

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6339

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As of February 5, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to creating a computer science grant program.

**Brief Description:** Creating a computer science grant program for school districts.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hunt, Holy, Wellman, Wilson, L. and Mullet.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/20.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to establish a grant program to support middle school computer science and coding programs.
- Directs OSPI to prioritize schools with large percentages of low-income students, rural districts, and those that currently do not offer computer science or coding programs.
- Appropriates \$5 million for the purposes of the grant program.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

**Background:** Computer science generally refers to the science entailing the theory and methods of processing information in computers, as well as the design of computer hardware, software, and applications. In 2013, the Legislature directed school districts to approve advanced placement computer science as a math or science equivalent. In 2015, SHB 1813 directed OSPI to adopt computer science learning standards.

Title I, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:** OSPI must establish, develop, and administer a grant program to provide assistance to districts for the development and growth of middle school computer science programs and middle school coding programs.

In selecting applicants under the program, OSPI must prioritize school districts that have a large percentage of students that qualify for free and reduced-price meals, districts that receive grants for federal low-income programs, rural school districts, and school districts that do not offer computer science or coding programs.

Grants awarded under the program may be used for programs that occur during and outside of regular school hours.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains an appropriation totaling \$5,000,000 from the general fund.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Research suggests that the earlier that students can get into computer science, the better. The proportion of women working in the computing sector has gone down, and more support is needed to help women get into the computer science fields. Reaching students earlier will help underrepresented groups gain opportunities in these areas as well as better prepare them for more rigorous courses in the future. The grant program could be expanded to elementary schools.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Charlie Brown, Girls Who Code; Sara Stewart, Girls Who Code; Shannon Thissen, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.