



Texas Computer Education Association

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'Dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning through the use of computer technology.'

5 June 2006

Mrs. Geraldine Miller
Chair, State Board of Education
1100 Providence Tower West
5001 Spring Valley Road
Dallas, Texas 75244-3910

Dear Mrs. Miller:

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors and membership of the Texas Computer Education Association, we are writing to respectfully request your consideration for the inclusion of an important curriculum item on the SBOE July 6-7 meeting agenda: **the addition of computer science as an option for the fourth year science credit for both the recommended and distinguished achievement high school graduation programs.** This specifically pertains to proposed amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 74, Curriculum Requirements--§74.61(i)(1)(B).

Our state leaders have shown great wisdom by approving legislation to enable the four-year science and mathematics requirement for the recommended and distinguished graduation plans. This in itself will ensure that Texas high school graduates will be among the best prepared for post-secondary studies as well as bolster our state's position as a leader in underscoring the importance of logical thinking and scientific inquiry. It is our professional opinion that computer science genuinely falls within the criteria which define science and merits inclusion as an option for the fourth year science credit.

The rationale for computer science as a science option is clearly justifiable and the benefits are many. The *science of computing* is the study of theory and the empirical experimentation to prove the theories. As in the traditional sciences, computer science is premised on methodology which begins with a hypothesis and then follows a sequence of steps to investigate the hypothesis. As in chemistry, biology, and physics, computer science students are presented with theories that they must prove or disprove. Instead of a frog, chemicals, or magnets, the tools for analysis are computers and programming languages. Perhaps the greatest benefit is that this initiative will better equip our student population for their professional careers and thus contribute to a strong Texas economy based on a highly knowledgeable, technologically capable workforce.

It is undeniable that computers are a part of our economy, our lives, and our future. We have the responsibility to educate our youth with knowledge and skills so that they can compete and be leaders in this state, the nation and the world. As such, inclusion of computer science as a science credit is a wise investment for the future.

Unfortunately, the two of us will be representing TCEA at the National Educational Computing Conference the week of the SBOE meeting. We can however arrange for representatives from our membership, other professional organizations, higher education, and industry to provide a position paper, public testimony, and/or letters supporting this initiative at the board meeting. We of course would also be amenable to further discussing this with you and other board members prior to the meeting via e-mail, telephone, or personally at a location of your choice. Our contact information is provided on the separate enclosed page.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. And much appreciation for all the time and effort you expend on behalf of the teachers and students of Texas!

Sincerely,

Stephen B. Rainwater, Ed.D.
TCEA President 2006-2007

Ron Cravey
TCEA Executive Director

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