
Education Committee

HB 1559

Brief Description: Including technology costs in basic education.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt, Jarrett, Schual-Berke, Nixon, McDermott, Rockefeller, Kenney and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adding education technology to the funding formula of basic education.

Hearing Date: 2/13/03

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.

According to an October 2001 report from SPI, 95 percent of K-12 classrooms were wired for internet/K-20 access. At that time, in the K-12 system, there were 260,000 instructional computers, of which fewer than 57 percent met minimum standards. Students used those computers primarily for word processing and web based research. In the 2000-01 school year, about 3500 students were enrolled in on-line classes and about 76,000 had school-provided email accounts. The information was acquired through a school building technology inventory. SPI is in the process of updating the information for 2002.

In the 2001-03 budget, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction received about \$8,000,000 for education technology. Of that amount, \$2,025,000 for fiscal year 2002, and 1,964,000 for fiscal year 2003, were provided to improve technology infrastructure, monitor and report on school technology development, and promote standards for district technology. In addition, the funds were to be used for the provision of regional technology support centers. The remaining \$4,000,000 was divided evenly between the two years of the biennium. It's intended use: to provide technical support for the K-12 sector's participation in the K-20 telecommunications network. The technology funding was included in budget sections that are not part of basic education.

Summary of Bill:

The costs associated with education technology are added to the funding formula for basic education. Recognized costs include those costs associated with administrative technology and costs for the technology needed for instructional programs. Money provided through the formula for technology must be expended for that purpose. The funding formula adopted by the legislature for technology cannot mandate the nature or type of technology purchased by school districts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/30/2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.