

SUBJECT: Authorizing a computer science professional development grant fund

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 12 ayes — Dutton, Lozano, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley,  
Huberty, K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — M. González

WITNESSES: For — Shelley Gretlein, NI; Stephanie Villareal, Representative Mary Gonzalez; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ray Sullivan, Amazon; Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Daniela Rubio, Austin Achieve Public Schools; Chloe Latham Sikes, Intercultural Development Research Association; Angela Hale, LGBTQ Chambers of Commerce and McKinney Chamber of Commerce; Jennifer Rodriguez, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company; Thomas Ratliff, Microsoft; Tracy Young, NAF; Taylor Sims, Project Lead the Way; Hillary Lilly, San Antonio ISD; Grover Campbell, TASB; Kristin McGuire, TCASE; Servando Esparza, TechNet; Luis Acuna, Texas 2036; Dena Donaldson, Texas AFT; Megan Herring, Texas Association of Business; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Jennifer Bergland, Texas Computer Education Association; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Starlee Coleman, Texas Public Charter School Association; Carrie Griffith, Texas State Teachers Association; Jarod Love, The College Board; Gilbert Zavala, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Molly Weiner, United Ways of Texas; Annemarie Donnelly; Ash Hall; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Frank Corte Jr, Schulman Lopez Hoffer Adelstein)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin and Jessica

McLoughlin, Texas Education Agency)

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code ch. 21, subch. J governing staff development provided to an educator states that staff development may include training technology and digital learning.

Some have suggested that few Texas high school students are taking computer science classes due to a shortage of certified teachers. It has been suggested that a professional development grant program could provide teachers an opportunity to obtain computer science teaching certification.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 244 would allow the commissioner of education to establish a competitive professional development grant program to encourage teachers to obtain computer science certification and continue professional development in coding, computational thinking, cybersecurity, and computer science education.

The commissioner could make grants available from any federal funds available for the purpose to eligible providers that offered:

- professional development for classroom teachers to ensure teachers maintained a working knowledge of current computer industry standard tools and resources; and
- training for computer science certification for teachers in accordance with certification requirements adopted by the State Board of Educator Certification.

To be eligible to receive a grant, a provider would have to:

- 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 had demonstrated experience in providing professional development through a statewide network; and
- meet eligibility standards established by commissioner rule.

An eligible provider receiving a grant would be required to:

- provide the training or professional development;
- establish professional development hubs in each education service center region;
- serve high-need campuses;
- have established partnerships with institution of higher education faculty with expertise in cybersecurity, computing, and computer science education; and
- develop partnerships with computer industry professionals.

The commissioner could adopt rules as necessary to implement the grant program.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.