**HB 3568 (Bohac)**

**Computer science teaches our kids to be problem solvers and innovators.** Computer science teaches computational thinking—logical data analysis and organization, the ability to create concise problem statements, the skills to identify and implement algorithm-based solutions, and to generalize and extrapolate solutions that can be applied to other problems. Helping students develop these skills will be a benefit to them in every subject, in the classroom and beyond.

**Computer science skills are in demand in the job market.**

* Nearly every industry today is driven by applied computer science.
* The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that, by 2018, computing occupations will grow by 21% - that’s twice the national average.
* Right now, there are more than 150,000 job openings that require computing, with more than 45,000 in Texas.
* And these jobs pay 75 percent more than the national median annual salary.

**We are not preparing our students to meet this demand:**

* Less than 2% of all Texas high school students took a computer science course for each of the last five years (TEA).
* Less than 15% of Texas high schools offered the AP Computer Science course in 2013-14. (College Board).
* Only 90 Texas teachers passed the Grades 8-12 Computer Science certification exam in 2013/2014. (SBEC)
* The percentage of graduates who earned credits in high school computer science classes fell from 25% in 1999 to 19% in 2009, making it the only STEM subject to experience such a drop, according to the U.S. Department of Education (Nord et al., 2011).
* **By 2020, there will be 1,000,000 more computing jobs than the graduates to fill them, resulting in a $500 billion opportunity gap. (code.org)**

**THE SOLUTION:**

* HB 3568 would give Technology Applications/computer science courses the same weighted funding as CTE.
* With additional funding, campuses and districts will be incentivized to encourage students to complete a Computer Science pathway in the STEM Endorsement.
* This funding is also critical to implement robust and engaging courses with up-to-date equipment and software to ensure students are working with industry standard tools and resources.
* This funding can also help overcome a significant shortage of qualified computer science teachers with support for teacher stipends, teacher professional development, and reimbursements for the cost of the 8-12 Computer Science certification exam.