AN ACT Relating to procuring and supporting appropriate computers and devices for public school students and instructional staff; amending RCW 28A.650.010; adding new sections to chapter 28A.650 RCW; creating new sections; and repealing RCW 28A.650.005, 28A.650.015, 28A.650.020, 28A.650.025, 28A.650.030, 28A.650.900, and 28A.650.901.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the importance of internet-accessible learning devices for the ability of students to receive a modern education. When Washington schools closed in March 2020, schools and school districts shifted quickly to offering education in an online environment. Teachers adapted their lessons for videoconferencing platforms and arranged for students to submit homework via email. However, limited opportunities for in-person instruction amplified digital deserts and disparities among students that are likely to continue to grow for the foreseeable future.

(2) The legislature finds that students from low-income families face disproportionate barriers to accessing learning over the internet in their homes, partly because they do not have internet-accessible devices appropriate for learning. The legislature also recognizes that accessing learning over the internet requires more
than just an internet-accessible device appropriate for learning. For students and their families to be truly connected, they need the digital literacy, digital skills, and digital support to use internet-accessible devices and to navigate the web in support of student learning.

(3) Therefore, the purposes of this act are to: (a) Accelerate student access to learning devices and related goods and services; (b) expand training programs and technical assistance on using technology to support student learning; and (c) build the capacity of schools and districts to support digital navigation services for students and their families.

Sec. 2. RCW 28A.650.010 and 2017 c 90 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Digital citizenship" includes the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior related to current technology use, including digital and media literacy, ethics, etiquette, and security. The term also includes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, develop, produce, and interpret media, as well as internet safety and cyberbullying prevention and response.

(2) ("Education technology" or "technology" means the effective use of electronic and optical tools, including telephones, and electronic and optical pathways in helping students learn.

(3) "Network" means integrated linking of education technology systems in schools for transmission of voice, data, video, or imaging, or a combination of these.) "Learning device" means an internet-accessible computer, tablet, or other device, with an appropriate operating system, software applications, and data security, that can be used to access curricula, educational web applications and websites, and learning management systems, and with telecommunications capabilities sufficient for videoconferencing.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 28A.650 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Each educational service district shall provide technology consultation, procurement, and training, in consultation with teacher-librarians through school library information and technology programs as defined in RCW 28A.320.240, and as described in this
section. An educational service district may meet the requirements of
this section in cooperation with one or more other educational
service districts.

(2) Technology consultation involves providing technical
assistance and guidance to local school districts related to
technology needs and financing, and may include consultation with
other entities.

(3)(a) Technology procurement involves negotiating for local
school district purchasing and leasing of learning devices and
peripheral devices, learning management systems, cybersecurity
protection, device insurance, and other technology-related goods and
services.

(b) When selecting goods and services for procurement, the
educational service district must consider a variety of student
needs, as well as accessibility, age appropriateness, privacy and
security, data storage and transfer capacity, and telecommunications
capability.

(c) Technology procurement may be performed in consultation and
contract with the department of enterprise services under chapter
39.26 RCW.

(4) Technology training involves developing and offering direct
services to local school districts related to staff development and
capacity building to provide digital navigation services to students
and their families. The educational service districts must seek to
consult teacher-librarians and other relevant information technology
programs to determine where there is a need and focus for this
training. These services may be provided on a fee-for-service basis.

(5) Technology consultation, procurement, and training under this
section must be provided to local public schools, as defined in RCW
28A.150.010, the Washington center for deaf and hard of hearing
youth, and the school for the blind, in addition to local school
districts. Technology training under this section may also be offered
to child care providers.

(6) The educational service districts must cooperate with the
office of the superintendent of public instruction to provide the
data required under section 5(1) of this act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 28A.650
RCW to read as follows:
Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall develop and administer a technology grant program, as described in this section, to advance the following objectives:

(a) Attain a universal 1:1 student to learning device ratio;
(b) Expand technical support and training of school and district staff in using technology to support student learning; and
(c) Develop district-based and school-based capacity to assist students and their families in accessing and using technology to support student learning.

(2) The following entities, individually or in cooperation, may apply to the office of the superintendent of public instruction for a grant under this section: A public school as defined in RCW 28A.150.010; a school district; an educational service district; the Washington center for deaf and hard of hearing youth; and the state school for the blind.

(3) At a minimum, grant applications must include:
(a) The applicant's technology plan for accomplishing the goals of the grant program, the applicant's student demographics, including the percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and any specialized technology needs of the applicant's students, such as students with disabilities and English learners who may need adaptive or assistive technologies; and
(b) A description of preexisting programs and funding sources used by the applicant to provide learning devices to students, staff, or both.

(4) When ranking and selecting applicants, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must prioritize both of the following:
(a) Applicants without preexisting programs to provide a device for every student and that have 30 percent or more students eligible for free and reduced-price meals; and
(b) Applicants with students who have specialized technology needs.

(5) When selecting applicants, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must, to the extent possible, select applicants representing geographic diversity.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 28A.650 RCW to read as follows:
(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall collect and analyze the following data:

   (a) Demographic, distribution, and other data related to technology initiatives; and

   (b) Biennial survey data on school and school district progress to accomplish the objectives listed in section 4(1) of this act.

(2) By November 1, 2022, and by November 1st every even year thereafter, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide a report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, with:

   (a) A summary of the technology initiatives data collected under subsection (1) of this section;

   (b) The status of the state's progress in accomplishing the following: (i) Accelerate student access to learning devices and related goods and services; (ii) expand training programs and technical assistance on using technology to support student learning; and (iii) build the capacity of schools and districts to support digital navigation services for students and their families;

   (c) Recommendations for improving the administration and oversight of the technology initiatives; and

   (d) An update on innovative and collaborative activities occurring in communities across the state to support widespread public technology literacy and fluency, as well as student universal access to learning devices.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "technology initiatives" means the technology grants awarded by the office of the superintendent of public instruction under section 4 of this act, and the provision of technology consultation, procurement, and training by educational service districts under section 3 of this act.

NEW SECTION.  Sec. 6. The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

   (1) RCW 28A.650.005 (Findings—Intent) and 1993 c 336 s 701;

   (2) RCW 28A.650.015 (Education technology plan—Educational technology advisory committee) and 2011 1st sp.s. c 43 s 725, 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 133, 2009 c 556 s 17, 2006 c 263 s 917, 1995 c 335 s 507, 1994 c 245 s 2, & 1993 c 336 s 703;
NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2021, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.

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