87R2889 MWC-F

By:  González of El Paso H.B. No. 244

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of a grant program for promoting computer science certification and professional development in coding, technology applications, and computer science for public school teachers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Subchapter J, Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 21.466 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.466.  COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(b)  The commissioner shall establish a competitive professional development grant program to encourage teachers to:

(1)  obtain computer science certification; and

(2)  continue professional development in coding, computational thinking, and computer science education.

(c)  From money appropriated for the purpose, the commissioner shall make grants to eligible providers that offer:

(1)  professional development for elementary school and middle and junior high school teachers to ensure teachers maintain a working knowledge of current computer industry standard tools and resources; and

(2)  training for computer science certification for teachers in accordance with certification requirements adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification.

(d)  To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a provider must:

(1)  be an institution of higher education, regional education service center, or school district or partnership of multiple school districts or a nonprofit entity approved by the commissioner that has demonstrated experience in providing professional development through a statewide network; and

(2)  meet eligibility standards established by commissioner rule.

(e)  An eligible provider receiving a grant under this section must:

(1)  provide the training or professional development described by Subsection (c) and establish professional development hubs in each education service center region;

(2)  serve high-need campuses;

(3)  have established partnerships with institution of higher education faculty with expertise in computing and computer science education; and

(4)  develop partnerships with computer industry professionals.

(f)  The total amount of grants awarded under this section for a state fiscal biennium may not exceed $4 million.

(g)  The commissioner may adopt rules as necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2.  Not later than December 31, 2021, the commissioner of education shall establish the grant program required under Section 21.466, Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2021.