

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a technology immersion pilot project in public schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 32, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter D to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. TECHNOLOGY IMMERSION PILOT PROJECT

Sec. 32.151. ESTABLISHMENT OF PILOT PROJECT. The agency may by rule establish the technology immersion pilot project to:

(1) provide a wireless mobile computing device to each student in a participating school; and

(2) implement the use of certain scientifically validated software, on-line courses, and other appropriate scientifically validated learning technologies that:

(A) will improve academic achievement in a participating school; and

(B) have been proven by scientifically validated research to accelerate the learning process.

Sec. 32.152. PILOT PROJECT ADMINISTRATION. If the agency establishes the pilot project under Section 32.151, the agency shall establish a procedure and develop criteria for the administration of the pilot project. In administering the pilot project, the agency shall:

(1) select participating school districts or schools;

(2) define the conditions for the distribution and use

1 of computer equipment and other technologies;

2 (3) purchase and distribute computer equipment and
3 other technologies;

4 (4) enter into contracts as necessary to implement the
5 pilot project;

6 (5) monitor local pilot project implementation; and

7 (6) conduct a final evaluation of the pilot project.

8 Sec. 32.153. PILOT PROJECT FUNDING. (a) To implement the
9 pilot project, the agency may use any gift, grant, or donation given
10 for the pilot project. The agency may solicit and accept a gift,
11 grant, or donation of any kind from any source, including from a
12 foundation, private entity, governmental entity, and institution
13 of higher education, for the implementation of the pilot project.
14 The agency may not use money from the general revenue fund for
15 purposes of the pilot project.

16 (b) Funds for the pilot project may not be used for the
17 construction of a building or other facility.

18 (c) The agency shall use pilot project funds for:

19 (1) the purchase of wireless mobile computing devices
20 so that each student in a participating classroom has a wireless
21 mobile computing device for use at school and at home;

22 (2) the purchase of other equipment, including
23 additional computer hardware and software;

24 (3) the hiring of technical support staff for school
25 districts or schools participating in the pilot project; and

26 (4) the purchase of technology-based learning
27 materials and resources.

1 (d) The agency may not allocate more than \$1 million for a
2 school participating in the pilot project.

3 (e) The pilot project may be implemented only if sufficient
4 funds are available under this section for that purpose.

5 Sec. 32.154. DISTRICT OR SCHOOL SELECTION. (a) A school
6 district may apply to the agency for the establishment of a
7 technology immersion pilot project for the entire district or for a
8 particular school or group of schools in the district.

9 (b) The agency shall select the participating districts and
10 schools for the pilot project based on each district's or school's
11 need for the pilot project. In selecting participants, the agency
12 shall consider the following criteria:

13 (1) whether the district or school has limited access
14 to educational resources that could be improved through the use of
15 wireless mobile computing devices and other technologies;

16 (2) whether the district or school has the following
17 problems and whether those problems can be mitigated through the
18 use of wireless mobile computing devices and other technologies:

19 (A) documented teacher shortages in critical
20 areas;

21 (B) limited access to advanced placement
22 courses;

23 (C) low rates of satisfactory performance on
24 assessment instruments under Subchapter B, Chapter 39; and

25 (D) high dropout rates;

26 (3) the district's or school's readiness to
27 incorporate technology into its classrooms;

1 (4) the possibility of obtaining a trained technology
2 support staff and high-speed Internet services for the district or
3 school; and

4 (5) the methods the district or school will use to
5 measure the progress of the pilot project in the district or school
6 in accordance with Section 32.155(e).

7 (c) The agency shall if possible select at least five
8 schools to participate in the pilot project. At least one pilot
9 project should include students in grades 6-12. The agency may
10 select at least one entire school district and at least one entire
11 school in a second district to participate in the pilot project.

12 Sec. 32.155. COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE PROGRESS TEAM.

13 (a) Each participating school district or school shall establish a
14 community educational pipeline progress team to assist in
15 developing and implementing the technology immersion pilot
16 project.

17 (b) The board of trustees of a participating school
18 district, or of a district in which a participating school is
19 located, shall appoint individuals to the team. The team may be
20 composed of:

21 (1) educators;

22 (2) district-level administrators;

23 (3) community leaders;

24 (4) parents of students who attend a participating
25 school; and

26 (5) any other individual the board finds appropriate.

27 (c) The team shall develop an academic improvement plan that

1 details how the pilot project should be implemented in the
2 participating district or school. In developing the academic
3 improvement plan, the team shall consider:

4 (1) the educational problems in the district or school
5 that could be mitigated through the implementation of the pilot
6 project; and

7 (2) the technological and nontechnological resources
8 that are necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the
9 pilot project.

10 (d) The team shall recommend to the board how the pilot
11 project funds should be used to implement the academic improvement
12 plan developed under Subsection (c). The team may recommend
13 annually any necessary changes in the academic improvement plan to
14 the board. The agency must approve the academic improvement plan,
15 or any changes in the academic improvement plan, before disbursing
16 pilot project funds to the board.

17 (e) The board of trustees of each district participating in
18 the pilot project shall send an annual progress report to the agency
19 not later than August 1 of each year that the district is
20 participating in the pilot project. The report must state in detail
21 the type of plan being used in the district or school and the effect
22 of the pilot project on the district or school, including:

23 (1) the academic progress of students who are
24 participating in a pilot project, as measured by performance on
25 assessment instruments;

26 (2) if applicable, a comparison of student progress in
27 a school or classroom that is participating in the pilot project as

1 compared with student progress in the schools or classrooms in the
2 district that are not participating in the pilot project;

3 (3) any elements of the pilot project that contribute
4 to improved student performance on assessment instruments
5 administered under Section 39.023 or any other assessment
6 instrument required by the agency;

7 (4) any cost savings and improved efficiency relating
8 to school personnel and the maintenance of facilities;

9 (5) any effect on student dropout and attendance
10 rates;

11 (6) any effect on student enrollment in higher
12 education;

13 (7) any effect on teacher performance and retention;

14 (8) any improvement in communications among students,
15 teachers, parents, and administrators;

16 (9) any improvement in parent involvement in the
17 education of the parent's child;

18 (10) any effect on community involvement and support
19 for the district or school; and

20 (11) any increased student proficiency in
21 technologies that will help prepare the student for becoming a
22 member of the workforce.

23 Sec. 32.156. COMPUTER RETENTION. Each student
24 participating in the pilot project may retain the wireless mobile
25 computing device provided under the pilot project as long as the
26 student is enrolled in a school in a participating school district.
27 The student may retain the wireless mobile computing device after

1 the expiration of the pilot project.

2 Sec. 32.157. PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION; EXPIRATION.

3 (a) After the expiration of the three-year pilot project, the
4 agency may review the pilot project based on the annual reports the
5 agency receives from the board of trustees of participating school
6 districts. The agency may include the review of the pilot project
7 in the comprehensive annual report required under Section 39.182
8 that covers the 2006-2007 school year.

9 (b) This subchapter expires August 31, 2007.

10 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.