

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1559

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to technology in schools.

Brief Description: Including technology costs in basic education.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/13/03, 2/19/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, Hunter, Rockefeller and Santos.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox and McMahan.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By a 1993 law, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) 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 OSPI was required to appoint an education technology advisory committee to assist in the development and implementation of the plan. The advisory committee includes or included representation from a variety of state agencies, higher education, and education constituencies.

In addition to the technology responsibilities assigned to the OSPI, educational service districts (ESDs) 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 ESDs must establish representative advisory councils to advise the districts on expenditures for technology support centers.

According to an October 2001 report from the OSPI, 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 2000-2001 school year, about 3,500 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. The OSPI is in the process of updating the information for 2002.

In the 2001-2003 budget, the OSPI received about \$8 million 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 million was divided evenly between the two years of the biennium. Its 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: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Technology is a given for today's students. Colleges, universities, and some employers expect high school graduates to understand and use basic technological tools. Students connect to technology and, for many, it helps them connect to their education. Districts have many technology needs in hardware, software, connectivity, sustainability, and other areas. The way that these districts fund technology varies dramatically, with many districts using local levies and grants to fund the technology needed by their students. This haphazard approach to technology acquisition and support is exacerbating the divide between rich and poor districts and students. The solution to all these issues is ensuring that the basic education funding formula recognizes the costs associated with administrative and instructional technology .

(With concerns) This issue is part of a larger set of school funding issues. The entire school finance system needs to be reexamined and revised, and technology needs to be considered in that context.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Hunt, prime sponsor; Julie Drennon, Kristen Bornemann, Heather Lawrence, North Thurston Public Schools; Don Morsette, Ryan Hodgkinson, Trang Pham, Olympia schools; and Greg Williamson, David Walddon, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(With concerns) Carol Taylor Cann, Washington State Parent Teacher Association.