**Fletcher Testimony to SBOE 7/1/20**

My name is Carol Fletcher and I am here today representing CS4TX, a group that advocates for CS education for All Texas students. Thank you for your service to TX.

In April of 2014, the TX State Board of Education made history. At that meeting, the SBOE made Texas the first state in the nation to require all high schools to offer computer science courses. Since that time, hundreds of additional high schools have begun offering CS courses to their students. TX has doubled overall student enrollment in CS courses and begun closing the gaps by increasing enrollment of Black students by 135%, Hispanic students by 124%, and low-income students by 134%.

In short, this decision by the SBOE has begun doing exactly what it was intended to do, increase the number and diversity of students who complete computer science courses in high school. As a policymaker, I’m sure it’s nice to see such concrete positive results from your efforts.

Unfortunately, today you are being asked to consider rolling back this requirement.

We believe that the underlying reasons for including CS in the Required HS curriculum have not changed since 2014. In fact, they are even more compelling today.

Last year, Texas had over 70,000 computing job openings.

Computing jobs are the greatest source of new wages in the United States and these jobs are found in every sector of the economy, from high tech, to entertainment, to health care, to transportation.

Simply put, every student does not need to become a computer scientist, but students who have the opportunity to take computer science will no doubt be far better prepared for a rapidly changing world and the knowledge economy than those who are denied this opportunity.

If Texas wants to be a global leader in the information age, we cannot retreat now from our commitment to computer science for all simply because CS courses moved from Chapter 126 to Chapter 130. That’s why CS4TX is recommending updating and simplifying 74.3 to require every high school to offer at least one introductory CS course from the following 3 options:

Fundamentals of CS, CS 1, or AP CS Principles. I’ve provided you with specific verbiage in my written correspondence earlier this week.

CTE courses should not be treated any differently than courses in other chapters of the Administrative Code and there is no compelling reason to exclude CTE courses from the Required HS Curriculum. Computer science is considered a CTE course in several other states like Arkansas and Georgia, which also require all high schools to offer CS courses, so its clear that there are not any issues with Perkins regulations that would prohibit Texas from doing the same.

In short, we encourage the Board to update Chapter 74.3 while maintaining the expectation that every Texas high school offer at least one introductory CS course. Texas students and families deserve nothing less.

Thank you again for your service to Texas students and families. As a former local school board official for 18 years myself, I understand this is often a thankless job. We appreciate your attention and I’m happy to answer any questions.

**I was given the opportunity to attend GHC as a computer science teacher a decade or two ago. It made a world of difference to motivate what I do today in my retirement. To build together it is essential that computer science teachers are given the opportunity to attend GHC this year. Since it is virtual, AnitaB could easily open up keynotes and other sessions to inspire teachers to build their classrooms and reward them for their volunteering to do extra research. As the NCWIT Aspiration Houston co-coordinator I am finding it very difficult to build a team willing to give extra time. In fact, would be nice to give public school computer science teacher a stipend to attend and build on the aspirations.org community. And pair that teacher with a mentor from our community. Together we build ... but only if part of your outreach. See www.build-a-brain.com for my history. Thank you for your consideration.**