

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3700
By: Guerra
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Computers are an important part of many people's daily lives and play a fundamental role in commerce and in most occupations in our modern economy. Interested parties contend that it is essential that students are exposed to the field of computer science in our public education system because computer science courses can transform the way a student thinks about the world. Currently, computer science courses often do not count toward a student's required coursework and are treated as electives. Reports indicate that more than half of projected jobs in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields are in computing occupations. The parties have expressed concern that computer science education is marginalized throughout the public education system in Texas and across the United States and that the lack of access to computer science hurts the Texas economy and creates major inequities in education, particularly for those groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields. H.B. 3700 seeks to address these issues.

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. 3700 amends the Education Code to require the commissioner of education by rule to develop and implement a computer science development pilot program, not later than September 1, 2015, under which students in participating school districts may comply with the curriculum requirements for the third mathematics or science credit of the foundation high school program by successfully completing an advanced computer science course; under which participating school districts implement rigorous standards, as developed by the commissioner, for computer science courses that are focused on the creation and use of software and computing technologies; and under which classroom teachers employed by participating school districts have increased opportunities to become certified as computer science teachers. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to administer the pilot program and sets its provisions to expire July 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.