

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1710

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to technology grants.

Brief Description: Establishing technology grants for public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives McMorris, Cole and Kessler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/97, 2/24/97, 2/28/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Linville; Quall; Smith; Sterk; Sump; Talcott and Veloria.

Staff: Bronwyn Mauldin (786-7093).

Background: As part of the Education Reform Act of 1993, the Legislature recognized the need for students to be knowledgeable in the use of technology. Under the act, the Legislature directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop and implement a K-12 education technology plan. The Legislature authorized the superintendent to distribute grants for educational technology support centers and for expansion of the education statewide computer network.

Summary of Substitute Bill: To the extent that funds are appropriated, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide technology grants to qualifying school districts, school district consortia, and educational service districts, for the purpose of providing temporary assistance to districts in meeting their technology needs. To qualify for a technology grant, a school district or educational service district must either have an ongoing program where learning is assisted by technology, or the center for the improvement of student learning must identify a district's technology need. The recipient school district must match state funds on a 50 percent basis, and must have plans and the means to evaluate student learning resulting from the technology-based strategies used in the district. The 50 percent

matching funds must be raised both from school district funds and through partnerships with public and private organizations with expertise in applications of technology to learning, including private companies and universities. The school district must link its planned use of technology to the essential learning requirements. School districts most in need of financial assistance, districts least prepared to take advantage of technology as a means of improving student learning, and districts in economically distressed areas will have priority for receiving technology grants.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must appoint a technology education committee to develop the grant review process, then review and prioritize technology grant applications. The superintendent must award grants according to the priority listing, up to the amount of funds available. The superintendent must announce the first round of awards by July 1, 1997, subject to available funding. The superintendent will submit a progress report to the Legislature by December 15 each year in which an appropriation is provided.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds the requirement that a school district's planned use of technology be linked to the essential academic learning requirements. It also adds that school districts in economically distressed areas are a priority for technology grants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Technology grants should be used to level the playing field for students in rural areas who have less accessibility to technology. This bill allows the least prepared students to compete evenly for technology funds. The bill will help schools develop the technology they need to implement the K-20 telecommunication system.

Testimony Against: Because technology is popular, schools are giving it too much attention at the expense of academics.

Testified: Representative McMorris, prime sponsor; Jack Gible, Republic School District (pro); Lloyd Gardner, citizen (opposed); and Norm Wisner, Educational Service Districts (pro).