

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2180
By: Nelson
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that computer science and coding skills are in strong demand in the job market, but concerns have been raised that despite these opportunities Texas students are not being adequately prepared for these jobs. S.B. 2180 seeks to address these concerns by providing for the update of the essential knowledge and skills for the technology applications curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight and for a computer science strategic advisory committee to develop and provide recommendations for increasing computer science instruction and participation in public schools.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 2180 amends the Education Code to require the State Board of Education (SBOE), in adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the technology applications curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight, to adopt essential knowledge and skills that include coding, computer programming, computational thinking, and cybersecurity. The bill requires the SBOE to review and revise, as needed, the essential knowledge and skills of the technology applications curriculum every five years to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to student education and aligns with current or emerging professions and requires the SBOE to do so beginning not later than December 31, 2022.

S.B. 2180 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish the computer science strategic advisory committee to develop and provide recommendations for increasing computer science instruction and participation in public schools. The bill provides for the advisory committee's composition, which includes 11 appointed members and other members added by the advisory committee, and for the advisory committee's operation, including a requirement that TEA staff members provide administrative support for the advisory committee and that funding for the administrative and operational expenses of the advisory committee be provided by appropriation to TEA for that purpose.

S.B. 2180 requires the advisory committee, not later than September 1, 2020, to submit to the governor and the legislature a report that includes recommended changes to state law, including

funding proposals and timelines for the implementation of the recommended changes. The bill requires the report to include recommendations that are intended to:

- increase the number of certified computer science teachers;
- increase the number of public high schools offering computer science courses;
- increase the number of high school students enrolled in computer science courses;
- encourage the enrollment of diverse student populations in computer science courses; and
- expand computer science learning opportunities, including computer programming, computer coding, cybersecurity, and computational thinking, in public schools.

The advisory committee is abolished and the bill's provisions relating to the advisory committee expire January 1, 2021.

S.B. 2180 requires TEA to implement a provision of the bill only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. The bill, if the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, authorizes, but expressly does not require, TEA to implement a provision of the bill using other appropriations available for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.