87R9979 MLH-D

By:  Allison H.B. No. 3298

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to computer science and technology applications in public schools, including the essential knowledge and skills of the technology applications curriculum, the establishment of a computer science strategic advisory committee, and the establishment of a computer science and technology applications professional development grant program 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 award grants under this section if funds are available for that purpose from:

(1)  appropriated funds;

(2)  excess funds identified under Subsection (h);

(3)  federal funds;

(4)  any gifts or donations received by the commissioner; or

(5)  funding provided by a public-private partnership.

(h)  If the commissioner certifies that the amount appropriated for a state fiscal year for purposes of the Foundation School Program exceeds the amount to which school districts are entitled under Chapters 46 and 48 for that year, the commissioner may use the excess funds to award grants under this section.

(i)  The commissioner shall notify eligible providers as soon as practicable regarding the availability of funds under this section.

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

SECTION 2.  Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 28.0181 to read as follows:

Sec. 28.0181.  COMPUTER SCIENCE STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) In this section, "advisory committee" means the computer science strategic advisory committee established under this section.

(b)  The agency shall establish the computer science strategic advisory committee to develop and provide recommendations for increasing computer science instruction and participation in public schools.

(c)  The advisory committee is composed of at least 11 members. The members must include:

(1)  two members appointed by the governor;

(2)  two members appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(3)  two members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(4)  one member appointed by the chair of the senate committee with primary jurisdiction over primary and secondary education;

(5)  one member appointed by the chair of the senate committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education;

(6)  one member appointed by the chair of the house of representatives committee with primary jurisdiction over primary and secondary education;

(7)  one member appointed by the chair of the house of representatives committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education;

(8)  one member appointed by the chair of the State Board of Education; and

(9)  any other members added by the advisory committee in a manner determined by the committee in the committee's discretion.

(d)  In appointing members to the advisory committee, the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives shall coordinate appointments to ensure that the six individuals appointed to the advisory committee collectively by those officers include:

(1)  three educators who teach in a public school and are certified in computer science;

(2)  one parent or person standing in parental relation to a student enrolled in a public school;

(3)  one person employed in the technology industry; and

(4)  one faculty member of an institution of higher education.

(e)  The governor shall designate a member of the advisory committee as the presiding officer of the advisory committee to serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the governor.

(f)  The advisory committee may hold public meetings.

(g)  Members of the advisory committee are not entitled to compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling committee duties.

(h)  Staff members of the agency shall provide administrative support for the advisory committee.

(i)  Funds available for purposes of Section 21.466, subject to any applicable restrictions, may be used to cover the cost of the administrative and operational expenses of the advisory committee.

(j)  Not later than September 1, 2022, the advisory committee shall 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 report shall include recommendations that are intended to:

(1)  increase the number of certified computer science teachers;

(2)  increase the number of public high schools offering computer science courses;

(3)  increase the number of high school students enrolled in computer science courses;

(4)  encourage the enrollment of diverse student populations in computer science courses; and

(5)  expand computer science learning opportunities, including computer programming, computer coding, cybersecurity, and computational thinking, in public schools.

(k)  The advisory committee is abolished and this section expires January 1, 2023.

SECTION 3.  Section 5, Chapter 1149 (H.B. 2984), Acts of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, is repealed.

SECTION 4.  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 5.  As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the appropriate persons, as provided by Section 28.0181(c), Education Code, as added by this Act, shall appoint members to the computer science strategic advisory committee.

SECTION 6.  Not later than December 31, 2022, the State Board of Education shall review and revise, as needed, the essential knowledge and skills of the technology applications curriculum as required by Section 28.002(c-3), Education Code, as added by Chapter 1149 (H.B. 2984), Acts of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019.

SECTION 7.  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.