

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: HB 62

48th Legislature, 1st Session, 2007

Short Title: Educational Tech Deficiency Correction Fund

Sponsor(s): Representative Rick Miera and Others

Analyst: Frances R. Maestas

Date: January 27, 2007

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Bill Summary:

HB 62 makes two appropriations from the General Fund to address educational technology infrastructure deficiencies and to replace functionally obsolete computers and network devices and amends the *Technology for Education Act* (act) to require that no allocation is to be made unless:

- the Council on Technology in Education (CTE) approves the methodology used by the Education Technology Bureau in the Public Education Department (PED) to prioritize projects to correct deficiencies;
- CTE approves distributions from the Educational Technology Deficiency Correction Fund;
- a school consults with the Public School Facilities Authority prior to installing any educational technology infrastructure; and
- for 2009 and subsequent years, an independent third party verifies the initial school district self-assessment of the outstanding educational technology deficiencies within a school district (see Background).

Fiscal Impact:

From the General Fund, HB 62 appropriates:

- \$27.0 million in non-reverting funds to the Education Technology Deficiency Correction Fund for expenditure in FY 07 and subsequent fiscal years to address educational technology infrastructure deficiencies in public schools; and
- \$24.0 million in reverting funds to PED for expenditure in FY 07 and FY 08 to replace functionally obsolete educational technology equipment and devices.

Issues:

In the 2006 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard a progress report by CTE on developing and implementing a standards-based process for funding educational technology needs in public schools statewide.

CTE reported that minimum adequacy standards for educational technology will include:

- one T1 internet connection per school building;
- four network connections per classroom;
- a 100 mb connection for each computer/printer in a lab, library, or school office;
- wireless access or network connection in every cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium;
- a fiber connection with high speed switches/routers for network distribution facilities; and
- antivirus, filtering, and firewall security measures.

The methodology to be used to prioritize projects, CTE indicated, will compare school districts against technology adequacy standards, counting the number of classrooms that did not meet the minimum standard. The number of deficient classrooms will then be multiplied by the average cost to correct the deficiency, thus generating the total cost for the district. CTE emphasized the need to: provide equity across districts for technology infrastructure; identify those schools with the greatest need through an annual review; and provide funds and technical assistance based on school needs.

CTE noted that the two main costs of this program involved improving the technology infrastructure and replacing obsolete computers and network devices statewide over a five-year period based on a ratio of three students to one computer. Due to federal E-rate internal wiring awards to several school districts totaling approximately \$13.6 million, CTE stated, network standards costs declined. Accounting for the reduction in costs due to the E-rate awards, CTE explained the proposed 2006 five-year strategy will cost approximately \$51.0 million in each of the first three years: \$27.0 million to address infrastructure deficiencies and \$24.0 million in to replace obsolete computers. Upon the completion of the infrastructure deficiencies after three years, CTE stated, the remaining computer replacement cost would amount to \$24.2 million annually for the final two years of the project.

In 2006, the LESC endorsed legislation that included the recommendations of the Public School Capital Outlay Oversight Task Force (PSCOOTF) to appropriate approximately \$118.5 million (\$94.3 million for infrastructure deficiencies and \$24.2 million to replace obsolete equipment) as recommended by CTE. Although the legislation did not pass, the Legislature appropriated \$1.5 million from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY 06 through FY 10 to purchase and install educational technology, including related equipment and furniture, in public schools statewide.

Background:

- In 2005, the Legislature amended the *Technology for Education Act* by adding a new section to the act to require:
 - by September 1, 2005, the Educational Technology Bureau at PED, with the advice of the CTE and the office of the Chief Information Officer, to define and develop minimum educational technology standards to supplement the adequacy standards developed by the Public School Capital Outlay Council;
 - school districts to conduct a self-assessment of the outstanding educational technology deficiencies in their schools and to provide cost estimates for correcting the deficiencies; and

- the Educational Technology Bureau to develop a methodology for prioritizing projects to correct the deficiencies, and to approve, after a public hearing and when money becomes available, allocations for deficiency correction projects from the Educational Technology Deficiency Correction Fund.

The 2005 amendments also created the Educational Technology Deficiency Correction Fund.

Related Bill:

SB 78 *Educational Technology Deficiency Correction* (identical)