

# 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.)

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Prepared By: Education Committee

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BILL: CS/SB 1724

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Wilson

SUBJECT: Computers for low-income students

DATE: April 26, 2005

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

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Hermanson</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>EA</u>	<u>                    </u>
3.	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>WM</u>	<u>                    </u>
4.	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
5.	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
6.	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

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## I. Summary:

The committee substitute creates a program to provide Florida public school students enrolled in grades 5-12 with the opportunity to purchase computers at discounted prices. The Department of Education (DOE) is authorized to negotiate with computer manufacturers and certain nonprofit corporations for the computer prices, specialized software and hardware packages, a warranty, and whether computer accessories will also be offered at reduced prices.

The committee substitute requires the DOE to negotiate with broadband Internet access providers, and possibly non-broadband Internet access providers, concerning prices for Internet access packages. The committee substitute also requires the DOE to adopt rules concerning student computer or technical training, how parents and students may be notified of the program, the distribution of eligibility certificates, the locations where the computers are available, and how students may obtain and pay for the equipment.

Additionally, the committee substitute requires the Digital Divide Council and the DOE to implement a pilot project to assist low-income students in purchasing discounted computers and Internet access services. The pilot project will be funded in an amount determined by the General Appropriations Act, and possibly public and private grants.

The committee substitute creates undesignated sections of the Florida Statutes.

## II. Present Situation:

Currently, there is no statewide program that helps provide students in grades 5 through 12 with computers at a discounted price.

The Florida Digital Divide Council currently provides funding programs and services, such as First Serve and Community Technology Centers.<sup>1</sup> The Council has encouraged and established partnerships to extend existing programs to provide reasonable opportunities for computer training, education, and Internet access, to *at risk families in underserved communities*. The Council's twenty-four regional workforce boards, which contain a significant representation from the business community, are largely responsible for implementing these programs in the communities.

Additionally, the Legislature appropriated \$49.9 million for public school technology in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. These funds are allocated to districts on a per-pupil basis and funds are used for a variety of technology needs such as hardware, software and maintenance.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The committee substitute creates a program to offer computers at discounted prices to students in grade 5 through grade 12 who are enrolled in a Florida public school.

The committee substitute authorizes the DOE to negotiate with computer manufacturers or nonprofit corporations that obtain reconditioned computer hardware concerning:

- The price of a discounted computer and whether computer accessories, such as a printer or scanner, will also be offered to students at a reduced price;
- Specialized software and hardware packages, including but not limited to:
  - A word processor,
  - Software and hardware necessary to enable broadband Internet access, and
  - An operating system; and
- The type of warranty to be provided to the students and whether an extended warranty will also be available. If an extended warranty is to be provided, the DOE should also determine the terms of that warranty.

The committee substitute requires the DOE to negotiate with broadband Internet access providers concerning the prices of discounted broadband Internet access packages. The committee substitute also provides that the DOE shall negotiate with non-broadband Internet access providers in areas where broadband Internet access is not currently available.

Additionally, the committee substitute requires the DOE to adopt rules for the program concerning:

- How to integrate computer or technical training to students in their school districts;
- How parents and students may be notified about discounted computer and Internet access choices; and
- The distribution of eligibility certificates to the students, the locations at which discounted computers and Internet access services are available for purchase, and how students may obtain and pay for the equipment and services.

The committee substitute also creates a pilot project, to be implemented by the Digital Divide Council (Council) in consultation with the DOE, to assist low-income students in purchasing the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.digitaldividecouncil.com/>

discounted computers and Internet access services as negotiated by the DOE. The Council must identify counties, grade levels, and low-income eligibility criteria for participation in the pilot project. The pilot project will be funded in an amount determined in the General Appropriations Act. In addition, the Council is authorized to accept grants from additional public and private sources to implement the pilot project.

The committee substitute will take effect July 1, 2005.

**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:

C. Government Sector Impact:

The fiscal impact is indeterminate. The DOE will have costs associated with organizing the program, negotiating the prices, and providing computer or technical training to the students.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

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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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## **VIII. Summary of Amendments:**

None.

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