

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 588
By: Bohac
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties suggest that public school students should be better prepared to take advantage of the demand for computer science skills in the job market. H.B. 588 seeks to address this issue through the establishment of a grant program for promoting computer science certification and professional development for public school teachers.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 588 amends the Education Code to require the commissioner of education, not later than December 31, 2017, to establish a computer science certification grant program to encourage teachers to become certified as computer science teachers and to continue professional development in computer science education. The bill requires the commissioner, from funds appropriated for that purpose, to make grants to eligible providers that offer training for computer science certification for teachers in accordance with certification requirements adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification and that offer professional development for currently certified computer science teachers to ensure that certified teachers maintain working knowledge of current industry standard tools and resources.

H.B. 588 makes the following providers eligible to receive grants under the program, if the provider also meets eligibility standards established by commissioner rule: an institution of higher education, a regional education service center, an independent school district or a partnership of multiple independent school districts, or a nonprofit entity approved by the commissioner that has demonstrated experience in providing professional development in the area of educational technology. The bill requires an eligible provider receiving a program grant to provide the training or professional development to teachers in at least three high-need school districts, as determined by commissioner rule and, in each school year, to successfully provide the training necessary to enable at least 10 teachers to receive computer science certification. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.