

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 2929

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As of February 20, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to telecommunications, telecommunications planning, and higher education technology.

**Brief Description:** Requiring a higher education distance education network and implementation plan.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlson, Huff, Jacobsen, Foreman, Sehlin and Silver).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 2/20/96.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Staff:** Jean Six (786-7423)

**Background:** The four-year higher education institutions and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) have proposed the development of a higher education network. This network would link all campuses of the four-year institutions, community and technical colleges, branch campuses, some county extension sites, and some off-campus locations. The cost of the proposal totals \$40 million General Fund-State.

**Summary of Bill:** The Higher Education Network and Distance Education Committee is formed. The committee is convened by Department of Information Services (DIS) and includes the following or designees: the director of DIS, the executive director of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), a president of a community or technical college, a president of a public baccalaureate institution, the state librarian, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. On a nonvoting basis, the committee also includes a representative of the computer or telecommunications industry and a representative of a private college.

This committee must develop a network design and implementation plan for approval or modification by the Information Services Board (ISB). The design is to incorporate the following principles: (a) maximize existing networks and video telecommunications resources owned or operated by the state; (b) minimize duplication of technology resources and education programs or degrees at institutions; (c) provide optimum geographic and social distribution of the benefits of a network; (d) ensure that the network can be expanded and upgraded, is based on an open-architecture model, and connects to national and worldwide information infrastructures; (e) foster partnerships among public, private, and nonprofit entities; and (f) provide for future access by public entities on a no-cost or low-cost basis. Such entities include, but are not limited to public libraries, public hospitals, public schools, and public service agencies. The design must detail which sites shall be connected to the network and the technologies and service delivery modes to be utilized at each site.

For each site included in the network design the HECB approves a service delivery plan which provides for effective utilization of planned investments. The HECB also approves a network governance structure, ensuring participation by all members of the network.

The implementation plan must prioritize investments into phases to be funded by the Legislature. The plan also incorporates specific funding options that are appropriate for the 1997 supplemental budget. The committee must ensure that in each phase (a) the addition of a site or sites to the network will result in a completed link and the capability to operate distance education programs; (b) the sites added in each phase have an HECB-approved service delivery plan; and (c) each phase has completed a request for proposals process.

Once approved by the ISB, the design and implementation plan must be submitted to OFM and the relevant committees of the Legislature by October 1, 1996.

A fund is created with the State Treasurer. The director of DIS may accept gifts and grants for use in developing the higher education distance education network. The director may also disburse funds with approval of the ISB, for implementation of the network plan.

The membership of the Information Services Board is expanded to include a representative of K-12 education, a second representative of the private sector, one representative of the House of Representatives, and one representative of the Senate. The two legislative appointees may not be from the same political party. One member, who is currently appointed jointly by the House of Representatives and the Senate is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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