STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION

EO 19-17

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME – GREETINGS:

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING THE STATE COMPUTER SCIENCE AND CYBERSECURITY TASKFORCE

WHEREAS: The General Assembly first established the Computer Science and Technology in Public School Task Force pursuant to Act 187 of 2015 to: (1) research and recommend computer science and technology standards and frameworks for the State to follow; (2) review and recommend changes to existing computer science and technology standards and frameworks for the State to follow; (3) study the computer science and technology needs of the State now and in the future; and (4) recommend strategies to meet the anticipated computer science and technology workforce needs in the State; and

WHEREAS: The Computer Science and Technology in Public School Task Force ceased to exist on December 31, 2016, pursuant to Act 187 of 2015; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas has seen tremendous success and growth in computer science and technology education since the inception of the Computer Science and Technology in Public School Task Force, as evidenced by the State of Arkansas meeting its five-year goal of enrolling over seven thousand and five hundred students in these courses in just four (4) years; and

WHEREAS: The leadership and hard work of our students, teachers, and state agency employees during my administration has led to ongoing growth in these programs that now boast an enrollment of over nine thousand and eight hundred students (9,813) in these courses in the 2019/2020 school year; a two hundred and sixty percent (260%) growth from approximately one thousand and one hundred (1,104) enrollees in the 2014/2015 school year; and

WHEREAS: Approximately six hundred (600) Arkansas high school students have enrolled in more than one (1) computer science course in the 2019/2020 school year; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas has increased the number of computer science certified teachers from approximately twenty (20) in 2014 to over two hundred and thirty seven (237) fully endorsed educators and an additional one hundred and seventy three (1730) more holding an approval code gained through professional development and training in 2019; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas has established a national model for computer science flex credit, which allows computer science to count in place of math and science courses; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas is the first State in the Union to write and mandate grade specific computer science standards for all K-8 students; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas has allocated over $15 million in state funding to the "CS for AR" Initiative with the majority of the foregoing funds being allocated to develop new computer science teachers and educators; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas has received approximately $4 million of outside financial support to help fund the "CS for AR" and "AR Kids Can Code" initiatives; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas has also awarded approximately $1 million in state and federal funding to schools in the State to expand high quality career related computer science pathways, such as robotics, mobile application development, and cyber security academies; and

WHEREAS: The comprehensive strategic plan for computer science employed by the State of Arkansas continues to serve as a model for sister states as they develop their own computer science initiatives; and

WHEREAS: The "AR Kids Can Code" initiative has launched www.artechjobs.com, a job posting board for use by employers and job seekers alike free of charge; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas was the first state to meet all nine (9) of Code.org policy suggestions for computer science education and was the first state to pass comprehensive legislation requiring every high school in the State to offer high-quality computer science courses; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas is the first state to meet all ten (10) policy recommendations by the Bank of New York Mellon (BNY Mellon) State of the States Computer Science Report; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas, through its Office of Computer Science, continually seeks new ways to expand the Computer Science and Computing Initiative to better serve the needs of our current and future technology-based industries and ensure Arkansas's youth graduate with critical computer science and computing skills; and

WHEREAS: Due to ongoing developments in the field of computer science, the State finds it prudent to convene a new Taskforce of educational, economic, and industrial leaders, to survey the State's current computer science policies and make recommendations to enhance the State's efforts through its Computer Science and Computing Initiative.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, acting under the authority vested in me, do hereby order and commission the following:

1. The State Computer Science and Cybersecurity Taskforce (the "Taskforce") is hereby established.

2. The Taskforce shall advise the Governor on how to best guide the continued efforts of state agencies and state partners to provide quality computer science education to students in the State, while providing information and direction for potential future state legislation, rules, and policies.

3. The Taskforce shall be composed of no less than twenty-five (25) members who will be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Governor may appoint additional members as he may deem necessary.

4. The Taskforce will be composed of state educational leaders, state public sector leaders, and state private sector leaders, who will volunteer their time and serve without compensation.

5. The Taskforce shall first convene sometime in January of 2020 and shall continue to do so until the Taskforce submits its final report or until this Order is amended, modified, or rescinded by another Executive Order.

6. The Taskforce shall submit a progress report to the Governor no later than June 30, 2020, and a final report no later than November 30, 2020.

7. The Taskforce shall provide guidance and feedback on the following: (1) updated large scale goals and strategies; (2) industry pathways and relevant certifications for major areas of computer science and computing; (3) post-secondary alignment strategies and goals; (4) work-based learning opportunities for students; (5) teacher credentialing; (6) correct placement and focus on data sciences and cybersecurity in curricula; (7) potential funding usage and future needs; and (8) outreach and development of educational materials.

8. The Taskforce shall be staffed by the Department of Education who shall provide adequate staff and support to the Taskforce.

9. If any part of this Executive Order is found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder shall remain in full force and effect.

10. This Order shall remain in effect until the final report is filed with the Governor, or until it is amended, modified, or rescinded by another Executive Order.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 6th day of December, in the year of our Lord 2019.

Asa Hutchinson, Governor

Attest:

John Thurston, Secretary Of State