcomes that accrue when high school students are given increased opportunities to excel in the computer science field.
- Finally, as a dues paying member of the Texas Computer Education Association, I have a vested interest in Texas high schools and their students. It may sound

somewhat worn and trite, but our students are our future. We need to do our utmost to provide them with the best possible education, and in this instance that means adding **computer science as an option for the fourth year science credit for both the recommended and distinguished achievement high school graduation programs.**

Thank you for your time. I hope that you and the Texas State Board of Education see the wisdom in following my recommended course of action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "T".

John T. Thompson, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor & Coordinator  
Educational Computing Program  
Computer Information Systems Dept.  
Chase 208, Buffalo State College  
1300 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222  
(716) 878-3531 [thompsjt@buffalostate.edu](mailto:thompsjt@buffalostate.edu)