FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 6705

C 137 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring a higher education technology plan.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Wood, Kohl, Zarelli, Sutherland, Cantu, Prince, Sheldon, Loveland, Winsley, Hale and Rasmussen).

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Higher Education

Background: The state of Washington affirmed its efforts toward statewide technology planning in 1987 by requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Higher Education Coordinating Board to jointly develop and recommend an educational telecommunications network plan to provide coordination between the common schools and higher education institutions. In the same year, the Department of Community Development and the Department of Information Services were charged with the responsibility of conducting a study for a video telecommunications plan for state government.

As one of its duties, the Information Services Board is "to assure the cost-effective development and incremental implementation of a state-wide video telecommunications system to serve: Public schools; educational service districts; vocational technical institutes; community colleges; colleges and universities...." In addition, the 1995-97 budget states that "Prior to any such expenditure by a public institution of postsecondary education, a telecommunications expenditure plan shall be approved by the higher education coordinating board. The higher education coordinating board shall coordinate the use of video telecommunications for instruction and instructional support in postsecondary education, including the review and approval of instructional telecommunications course offerings."

Summary: The Legislature recognizes that access to educational opportunities for the citizens of Washington State are enhanced by maximum use of a common telecommunications backbone network in building and expanding education technology systems. Therefore, coordinated policy and planning to ensure program quality, interoperability, and efficient service delivery are the highest priorities of the Legislature.

The K-20 Telecommunications Oversight and Policy Committee (TOP) is established. By April 15, 1996, the Department of Information Services (DIS) must convene the committee, which includes the following voting members or their designees: the Governor; one member from each caucus of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate; one member from each caucus of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House; the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI); the chair of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB); and the chair of the Information Services Board (ISB). The voting members must reach a consensus in approving the network design and implementation plan. On a

nonvoting basis, the committee also includes the following members or their designees: one community college or technical college president, appointed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC); one president of a public baccalaureate institution, appointed by the Council of Presidents (COP); the state librarian; one Educational Service District (ESD) superintendent, one school district superintendent, and one representative of an approved private school, each appointed by the SPI; one representative of independent nonprofit baccalaureate institutions, appointed by the Washington Friends of Higher Education; and one representative of the computer or telecommunications industry, appointed by the ISB.

The duties of the K-20 Telecommunications Oversight and Policy Committee include, but need not be limited to, the following: (1) By June 1, 1996, establishment of timelines for the submission of plans and adoption of policy goals and objectives for a K-20 telecommunications system; (2) authorization of the construction and acquisition of a network backbone upon its approval of phase one of a technical plan for the network; (3) adoption of a network design and implementation plan and subsequent updates; and (4) authorization for release of funds for network purposes.

The HECB and SPI, for their respective educational systems, must immediately begin to develop programming plans and location plans for connection to the network. The ISB must prepare the technical plan for the network. For each site proposed for connection to the network, the HECB and SPI must recommend service delivery specifications that include, but need not be limited to, an assessment of community needs and programming and service levels that provide for effective use of network resources. Each system must prioritize the implementation of the proposed location plan prior to submission to TOP, which then considers the recommendations of the HECB, the SPI and the ISB when adopting the network design and implementation plan. The HECB and SPI must also recommend to the TOP a network governance structure that ensures participation by all members of the network and adheres to the goals and objectives of the committee.

The ISB must develop the technical plan in phases. Phase 1 includes a telecommunications backbone connecting ESDs, main campuses of public baccalaureate institutions, branch campuses of public research institutions, and the main campuses of the community colleges and the technical colleges. Phase 2 must (a) provide for connection the network by entities that include, but need not be limited to, school districts, public higher education off-campus sites and extension center, branch campuses of technical colleges and community colleges, and independent nonprofit baccalaureate institutions as prioritized by TOP; and (b) distance education facilities and components for entities in both phases. Subsequent phases may include, but need not be limited to, connections to public libraries, state and local governments, community resource centers, and the private sector.

The role of the HECB is clarified regarding coordination of and planning for statewide telecommunications programming, location selection, and meeting community needs.

The membership on the ISB is expanded to include a second representative of the private sector, the SPI or an appointee of the SPI, a Senator and a member of the House of Representatives not of the same political party, and the director of DIS.

The K-20 technology account is created in the state treasury. DIS must deposit into the account all moneys received from legislative appropriations, gifts, grants, and endowments for the K-20 system. The account is subject to appropriation and may be expended solely for the K-20 telecommunications system. Disbursements from the account are made with the authorization of the director of DIS with approval of the Telecommunications Oversight and Policy Committee.

Nothing in the act prevents the ongoing maintenance and operation of existing telecommunications and information systems or programs.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	43	6	
House	93	0	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	47	1	(Senate concurred)

Effective: March 25, 1996
June 30, 1997 (Section 12)