

STORAGE NAME: h0975a.go

DATE: March 8, 2000

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: HB 975 (PCB EI 00-02)

RELATING TO: Educational Technology

SPONSOR(S): Committee on Education Innovation and Representative Melvin

TIED BILL(S):

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) EDUCATION INNOVATION YEAS 6 NAYS 0
 - (2) GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS YEAS 5 NAYS 0
 - (3) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
 - (4)
 - (5)
-

I. SUMMARY:

HB 975 requires planning for educational technology at the school, district and state levels. Specifically this bill:

- Defines the term "educational technology" as all technology and technology related processes used directly or indirectly for instructional purposes.
- Requires each school to address strategies for implementing educational technology in the school improvement plan (SIP).
- Requires each district school board to submit and annually update a district educational technology plan to DOE as part of their district system of planning and budgeting. The educational technology plan must be developed using information from the educational technology plans of the schools in the district and the technology capability thresholds established by DOE.
- Requires DOE to develop and annually update a state educational technology plan.
- Requires the state educational technology plan to include technology capability thresholds.
- Requires DOE to develop a Technology Services and Product Bank which is required to collect and disseminate information through an Internet site, that identifies outdated technology, changes in technology, lowest prices for hardware, software, and services, and sources and prices of hardware, software and services; and serve as a clearinghouse for research and development projects.
- Creates the Educational Technology Advisory Group to advise the Department of Education (DOE) in developing and annually updating the state educational technology plan.

Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, school boards are required to distribute the funds received for public school technology to schools on the basis of the educational technology component of the SIP. Neither the amount of money allocated for technology nor the method of distribution of funds from the state to the districts will be affected by this bill. However, this bill requires the district to distribute technology funds in accordance with school, district and state educational technology plans.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

Technology Planning and Funding

The Florida Legislature has provided funding specifically for technology since 1993 to promote and support the effective use of technology in Florida's K-12 schools. Thirty percent of the funds provided in the first three years were required to be used for training in the use of instructional technology in the classroom. Planning at the state, district or school level is not necessarily tied to the funding. The latest Department of Education technology plan was completed in 1993. School districts have a system of planning and budgeting established in s. 229.555, F.S.; however, a technology plan is not specifically required as a part of that system. Beginning in 1999-2000, each school improvement plan is required to address technology.

The funds are distributed based on the number of students in the district.

Per Year Funding

The Legislature allocated \$55 million in school technology incentive funds to school districts in the 1993-92, 1994-95, and 1995-96 school years.

- \$65 million in 1996-97
- \$75 million in 1997-1998
- \$80 million in 1998-1999
- \$63.4 million in 1999-2000

The 1997 Legislature provided school districts with flexibility in spending these funds and provided additional funds for other purposes that could be used for technology: categorical funds for public school technology (\$79 million), grades K-8 summer school (\$83 million), class size reduction (\$100 million) and full service schools (\$11 million). These additional funds could be used for any of these four purposes in amounts that school boards determined would best meet the needs of students.

In the 1998-1999 fiscal year, the Legislature provided the same flexibility with the exception of removing the availability of funds for technology for the purposes of class size reduction

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or full service school. Funds to support public school technology were appropriated as aid to local government funds; thus, they went to the school district. However, the Department did spend some of its funds for staff to review and approve the technology plans.

The Legislature appropriated \$6,316,473 of general revenue to support FIRN in fiscal year 1997-1998 and \$6,166,473 in fiscal year 1998-1999. An additional \$1 million is provided for school library technology called SUNLINK.

The Legislature also appropriated, in both the 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 fiscal years, \$500,000 for incentives for grants for extended access to school library media centers.

Fiscal Year 1999/2000 Technology Appropriations

In addition to \$63.4 million for instructional technology, the Legislature made the following allocations for technology in the 1999-2000 General Appropriations Act (GAA):

- Distance Learning Library Initiative -- line item 31A -- \$2,300,000
- Teacher Professional Development in Technology -- line item 52 -- \$5,024,523 (Of which \$1,800,000 was specifically for Technological Research and Development Authority to provide training related to technology)
- Office of Deputy Commissioner for Technology and Administration -- line items 55A-D -- \$7,680,491
- Instructional Technology (Grants and Aids) -- line item 55F -- \$250,000
- Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN) -- line item 55H -- \$6,991,473
- Florida On-Line High School -- line item 107 -- \$3,800,000
- SUNLINK Uniform Library Database -- line item 112 -- \$1,000,000
- Public School Instructional Technology Improvement Study Group -- line item 128A -- \$175,000
- Preferred Technology Curriculum Pathway -- line item 143A -- \$2,000,000
- TOTAL 1999-2000 State Technology Funding -- \$92,621,487

Although it appears that educational technology funding was reduced from \$80 million in fiscal year 1998-99 to \$63.4 million in 1999-2000, the Legislature provided funds specifically for professional development in a different category instead of within the education technology funding line item as in previous years.

