

SUBJECT: Establishing a computer science strategic advisory committee

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

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

0 nays

1 absent — Lozano

WITNESSES: For — Jennifer Bergland, Texas Computer Education Association; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ray Sullivan, Amazon; Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Daniel Womack, Dow, Inc.; Sebastien Laroche, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Thomas Ratliff, Microsoft; Tracy Young, NAF; Naomi Miller, Northside ISD; Taylor Sims, Project Lead the Way; Hillary Lilly, San Antonio ISD; Grover Campbell, TASB; Servando Esparza, TechNet; Dena Donaldson, Texas AFT; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Laura Atlas Kravitz, Texas State Teachers Association; Jarod Love, The College Board; Gilbert Zavala, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

On — Carol Fletcher, The University of Texas and Texas Advanced Computing Center; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Eric Marin, Monica Martinez, and Tim Regal, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Interested observers note that insufficient numbers of public school students are taking computer science courses to meet demand in the Texas job market for workers skilled in computer science and coding.

DIGEST: CSHB 3298 would require the Texas Education Agency to establish the computer science strategic advisory committee to develop and provide recommendations for increasing computer science instruction and participation in public schools.

The advisory committee would be composed of at least 11 members as specified in the bill. In appointing members, the governor, lieutenant governor, and House speaker would have to coordinate appointments to ensure that the six individuals they collectively appointed included:

- three public school educators certified in computer science;
- one parent or person standing in parental relation to a public school student;
- one person employed in the technology industry; and
- one faculty member of an institution of higher education.

The governor would appoint the presiding officer and the committee could hold public meetings.

By January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the advisory committee would have to submit to the governor and Legislature a report that included recommended changes to state law, including funding proposals and timelines for the implementation of the recommended changes. The report would have to include recommendations as specified in the bill to increase enrollment in high school computer science courses.

By December 31, 2022, the State Board of Education would have to review and revise, as needed, the essential knowledge and skills of the technology applications curriculum.

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.

NOTES: According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have an estimated negative impact of about \$227,000 to general revenue through

fiscal 2023.