

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6273

As of January 25, 2016

Title: An act relating to safe technology use and digital citizenship in public schools.

Brief Description: Concerning safe technology use and digital citizenship in public schools.

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Litzow, Rolfes, Fain, Mullet, Carlyle, Billig, Fraser and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/18/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Technology Literacy and Fluency. In 2007, the Legislature directed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations for educational technology literacy and technology fluency. Additionally, OSPI was required to obtain or develop education technology assessments that may be administered in elementary, middle, and high school grades to assess the EALRs for technology.

The K-12 Educational Technology Learning Standards were published in 2008. The standards are categorized around two EALRs:

- Integration - Students use technology within all content areas to collaborate, communicate, generate innovative ideas, investigate, and solve problems; and
- Digital Citizenship - Students demonstrate a clear understanding of technology systems and operations, and practice safe, legal, and ethical behavior.

Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). This state agency is comprised of all 1477 school board members from Washington's 295 public school districts. WSSDA is authorized by the Legislature to be self-funded and self-governed by a president and board of directors elected from school boards throughout the state. WSSDA provides materials and educational services to its members, including model policies and procedures.

Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). This federal act required school districts to update their Internet safety policies in 2012. The policies must provide:

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- the education of minors about appropriate online behavior, which includes interaction with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms; and
- cyberbullying awareness and response.

OSPI and WSSDA updated its model policy and procedure regarding electronic resources and Internet safety in accordance with CIPA. The policy and procedure were last updated in 2015.

Summary of Bill: By August 1, 2016, WSSDA must revise and distribute its model policy and procedure on electronic resources and Internet safety to all school districts in the state. In revising its model policy and procedure, WSSDA, with the assistance of OSPI, must convene and consult with an advisory committee. The advisory committee must include experts in digital citizenship and media literacy along with other stakeholders, including parent associations, educators, and administrators.

The model policy and procedure must address safe technology use and digital citizenship that empowers:

- a student to make smart media and online choices; and
- a parent or guardian to know how to discuss safe technology use with the parent's or guardian's child.

Digital citizenship is defined as the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior related to current technology use, including digital and media literacy, ethics, etiquette, and security. Digital citizenship includes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and interpret media.

Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, school districts must annually review and amend if necessary a policy and procedure that at a minimum incorporates WSSDA's revised model policy and procedure. The policy and procedure must be reviewed or amended through a process that includes representation of students, parents or guardians, teachers and other school employees, administrators, volunteers, and community representatives.

School districts must provide education that includes awareness of safe technology use, digital citizenship, and digital and media literacy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will empower students to become better users and consumers of information and will help them navigate the increasingly complicated digital landscape. This bill will help prepare students for the 21st century economy and to be safe when using new technology. Screens are everywhere and do not come with a user's manual or warnings. To understand the world and society, students need to

be able to understand media and technology. Literacy must be redefined to include digital and media literacy. Utah passed similar legislation addressing and defining digital citizenship. Previous Washington legislation regarding teacher-librarians also addressed digital citizenship. Students should be instructed in digital citizenship including how to be critical consumers of information and provide guidance on thoughtful and strategic use of online resources. This bill builds on what a lot of schools are already doing and will help schools that have not been teaching digital citizenship. Digital citizenship education in elementary schools can include appropriate supervision, finding age-appropriate websites, learning about digital trails, communicating online, plagiarism, and cyberbullying. Other topics include screen time, advertising and consumerism, and creative expression. It is important to teach these concepts early, so students and parents will develop good and safe habits. Individual schools and districts need to have the ability to build plans based on the needs of their community. The health of our democracy depends on giving students the skills they need to survive and thrive as informed citizens and to be able to exercise critical thinking skills in this digitally driven world. There are limitless opportunities related to media literacy and digital citizenship.

OTHER: Since the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) updated its policy and procedure in 2015, this component of the bill is not necessary. The focus of the advisory committee in the bill can be to support implementation of the policy and procedure. OSPI, not WSSDA, would be the appropriate agency to lead this type of committee. WSSDA has evidence that districts are having challenges providing the current education expectations associated with the E-Rate process. Additional funding and support is needed for districts to build their capacity to provide digital citizenship education.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lias, prime sponsor; Stephen Coker, Librarian, North Thurston High School; Derek Stewart, Director of Technology, North Thurston Public Schools; Patricia Arbuckle, Librarian, Julia Butler Hansen Elementary School, Olympia School District; Mark Ray, Chief Digital Officer, Vancouver Public Schools; Linda Kennedy, Action For Media Education and LK Media; Marilyn Cohen, Northwest Center for Excellence in Media Literacy; Michael Danielson, Seattle Prep, Teacher; Lynn Ziegler, Action for Media Education; Dalia Mendoza, Student; Lilia Drain, Action for Media Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Submitted written testimony: OTHER: Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association.