

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5906

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to technology planning for public schools.

Brief Description: Creating the technology in education task force.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Finkbeiner, McAuliffe, Eide, Regala, Kastama, Hewitt, Hochstatter and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/22/01, 3/29/01 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- The Technology in Education Task Force is created to conduct a study and develop recommendations on the use of and funding for technology in schools.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Cox, Ericksen, Keiser, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Santos, Schindler, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By a 1993 law, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is required to develop and implement a state K-12 education technology plan. The plan, which must be updated on a biennial basis, has been developed to coordinate and expand the use of education technology in the state's public schools. The plan must address the following elements:

- technical assistance to schools and districts for the planning, implementation, and training of staff in the use of technology in curricular and administrative functions;

- continued development of a network to connect districts, institutions of higher education, and other sources of on-line information; and
- methods to equitably increase the use of education technology by students and school personnel.

The SPI was required to appoint an education technology advisory committee to assist in the development and implementation of the plan. The task force includes or included representation from a variety of state agencies, higher education, and education constituencies.

In addition to the technology responsibilities assigned to the SPI, educational service districts (ESD's) are required to establish regional educational technology support centers to provide training, analysis, planning, access to distance learning, and other programmatic and technical support to schools in the district. The ESD's must establish representative advisory councils to advise the districts on expenditures for technology support centers.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Technology in Education Task Force is created. The task force will conduct a study and develop recommendations on the use of and funding for technology in schools. The study will focus on technology use and needs in grades three through 12.

The study will include the identification of the technology currently available in schools, the methods that districts now use to fund technology, plans to update technology, training in its use, and its integration into the curriculum. The study will also include the different uses of technology in elementary, middle, and high school, and the use of and funding for technology in public schools in other states. By November 1, 2001, the task force must submit the study, with recommendations, to the legislative education and fiscal committees.

The task force will consist of 20 voting members or their designees. Members will include the Governor, four legislators, one from each caucus, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the chair of the Information Services Board, and representatives of school districts, ESD's, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, industry and the public. It will be co-chaired by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Governor, or their designees.

This act expires December 1, 2001.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The number of task force members from the computer or digital technology industry is expanded from one to three.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The last time the SPI updated a report on the educational technology needs of schools occurred in 1994, before the growth of many technology companies. Properly used, technology can eliminate boundaries and enhance language, writing, and other academic skills. Many schools have obsolete technical equipment and software. In addition, there is an inequitable distribution of technology in state schools. The state needs a new blueprint for technology acquisition and use in the public schools. It also needs to add technology use and acquisition into the basic education formula.

(Concern) The Legislature should consider extending the amount of time for the study by eight months to June 2002.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Senator Rasmussen, prime sponsor; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association; and Carol Taylor-Cann, Washington State PTA.

(In support with concerns) Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.