



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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Bill Number: H. 3612 Introduced on January 12, 2021
Author: Lucas
Subject: Computer Science
Requestor: House Education and Public Works
RFA Analyst(s): Wren and A. Martin
Impact Date: January 19, 2021

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) and the Office of the Governor, to adopt a statewide computer science plan on or before December 31, 2022, and requires the State Board of Education to conduct a cyclical review of grade appropriate standards for computer science at least every five years.

This bill will increase General Fund expenses of the State Department of Education (SDE) by \$3,380,000 in FY 2021-22 and an additional \$120,000 in FY 2022-23. In FY 2021-22, \$3,280,000 is recurring, of which \$3,000,000 is for professional development, certification attainment, and equipment for the required computer science courses. The remaining \$280,000 in recurring funds is for 2 FTEs, course materials, and design costs for the development of the required computer science courses for VirtualSC. Non-recurring funds of \$100,000 are needed every five years to implement the standards revision requirement change from seven to five years. Further, SDE indicates that this bill could increase recurring General Fund expenses of the agency by \$120,000 in FY 2022-23 for additional state certified adjunct teachers, materials, and course development to meet expected course enrollment demands.

This bill is expected to increase expenditures for the state agency schools in FY 2021-22, however the amount is undetermined. Students attending the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities currently complete computer science courses through VirtualSC. The school plans to continue offering computer science courses in this manner. However, if the school is required to hire a teacher for the course, the bill would increase expenses of the agency by \$16,000 for an adjunct position. Additional expenses for the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe will include new staff to teach the course, computer hardware and software, additional licensing, and additional classroom space. However, the amount of additional expenses could not be quantified at this time.

The bill will have no expenditure impact on the Education Oversight Committee or the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) since the bill requires the agencies to perform activities that can be conducted within the normal course of agency business.

This bill is expected to increase local school district expenses by an undetermined amount in FY 2021-22. SDE indicates that some districts have the capacity to provide the required course with

existing staff and resources, while other districts may need to hire additional staff, allow students to utilize dual enrollment to take the courses at a university or technical college, or utilize a virtual program. These expenses will vary by district and are undetermined.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 12, 2021

State Expenditure

This bill requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with EOC and the Office of the Governor, to adopt a statewide computer science plan on or before December 31, 2022. The bill also requires the State Board of Education to conduct, at least every five years, a cyclical review of grade appropriate standards for computer science, computational thinking, and computer coding for kindergarten through grade twelve. No later than the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, each public high school and public charter high school must offer at least one computer science course that meets certain criteria. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, SDE must follow certain criteria to coordinate and lead the South Carolina Computer Science Education Initiative. SDE must design career pathways that connect students to postsecondary programs, degrees, or postsecondary credentials in high demand career fields. The State Board of Education must promulgate regulations to create certification pathways for computer science teachers no later than July 1, 2023. SDE must develop criteria for postsecondary computer science teacher preparation programs. Additionally, SDE must develop guidelines for use by school districts and schools outlining the educational and degree requirements for computer science teachers. CHE must determine if any financial incentives are needed by institutions of higher education to design programs to prepare and credential computer science teachers.

State Department of Education. SDE indicates that this bill will increase General Fund expenses by \$3,380,000 in FY 2021-22. Of this amount, \$3,280,000 is recurring, of which \$3,000,000 is for professional development, certification attainment, and equipment for the required computer science courses. The remaining \$280,000 in recurring funds is for 2 FTEs, course materials, and design costs for the development of the required computer science courses for VirtualSC. Non-recurring funds of \$100,000 are needed every five years to implement the standards revision requirement change from seven to five years. Also, SDE indicates that this bill could increase recurring General Fund expenses of the agency by \$120,000 in FY 2022-23 for additional state certified adjunct teachers, materials, and course development to meet expected course enrollment demands. Further, SDE indicates that the State Board of Education approved standards for the development and approval of teacher preparation programs leading to certification in computer science in 2020.

State Agency Schools. The Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities indicates that the school's students currently complete computer science courses through VirtualSC and plans to continue to offer computer science courses in this manner. If the school is required to hire a teacher for the course, the bill would increase expenses by \$16,000 for an adjunct position in FY 2021-22. The Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe indicates that the bill would increase expenses in FY 2021-22 for new staff to teach the course, computer hardware

and software, additional licensing, and additional classroom space. However, the agency could not quantify the amount of additional expenses at this time. The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School indicates that any expenses associated with this bill can be managed within existing appropriations. Based upon these responses, the bill is expected to increase expenses for state agency schools for FY 2021-22, however the amount is undetermined.

Education Oversight Committee. EOC indicates that this bill requires the agency to perform activities that can be conducted within the normal course of agency business. Therefore, this bill will have no expenditure impact on EOC in FY 2021-22.

Commission on Higher Education. The bill tasks the commission with determining what, if any, financial incentives are needed by institutions of higher learning to design programs to prepare and credential computer science teachers. These activities are conducted in the normal course of the commission's activities. Therefore, this bill will have no expenditure impact on the agency.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill requires each public high school and public charter high school to offer at least one computer science course that meets certain criteria no later than the beginning of the 2022-23 school year.

SDE indicates that some districts have the necessary staff and resources to provide the required courses, while other districts may need to hire additional staff, allow students to utilize dual enrollment to take the courses at a university or technical college, or utilize a virtual program. The expenses related to additional FTEs vary by district. For dual enrollment, the state currently pays approximately \$261 per student for dual enrollment courses (EFA base student cost x 70% for state portion x .15 for the dual enrollment weight). SDE indicates that this is frequently insufficient to cover the cost of the dual enrollment courses, and any additional expenses would be the district's responsibility but are undetermined. SDE also indicates that schools could contract with VirtualSC for the required computer science course for a full class of students that would be taught by a VirtualSC teacher. Also, a district may contract with VirtualSC to work with their district to establish a local district operated virtual program using teachers from the district. In these cases, the school would pay a fee per license that is used by the school to cover the instructional materials for the course. Therefore, this bill is expected to increase local school district expenses by an undetermined amount in FY 2021-22.

Local Revenue

N/A



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