Instructional Technology Grant Program

The 1990 Legislature created an Instructional Technology Grant Program to facilitate new and innovative uses of technology in Florida's classrooms. School districts submit proposals to DOE for consideration of grant awards. The proposals must contain the following information:

- An outline of the proposed project activities and project budget.
- A description of how the proposed project will integrate instructional technology with regular classroom teaching.
- A description of how the project incorporates state-of-the-art instructional technology which utilizes advanced integrated learning systems technology and other newly developed systems geared to hands-on learning and developing higher order thinking skills, including problem-solving skills, understanding of abstract concepts, and high-level critical thinking and applied learning skills.
- A description of how the project will affect and be incorporated into the overall implementation of instructional technology in the school district over the next five years.
- A description of the anticipated project results and procedures for assessing the success of the project.

This grant program has not been funded since 1995 and was recommended for repeal by DOE in 1995.

District System of Planning and Budgeting

Section 229.555(1)(b), F.S., requires each district school board to maintain a continuing system of planning and budgeting designed to aid in identifying and meeting the educational needs of students and the public. The major emphasis of the system must be locally determined goals and objectives, the state plan for education, and the Sunshine State Standards developed by the Department of Education (DOE) and adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). The district planning and budgeting system must include consideration of student achievement data.

The system of planning and budgeting must be structured to meet the specific management needs of the district and align the budget adopted by the school board with the plan the board has adopted. Each school board must utilize its system of planning and budgeting to promote a school-based management system in which individual school centers become the principal planning units and integrate planning and budgeting at the school level.

School Improvement Plans

Pursuant to s. 230.23(16), F.S., school boards are required to maintain a system of school improvement and education accountability. This system is to be consistent with, and implemented through, the district's continuing system of planning and budgeting. School improvement plans are one facet of this system.

School boards must implement a new, an amended, or a continuation school improvement plan for each school in the district with annual approval. One exception to this is that a school board may establish a district school improvement plan which includes all schools in the district operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs.

Beginning in 1999-2000, in addition to addressing the achievement of the state education goals in s. 229.591, F.S., each plan must also address issues relative to budget, training, instructional materials, *technology*, staffing, student support services, specific school safety and discipline strategies, and other matters of resource allocation, and is required to be based on an analysis of student achievement and other school performance data.

School boards are also required to develop a process for the approval of individual school improvement plans. If a school board does not approve a school improvement plan, DOE must be notified of the need for assistance.

Federal Funds

E-Rate

E-Rate is a federal program that allows eligible schools and libraries to take advantage of discounts (20 percent--90 percent) on telecommunications services, Internet access, and internal connections. The Florida Department of Education, the Florida Distance Learning Network (FDLN), the Florida Division of Library and Information Services, and the Florida Information Resources Network (FIRN) have been working on e-rate initiatives since early in 1996. These organizations have worked closely with the Public Service Commission to meet all eligibility requirements for Florida's schools and libraries. The staff members supported application processes in 63 of the 67 school districts as well and many of the 400 private schools that applied.

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Funding in the first year (1998), was \$1.9 billion for 18 months of service. All of the telecommunications services and Internet access requests were funded as priority one funding. The internal connections requested by applicants, given priority two funding, were funded down to the 70 percent discount range. Florida's schools and libraries in the 1998-funding year received \$48,004,656.77.

In the second year (1999), funding was capped at \$2.25 billion for 12 months. For year two funding, 95 percent of the Florida public school districts filed according to the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) guidelines. The funding started going out to the districts on July 12, and will continue weekly until all of the applications have been addressed by the SLD. From the seven awards funded, Florida was awarded \$16,199,666.

Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) Projects

The federal TLCF program was intended to help ensure that every student in every school will be technologically literate by the 21st century. In order to meet this challenge, the President has urged the private sector, schools, teachers, students, community groups, states, local governments, and the federal government to work in partnership to achieve the following four primary goals for technology in education:

- All teachers will have the training and support they need to help all students learn through computers and through the information superhighway;
- All teachers and students will have modern computers in their classrooms;
- Every classroom will be connected to the information superhighway; and,
- Effective and engaging software and on-line resources will be an integral part of every school curriculum.

These national goals will continue to provide general direction for implementation of the Florida TLCF Grant Program. A major focus of the TLCF program is to provide assistance to the most financially and technologically needy school populations across the country.

The Florida Department of Education applied for and was awarded a Technology Literacy Challenge Fund block grant (March 1997) from the United States Department of Education (USDE). During 1996-97, \$7.5 million in TLCF grants were awarded for 17 projects. During 1998-99, \$18 million in TLCF grants were awarded for 67 projects.

Florida awarded \$17.5 million in TLCF grants to 46 projects under the 1999 Technology Literacy Challenge Fund program. Grant awards for 1999 ranged from \$69,604 to \$1,283,637 with most of the awards in the \$300,000 - 400,000 range.

If the fourth year of the program is authorized by Congress, the current TLCF allocation projection provided by the USDE indicates that Florida will receive an additional \$17.5 million in grants to Local Education Agencies. The Florida implementation of the TLCF Grant Program is designed to support comprehensive technology planning at the school, district, state, and federal levels. Another key objective of Florida's TLCF implementation effort is to promote the development and dissemination of effective technology-based instructional strategies that are clearly aligned with Florida's Sunshine State Standards.

C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Definition

HB 975 defines the term "educational technology" as all technology and technology-related processes used directly or indirectly for instructional purposes. This includes:

- Use of hardware, software, networks, distance learning equipment, and related devices that support teaching and learning.

- Resources that allow students and teachers to exchange information with others, or permits them to access, retrieve, manipulate, and display information available on the Internet or elsewhere.
- Hardware, software, and processes that facilitate the teaching and learning process, such as those resources that support grade reporting, class scheduling, attendance accounting, assessment and similar functions.
- Endeavors related to supporting the use of technology in the classroom such as technical support.

State Educational Technology Plans

Under the provisions of HB 975, DOE is required to develop and annually update a state educational technology plan in consultation with the Educational Technology Advisory Group. The state educational plan must:

- Include technology capability thresholds that represent reasonable levels of technological capability to fully integrate technology into a school in order for the school to effectively utilize grade level appropriate educational technology in teaching and learning.
- Address student access to technology to support students' educational progress in the community, at work, at school, and at home.
- Encourage districts and schools to furnish safe access to school media centers or computer centers outside of the regular school day.
- Encourage districts and schools, when planning for new construction or remodeling projects, to consider the design of entrances to media centers or computer centers for safety and accessibility to the community and students for use before and after school hours.
- Address technology infrastructure, communication updates, and upgrades for new and existing schools.
- Encourage designs to accommodate future updating and upgrading needs, to provide multiple technological access points, and to facilitate teacher access to telephones and telephone message systems.

Technology Capability Thresholds

The technology capability thresholds must:

- Take into consideration technology currently available, as well as forecasted innovations in technology.
- Be designed to build the skills that students will need to meet the demands of Florida's business and industry.
- Be developed by January 1, 2001.
- Be reviewed, and if appropriate, updated by January 1, each year thereafter.

Educational Technology Advisory Group

HB 975 creates the Educational Technology Advisory Group to advise DOE in developing and annually updating the state educational technology plan. The advisory group consists of the following 10 members:

- Three members appointed by the Governor, one of whom serves as chair of the study group, and one of whom must be a school principal from a school that is active in the area of technology.
- Three members appointed by the Commissioner of Education, one of whom is a teacher who is actively engaged in integrating educational technology into daily teaching and learning.
- Two members appointed by the President of the Senate.
- Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Each member must possess knowledge, skills, or experience related to technology. Each member serves at the pleasure of the appointing official and cannot be an elected official. At least one of the appointees made by each appointor must have substantial business experience in the private sector relating to the technology industry. In addition to the ten appointees, a student selected by the superintendent of schools of the district in which the advisory group is meeting may be invited to attend and observe the meeting.

The Commissioner calls the meetings for the Educational Technology Advisory Group and determines the location of each meeting.

