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63-1633. COMPUTER SCIENCE INITIATIVE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. (1) As used in this section:
   (a) "Blended professional development" means to deliver content and training to in a combination of online and face-to-face.
   (b) "Computer science" means the study of principles, applications and technologies of computing and computers.
   (2) The STEM action center, the state board of education and the state department of education shall collaborate to develop and implement a computer science initiative for public schools by:
      (a) Adopting computer science content standards in 2016 aligned to nationally recognized computer science education standards with input from Idaho educators and industries for implementation in the 2017-2018 school year;
      (b) Providing for professional development on teaching computer science by:
         (i) Developing resources for teachers and administrators relating to teaching computational thinking;
         (ii) Providing statewide, regional, online and blended professional development opportunities for school district staff;
         (iii) Partnering with entities such as the Idaho digital learning academy and public higher education institutions to develop, deliver and provide professional development in computer science for teachers; and
         (iv) Distributing grants to school districts and charter schools that may be used to provide incentives for teachers to pursue training in computer science or earn a computer science endorsement;
      (c) Maintaining, using and enhancing access to an online portal or repository of instructional resources that:
         (i) Is available for school districts and charter schools to use as a resource;
         (ii) Includes high quality computer science instructional resources that are designed to teach K-12 students computational
thinking skills and are in alignment with the state computer science content standards;
(iii) Leverages existing online resources and portals developed by state and governmental entities; and
(iv) Allows for collaborative contribution and sharing of resources by teachers and administrators;
(d) Evaluating providers of comprehensive computer science instructional software solutions and providing research, support and guidance on implementing software solutions for computer science courses or programs aligned to the state computer science content standards;
(e) Creating opportunities for schools to partner with local companies to provide for student and teacher mentoring and internships in the computer science field;
(f) Communicating and supporting computer science initiatives, programs, events, training and other promotions throughout the state for benefit of school districts, students, parents and local communities; and
(g) Creating equitable access to computer science resources and programs aligned to the state computer science content standards for teachers, administrators and students throughout the state.
(3) The STEM action center, the state board of education and the state department of education shall, when economical and beneficial, leverage existing state resources and systems to effectively and efficiently carry out the directives of this computer science initiative for public schools.
(4) The STEM action center board may select one (1) or more providers through a request for proposals process to provide a comprehensive computer science software solution for school districts to implement.
(5) The STEM action center, the division of professional technical education and industry shall collaborate to create technical postsecondary courses of study in areas related to computer science that meet workforce needs.
(6) The STEM action center shall collaborate with the state board of education, division of professional technical education, the state department of education, public higher education institutions and industry to develop a communication plan related to the computer science initiative.
(7) The STEM action center and the state board of education shall provide a report to the legislature on the status of this initiative annually.