

1 **Esports as a STEM Program**  
2 **Discussion Paper**  
3  
4

5 **Background**

6 As directed by Commissioner Representing Labor Julian Alvarez at the August 9, 2022,  
7 Commission meeting, staff has reviewed opportunities on how to best support Esports initiatives  
8 for Texas youth. Esports is a growing field of competition that combines science, technology,  
9 engineering, and math (STEM) with many of the traditional benefits of organized sports. The US  
10 Esports industry is worth more than \$1 billion and is rapidly gaining a mainstream following.  
11 Colleges and universities are offering scholarships to Esports athletes, and new careers related to  
12 professional gaming (either in professional Esports leagues or through various streaming  
13 platforms) are becoming increasingly prominent.

14 The STEM learning component of Esports gives youth an opportunity to study computer  
15 hardware and software, digital interface and user interface programming, and programming and  
16 design concepts for digital games. Additionally, regardless of the specific games being played,  
17 the benefits of participating in Esports include collaboration, communication, creativity, and  
18 strategic and analytical thinking. Various curricula exist to promote relevant, modern workforce  
19 skills through an Esports format that may be more attractive to youth who are not interested in  
20 alternative training methods. Esports offer a gateway to careers in game design and development,  
21 coding, IT, engineering, and web development.

22 **Options**

23 To make funds available for Esports camps and programs, staff has identified the following three  
24 options for consideration:

- 25
- 26 • Award grants to community and/or technical colleges, universities, or independent school  
27 districts (ISDs), through a competitive process, for the purpose of hosting Esports-  
28 focused summer camps. These camps will be available for youth ages 14–21. A  
29 maximum grant award of \$100,000 is recommended, with the expectation that  
30 approximately 700 youth would be served if the total identified funds are applied.
  - 31 • Award grants to ISDs and/or community-based organizations, through a competitive  
32 process, for the purpose of hosting after-school programs for youth ages 14-21 to build  
33 Esports skills for area youth. A maximum grant award amount of \$100,000 is  
34 recommended, with the expectation that approximately 700 youth would be served.
  - 35 • Award grants to existing summer camp programs to allow for Esports subject matter to  
36 be included in the camps, encouraging more Esports camps to be developed through the  
37 existing initiatives.
- 38  
39

1 **Decision Point**

2 Staff seeks direction in how to best make Esports camps and programs more available to Texas  
3 youth, with \$500,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) statewide funding  
4 available for said purpose.  
5