School Educational Technology Plans

The bill requires each school, including schools operating for the purpose of providing education to youth in juvenile justice commitment and detention facilities, to address strategies for implementing educational technology in each school improvement plan (SIP). The portion of the SIP concerning educational technology must address:

- The achievement of the technology capability thresholds established by DOE.
- Safe access to the school media center or computer center outside of the regular school day.
- Technical assistance for daily operations.

District Educational Technology Plans

This bill requires each district school board to submit and annually update, a strategic district educational technology plan to DOE as part of the district system of planning and budgeting pursuant to s. 229.555(1)(b), F.S. The technology plan must be developed using information from the educational technology plans of the schools in the district and the technology capability thresholds established by DOE. The plan is effective for a period of at least three years but for no more than five years. The initial district plan is due to DOE by August 1, 2001. An update must be submitted by August 1 of each interim year for the duration of the plan. A new plan is required to be submitted by August 1 in the final year of the prior plan. The plan must include essential elements as required by the department.

Technology Services and Products Bank

The Bill requires DOE to establish and update a Technology Services and Products Bank which is required to:

- Collect and disseminate, through an Internet site, information regarding hardware, software, and technology services available within the state, including but not limited to educational applications.
- Identify outdated technology; rapid changes in technology; lowest prices for hardware, software, and technology services; sources of hardware, software and technology services; and fluctuations in prices of hardware, software, and technology services.
- Serve as a clearinghouse of information regarding software research and development project proposals. Work products produced as a result of publicly funded research and development projects must be reported to the Technology Services and Products Bank for inclusion in the information clearinghouse.

The Technology Services and Products Bank may *not* prohibit a school or district school board from selecting specific technology services or products or from independently obtaining the lowest price.

Funding

Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, school boards are required to distribute the funds received for public school technology to schools on the basis of the educational technology component of the SIP. In order to receive funding, a proposed project must:

- Be in a school that has achieved the appropriate technology capability threshold for that project.
- Be consistent with both the district and state educational technology plans.
- Describe how the project will assist in improving student performance.

Preference for funding *must be* given to schools designated as performance grade category "D" or "F." Preference for funding *may* be given to a school that matches the request with other funds and private sector contributions to the maximum extent possible.

Reporting

Beginning on January 1, 2001, the Commissioner's required annual report to the Legislature must include:

- A summary of the Educational Technology Program including a description of the technology capability thresholds and the status of school achievement of the thresholds.
- Recommendations to improve efficiency and promote the utilization of educational technology.

The Bill removes all references to the Instructional Technology Grant Program.

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

Section 1: Amends s. 229.603, F.S., defining educational technology; requiring school improvement plans to address strategies for implementing educational technology; requiring districts to develop, submit and update district technology plans; requiring DOE to develop and update a state educational technology plan; requiring the state plan to include provisions for technology capability thresholds, student accessibility to technology, and updates and upgrades for new and existing schools; requiring DOE to establish and update a Technology Services and Products Bank; requiring districts to distribute technology funds based on the educational technology component of the school improvement plan; eliminating provisions to technology grants; revising content of annual report; creating an Educational Technology Advisory Board.

Section 2: Provides an effective date of upon becoming law.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None

2. Expenditures:

None

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None

2. Expenditures:

None

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The amount of money allocated for technology will not be affected by this bill. However, this bill will require districts to expend technology funds in accordance with school, district and state technology plans.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to expend funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority of counties or municipalities to raise revenue.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

None

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B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

N/A

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

None

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

The Committee on Education Innovation considered HB 975 on February 7, 2000. The bill passed unanimously as amended with the following four amendments:

- Changed confusing language to clarify meaning.
- Changed confusing language to better clarify intent that, when making plans for construction and renovation, consideration is to be given to the entrance to school media centers and computer centers for safety and ready accessibility to the community and to the students for use before and after school hours.
- Requires each appointed member of the advisory group to serve at the pleasure of the appointing official.
- Requires the Commissioner, rather than the chair, to set the location of the meetings of the advisory group.

The Committee on Governmental Operations considered HB 975 on March 8, 2000. The bill passed unanimously as amended with two amendments. The first amendment provided per diem reimbursement for members of the advisory group. The second amendment was a technical amendment to conform statute sections.

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION INNOVATION:

Prepared by:

Ouida J. Ashworth

Staff Director:

Ouida J. Ashworth

AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS:

Prepared by:

Amy K. Tuck

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