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COMPUTER SCIENCE INITIATIVE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2016 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Howard A. Stephenson

House Sponsor: Bradley G. Last

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill enacts provisions regarding computer science instruction in public schools.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms;
- creates the computer science initiative;
- requires the STEM Action Center Board and the State Board of Education to collaborate to develop and implement the initiative; and
- requires the STEM Action Center Board to include information on the initiative in the board's annual report to the Education Interim Committee.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

This bill appropriates:

- to the State Board of Education - State Office of Education - Initiative Programs, as a one-time appropriation:
  - from the Education Fund, $400,000.

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

63N-12-213, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:
Section 1. Section 63N-12-213 is enacted to read:

63N-12-213. Computer science initiative for public schools.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Computational thinking" means the set of problem-solving skills and techniques that software engineers use to write programs that underlie computer applications, including decomposition, pattern recognition, pattern generalization, and algorithm design.

(b) "Computer coding" means the process of writing script for a computer program or mobile device.

(c) "Educator" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53A-6-103.

(d) "Endorsement" means a stipulation, authorized by the State Board of Education and appended to a license, that specifies the areas of practice to which the license applies.

(e) (i) "Institution of higher education" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53B-3-102.

(ii) "Institution of higher education" includes the Utah College of Applied Technology.

(f) "Employer" means a private employer, public employer, industry association, union, or the military.

(g) "License" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53A-6-103.

(2) Subject to legislative appropriations, on behalf of the board, the staff of the board and the staff of the State Board of Education shall collaborate to develop and implement a computer science initiative for public schools by:

(a) creating an online repository that:

(i) is available for school districts and charter schools to use as a resource; and

(ii) includes high quality computer science instructional resources that are designed to teach students in all grade levels:

(A) computational thinking skills; and

(B) computer coding skills;

(b) providing for professional development on teaching computer science by:

(i) including resources for educators related to teaching computational thinking and
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computer coding in the STEM education high quality professional development application described in Section 63N-12-210; and
(ii) providing statewide or regional professional development institutes; and
(c) awarding grants to a school district or charter school, on a competitive basis, that may be used to provide incentives for an educator to earn a computer science endorsement.
(3) A school district or charter school may enter into an agreement with one or more of the following entities to jointly apply for a grant under Subsection (2)(c):
(a) a school district;
(b) a charter school;
(c) an employer;
(d) an institution of higher education; or
(e) a non-profit organization.
(4) To apply for a grant described in Subsection (2)(c), a school district or charter school shall submit a plan to the State Board of Education for the use of the grant, including a statement of purpose that describes the methods the school district or charter school proposes to use to incentivize an educator to earn a computer science endorsement.
(5) The board and the State Board of Education shall encourage schools to independently pursue computer science and coding initiatives, subject to local school board or charter school governing board approval, based on the unique needs of the school's students.
(6) The board shall include information on the status of the computer science initiative in the annual report described in Section 63N-12-208.

Section 2. Appropriation.

Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures Act, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016, and ending June 30, 2017, the following sums of money are appropriated from resources not otherwise appropriated, or reduced from amounts previously appropriated, out of the funds or amounts indicated. These sums of money are in addition to amounts previously appropriated for fiscal year 2017.

To State Board of Education -- State Office of Education -- Initiative Programs
From Education Fund, one-time $400,000

Schedule of Programs:

- Computer Science Initiative $400,000

The Legislature intends that the State Board of Education use:

1. at least $390,000 of the appropriation provided in this section for grants described in Subsection 63N-12-213(2)(c); and
2. up to $10,000 of the appropriation provided in this section for administration of the initiative described in Section 63N-12-213.

Section 3. Effective date.

If approved by two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, this bill takes effect upon approval by the governor, or the day following the constitutional time limit of Utah Constitution, Article VII, Section 8, without the governor's signature, or in the case of a veto, the date of veto override.