

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 1146

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Clary

SUBJECT: Harnessing the Power of Education Technology Advisory Council

DATE: April 10, 2003

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Dormady</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>AED</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## I. Summary:

CS/SB 1146 creates the Harnessing the Power of Education Technology Advisory Council in the Department of Education. This council will recommend policies and actions for the use of technology in public education generally, to improve student academic achievement, and to bridge the digital divide. The 15-member council would be required to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than October 15, 2004.

This bill creates a new section of the Florida Statutes.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2003.

## II. Present Situation:

Technology in Education Generally. Continuing technological advances are in the process of shaping educational practices in the United States and Florida. As of 2002, 12 states had established online high school programs and 5 others were in the process of establishing such programs. Twenty-five states currently permit the creation of cyber charter schools; 2 states administer tests online, and 10 more states plan to do so.<sup>1</sup> Some commentators have expressed concern, however, at possibly exaggerated claims regarding online learning, and others have expressed concern about the possible expansion of online education to elementary school students. Technology may also be used for the location of online content to enhance curricula or to provide professional development training for teachers.

<sup>1</sup> "E-Defining Education," *Education Week on the Web*, May 9, 2002, at [www.edweek.org/sreports/tc02/article.cfm?slug=35execsumh21](http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc02/article.cfm?slug=35execsumh21).

Technology in Education in Florida. In Florida, approximately \$60 million was spent on educational technology in 2001-2002. Florida is comparable with most states in its use of educational technology, and is more advanced in some areas. The Florida Virtual School, for example, is the largest state-sponsored online high school in the nation, enrolling students from every county in Florida tuition-free. In 2001, Florida schools had approximately 5.7 students per network-connected computer, and approximately 7.1 students per internet-connected computer.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education provide oversight for technology issues concerning Florida's K-12 schools, including compliance with the educational technology requirements set forth in the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. Additionally, the Florida legislature established the Digital Divide Council (in s. 445.049, F.S.) to focus on remedies for the disparity in access to technology resources that often exists between students, particularly students from families with different levels of income. A digital divide can also result from differing family education levels, from differences in age, gender, race, ethnicity, location, or family structure (single or dual-parent families), and as a result of disabilities.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

This bill requires that the "Harnessing the Power of Education Technology Advisory Council" be created in the Department of Education. The purposes of the council would be to recommend policies and actions regarding:

- The use of technology in public education;
- Ways in which technology can be used to improve student academic achievement; and
- Ways in which school-based deployments of technology can bridge the digital divide.

In connection with its advisory work, the bill requires the council to:

- Examine technology initiatives, especially wireless systems, and analyze the impact of these initiatives on teaching, learning, student achievement and standardized testing;
- Study the impact of these initiatives on bridging the digital divide;
- Develop ways to measure student achievement and learning using technology;
- Recommend a statewide public-private initiative regarding the use of technology to improve student academic achievement;
- Identify and recommend funding sources for the initiative; and
- Create issue-oriented workgroups to make recommendations to the council and the Governor, which may include private and public sector representatives.

The council is required to report to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than October 15, 2004, on its work.

The council, which would meet at least quarterly, would be made up of 15 members, including the Commissioner of Education, appointees of the Governor, members of the Senate (including

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<sup>2</sup> "E-Defining Education: Florida," *Education Week on the Web*, May 9, 2002, at [www.edweek.org/sreports/tc02/state\\_profile.cfm?slug=35fl.h21](http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc02/state_profile.cfm?slug=35fl.h21).

the chairman of the Education Committee, a member of the minority party, and an appointee of the Senate President), members of the House of Representatives (including the chairman of the Education Committee, a member of the minority party, and an appointee of the Speaker), the President of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents, the President of the Florida Education Association, two representatives who are education/technology coordinators for local school districts, the President of the Florida Chamber of Commerce, and the President of the Florida School Boards Association. Members may appoint designees to serve on their behalf.

Each member of the council will serve a term from July 1, 2003 through December 31, 2004. Members would be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061, F.S.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

#### **V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill provides that members of the council must be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061, F.S.

#### **VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.

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