SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5392

As of February 8, 2011

Title: An act relating to including technology as an educational core concept and principle.

Brief Description: Including technology as a stated educational core concept and principle.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Litzow, Fain, Nelson, Hill, Harper, Eide, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Tom and Roach.

Brief History:
  Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/07/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

  Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

  Background: The Education Reform Act of 1993 included goals for each school district, with the involvement of parents and community members, to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential to:
  1. read with comprehension, write effectively, and communicate successfully in a variety of ways and settings and with a variety of audiences;
  2. know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
  3. think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
  4. understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

The Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) were developed based on the goals to identify the knowledge and skills public school students need to know and be able to do. The statewide assessments were developed to assess the EALRs.

In 2007 the Legislature directed the Superintendant of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop EALRs and grade level expectations for educational technology literacy and technology fluency. SPI was directed to obtain or develop assessments for elementary, middle, and high school grades to assess the technology EALRs for voluntary use by school districts beginning

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in the 2010-11 school year using funds specifically appropriated for that purpose; however, the Legislature did not provide the specific funding.

Summary of Bill: Technology is added to school district goal two, so school districts provide the opportunities for students to know and apply the core concepts and principles of technology.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We should have included technology in 1993 and certainly should include it now. Technology proficiency is absolutely critical for our students, and we enthusiastically support the bill. One concern is that the description in section 1 is too narrow because it is not just important for math and science education. Technology literacy permeates all of education. Technology needs to be integrated across the curriculum and this bill needs to include information skills, technology fluency, and digital citizenship.

CON: School districts get no funding for technology; therefore, there are infrastructure issues with implementation of this bill.

OTHER: Technology helps with problem solving and critical thinking, which we support; but we are concerned that school districts need the resources to support this requirement, especially in light of the state level cuts that have already been made by the Legislature in math and science and STEM programs in the early action budgets. The Legislature required a report on STEM, which was submitted in December 2010, and this bill supports the recommendations of the STEM workgroup. Technology should be for all students not just math, science, engineering, and technology (STEM). We are very concerned how this will affect the time for music, other arts, and physical education. The other challenge is the capacity for school districts to accomplish this requirement. Not every school has the state of the art technology. Technology upgrades are expensive and we need state support for those upgrades instead of letting school districts pay for them through private or local funds. We also need teacher professional development to use the technology.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Lew McMurran, Washington Technology Industry Association; Stephen Coker, Washington Library Media Assn.

CON: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Assn.

OTHER: Bob Butts, Dennis Milliken, Dennis Small, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Jerry Bender, Assn. of Washington School Directors; Romana Hattendorf, Washington State PTA.