

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**EDUCATION**

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Notice of Action on Petition for Rulemaking**

**Standards and Assessment**

**Graduation Requirements**

**N.J.A.C. 6A:8**

Petitioner: Robyn LaTorre.

**Take notice** that on April 26, 2017, the New Jersey State Board of Education (State Board) received a petition for rulemaking from the above petitioner requesting the State Board of Education amend N.J.A.C. 6A:8 to add computer programming as a world language for purposes of the State's high school graduation requirements. A notice acknowledging receipt of the petition was published in the June 19, 2017 New Jersey Register at 49 N.J.R. 1732(a).

The petitioner specifically requested the State Board adopt amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1viii to specify computer programming or coding, such as C++, Javascript, Swift, HTML, XML, or Python, can satisfy the requirement for high school students to earn at least five credits in world languages or to demonstrate proficiency via an assessment.

The petitioner's request indicated the specific amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 would be beneficial to all students, but especially those pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The petitioner's request indicated most undergraduate degrees in STEM fields require computer language coursework and a student's critical-thinking skills, mathematical reasoning, and logistical mindset are enhanced when learning to code. The petitioner, who is a high school teacher, indicated the addition to the world languages requirement would offer a more complete education to 21st century learners.

Part of the Department's charge is to prepare New Jersey students for a global economy and to contribute to local, national, and international communities. The requirement for high school students to take a minimum of five credits (one course) in world languages to receive a State-endorsed diploma is a critical component in meeting this charge. The Department strongly contends that New Jersey students would not be sufficiently prepared for postsecondary engagement if there is any change to the world language requirement.

N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-4.1 established world languages as one of the core fields of study that must be taught in all schools. The Department acknowledges that a computer programming/code course may be valuable for students; however, it does not meet the expectations of the World Languages Standard 7.1 in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards since it would not assist students in being prepared to engage in meaningful conversation, to understand and interpret spoken and written language, and to present information, concepts, and ideas, while also gaining an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures. In addition, the Department utilizes the State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize graduating students who are able to demonstrate proficiency in English and one or more world languages.

Furthermore, it is unnecessary to amend N.J.A.C. 6A:8 because a school district has the discretion to set policy that would allow students to use a computer programming/coding course to fulfill five credits in 21st century life and careers or an elective to meet the 120 credits required for a State-endorsed diploma, as established by N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1.

Students interested in computer programming/coding also can take Advanced Placement Computer Science, which can be used to fulfill one of the three courses in mathematics required for a State-endorsed high school diploma.

For the reasons listed above, the petitioner's request is hereby denied.