DATE:	**December 3, 2020**
SUBJECT:	**High School CyberStart America**
CATEGORY:	**Cybersecurity Continued Education and Scholarship Opportunity**
NEXT STEPS:	**Share with appropriate high school staff**

Governor Greg Abbott has announced that Texas is partnering again with the SANS Institute in the CyberStart America Game, an innovative online cybersecurity game, formerly known as Girls Go CyberStart. The program, sponsored by the National Cyber Scholarship Foundation and the SANS Institute, is designed to encourage high school students to explore their aptitude for cybersecurity and computer science.

The program, which previously focused on recruiting female high school students in Texas to compete, is now open to all Texas students in grades 9–12. Participating students and their teachers do not need knowledge or experience in information technology or cybersecurity to take part, and the program is free for schools and students alike. As a result of the initiative's efforts last year, 2,294 students from Texas high schools participated, and 199 succeeded in reaching the national finals.

Participating students will have the opportunity to win prizes and recognition for their schools and scholarships for themselves. The National Cyber Scholarship Foundation anticipates awarding scholarships worth a total of $2 million for use at any accredited college to 600 high-scoring students across the nation who participate in the competition in 2021. Students can compete for state-specific and community-specific prizes as well as national championship status. There will also be incentives for Texas high schools to encourage more students to reach the qualifying level in the CyberStart Game, including exclusive access to additional cybersecurity education resources and recognized cyber skills mastery badges for their students.

Complete details may be found at www.cyberstartamerica.org. The CyberStart Game began November 15, 2020, and concludes on April 4, 2021. Students may continue to register so long as they reach the National Cyber Scholarship Competition qualifying level in the Game by the cut-off date of March 8, 2021. Students will be informed that they qualify for the CyberStart National Scholarship Challenge Round as soon as they have achieved sufficient progress, but they are allowed to continue playing and learning in order to build more skills that will be useful to them in the National Scholarship Challenge. To see the types of challenges students will face in the games, visit https://go.cyberstart.com.

Participating students and schools are encouraged to share updates on social media with [#TXCyberStart].