

Date of Hearing: April 28, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

AB 498 (Quirk-Silva) – As Amended April 14, 2021

Policy Committee: Education Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill, contingent on appropriation, creates the Computer Science Access Initiative, to increase the number of teachers authorized and trained to teach computer science.

The bill requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to award grants by July 1, 2022, to local educational agencies (LEAs) or a consortia of LEAs. Grant funds are to be used to provide stipends to existing teachers (a) to obtain a supplemental authorization to teach computer science or (b) to provide professional development to teach computer science. The bill specifies that 50% of grant funds must be used for (a). The bill requires an awarded entity to provide a 100% match to grant funds received, either as a dollar-for-dollar match or in-kind for teacher release time or substitute teacher costs for participating teachers. The bill requires a grantee to submit a report to CTC with information about populations served and participant outcomes.

The bill states the Legislature's intent to provide \$15 million in one-time funding for the program.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) One-time Proposition 98 GF costs of \$15 million for grant funds.
- 2) One-time Proposition 98 GF equivalent to \$15 million statewide for grantee LEAs to provide a local match, either as a dollar-for-dollar match or in-kind for teacher release time or substitute teacher costs for participating teachers. To the extent LEAs use other funds, such as federal funds or private funds, rather than their Proposition 98 GF general purpose funds to meet the match requirement, Proposition 98 GF costs would be offset.
- 3) One-time GF or special fund costs of about \$150,000 annually for at least two years for CTC to fund 1.0 full-time equivalent staff to develop a request for applications; review and score applications; select awardees; administer and monitor funds; and collect and analyze data. The bill does not specify a date by which LEAs are to report data, however, teacher outcome data will likely take at least one year for a grantee to produce.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, "The need for computer science as part of primary education is paramount. Computer science coursework and opportunities prepare students for

both careers in this fast growing field, and higher education degrees for top earning and highly valued expertise across disciplines and industry sectors.”

- 2) **Background.** A California teacher may provide instruction in computer sciences if the teacher holds a single subject teaching credential in either mathematics, business or industrial and technology education (ITE). In addition, other credentialed teachers may add “supplementary authorizations” to their credentials to teach computer science. The CTC modified its computer science supplementary authorization in 2016. To obtain supplementary authorization, teachers must complete twenty semester units or ten upper division semester units, or its equivalent, of non-remedial college course work in computer science. They may also qualify by holding a collegiate major from a regionally accredited college or university in a subject directly related to computer science.

The cost for supplementary authorization in computer science varies and would depend on a teacher’s prior coursework and where the teacher obtains their supplementary authorization. For a teacher without other applicable coursework, tuition costs for twenty semester units of non-remedial college course work in computer science at a California Community College would total \$920 (\$46 per credit).

AB 2329 (Bonilla), Chapter 693, Statutes of 2016, required the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a computer science strategic implementation advisory panel to develop recommendations for a computer science strategic implementation plan, and submit recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE) by January 15, 2019. In May 2019, the SBE adopted the California Computer Science Strategic Implementation Plan.

According to the plan, in the 2016-2017 school year, 2,273 teachers in California taught computer science courses. Most teachers leading computer science courses are credentialed in subjects other than mathematics, business or ITE and hold a supplementary authorization to teach computer science.

The plan recommends several strategies to the Legislature for improving the availability of computer science instruction consistent with this bill’s requirements. Specifically, the report recommends establishing a grant program for teachers to complete the required coursework for the computer science supplementary authorization and recommends funding for professional development programs for teachers to learn how to teach concepts and practices aligned to the California computer science standards,.

- 3) **Award Timelines.** According to the CTC, July 1, 2022, may be too short of a timeline to award grants. Other grants the CTC administers have taken six months to complete the request for application process and outreach alone. CTC suggests January 1, 2023, as a more realistic timeline.
- 4) **Related Legislation.** AB 1932 (Quirk-Silva), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to this bill. The bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 2309 (Berman), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, would have required CTC administer a grant program for postsecondary institutions to expand supplementary authorizations in computer science. The bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 2274 (Berman), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, would have required the California Department of Education to annually report information about computer science courses and teachers. The bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 20 (Berman), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, would have established a Computer Science Coordinator position at the CDE. The bill was held in this committee, but the position was funded in the 2019-20 budget.

AB 52 (Berman), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, would have required the computer science strategic implementation plan to be regularly updated. The bill was held in this committee.

AB 182 (Luz Rivas), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, would have created a single subject credential in computer science. The bill was held in this committee.

AB 1410 (Quirk-Silva and O'Donnell), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, was similar to this bill. The bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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