Members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

As a diverse coalition that recognizes the value of K-12 computer science education for Wisconsin's economy and our students, we **respectfully urge the Legislature to include funding for computer science teacher training and licensure in the upcoming 2025-2027 biennial budget bill.**

In an age of AI, computer science is an essential literacy. By teaching computational thinking, problem-solving, data analysis, and more, computer science is not only relevant for every career, it shows students how to think creatively about any problem. Some of Wisconsin's strongest industries - including manufacturing and agriculture - increasingly require computing and technology skills. In order to ensure every student can access this essential education, we must invest in the computer science teacher pipeline.

Insufficient teacher capacity is one of the biggest reasons schools struggle to offer computer science. And across Wisconsin, schools' ability to recruit and train teachers in this newer subject is not equal. While 95% of large schools currently offer computer science, only 37% of small schools do. Similarly, the percentage of rural schools offering computer science is 12% lower than the percentage of suburban schools. But dedicated state funding has proven to be directly correlated with higher levels of computer science course offerings. Supporting teachers in the schools that need it the most will ensure the opportunity to learn critical digital skills is not just confined to certain regions of the state.

All of Wisconsin's neighbors have appropriated state funding for computer science, including Minnesota ($1 million in FY24-25), Michigan ($4 million in FY24), Illinois ($3 million annually) and Indiana ($3 million annually). Meanwhile, Wisconsin continues to fall further behind in the number of schools offering the subject. Only 52% of high schools offer computer science - a 4% decrease from last year. This access rate is not only lower than the national average (60%), but lower than all neighboring states, except for Minnesota. Turning these trends around requires making computer science a point of statewide emphasis and allocating state funding to the subject.

Investing in computer science education will change lives for Wisconsin students and help the state retain a competitive talent pipeline for in-demand jobs. **Please support the funding request for computer science teacher training and licensure in the 2025-2027 state budget**. Thank you for your consideration.

**Signatories**

Julia Wynn, *Director of State Government Affairs*
**Code.org**

Kathy Henrich, *Chief Executive Officer*
**MKE Tech Hub Coalition**

Zach Brandon, *President*
**Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce**

Dan Harbeke, *Regional Head, Public Policy and External Affairs*
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Dr. Dennis Brylow, *Professor and Chair*
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