

By: Strama

H.C.R. No. 143

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Texas statute requires the public education system
2 of the state to ensure that all Texas children have access to a
3 quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and
4 fully participate in the current and future social, economic, and
5 educational opportunities of our state and nation; and

6 WHEREAS, These current and future opportunities demand a
7 workforce well versed in 21st century technology and ready to meet
8 the rapidly changing needs of a global economy; thus, the public
9 education system must have a curriculum that fully embraces
10 technology and prepares students to adapt to rapidly evolving
11 innovations; and

12 WHEREAS, The use in the classroom of technologies such as the
13 Internet and interactive learning software has been shown to raise
14 standardized test scores, increase motivation in students, and
15 greatly improve the effectiveness with which math, science, and
16 language skills are taught; studies in Illinois reported state
17 assessment test improvements among 11th grade science and 10th
18 grade reading students who received computer-based tutoring, and
19 evaluations in Pennsylvania showed that algebra students using
20 similar instructional technology outperformed students in
21 traditional classes by up to 25 percent in skill and up to 100
22 percent in problem solving; and

23 WHEREAS, In addition, classrooms employing these
24 technologies have been more apt to retain at-risk students and have

1 effectively introduced economically disadvantaged children to
2 computers, improving their chances at success in future educational
3 and career endeavors; the National Center for Education Statistics
4 reports that 60 percent of students from families in poverty who
5 access the Internet from only one location do so at school; and

6 WHEREAS, The flexibility offered by the use of these
7 technologies also allows teachers to tailor instruction to
8 accommodate the specific needs of individual students and provides
9 access to resources such as vastly larger libraries, direct contact
10 with teachers and researchers who are not physically present, and
11 educational collections in other cities, states, or countries; and

12 WHEREAS, Texas statute also requires the comprehensive use of
13 accessible technology in all aspects of instruction,
14 administration, and communication; given the obvious classroom
15 benefits of employing these resources, the state should assess its
16 use of instructional technology and develop a statewide online
17 learning program; now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
19 hereby create and establish the Commission on Online Learning to
20 develop a plan to provide all students and teachers in Texas with
21 access to the essential educational content and best pedagogical
22 practices to ensure the general diffusion of knowledge promised in
23 Section 1, Article VII, Texas Constitution; and, be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the study include consideration of the
25 following issues:

26 (1) accessibility of elements of the Texas Essential
27 Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) on a state-approved website or another

1 online source;

2 (2) curriculum enhancement materials that can be used
3 as stand-alone lessons or teaching aids;

4 (3) electronic student assessment tools;

5 (4) test preparation resource tools;

6 (5) library and other research tools;

7 (6) electronic professional development tools for
8 teachers;

9 (7) budget requirements to achieve recommendations;

10 (8) current state policies on online learning;

11 (9) research-based best practices in online learning
12 from other states and from other countries;

13 (10) any modifications of state policies that may be
14 needed;

15 (11) possible partners that could assist the state in
16 enhancing online learning, including other states, the federal
17 government, school districts in Texas, philanthropic foundations,
18 nonprofit organizations, and private companies; and

19 (12) a specific plan of action for the legislature and
20 Texas Education Agency to implement the most cost-effective
21 strategy to integrate online learning into the Texas education
22 system to the benefit of students, teachers, and parents; and, be it
23 further

24 RESOLVED, That the commission's membership include:

25 (1) two members of the senate appointed by the
26 lieutenant governor;

27 (2) two members of the house of representatives

1 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

2 (3) two members who are members of the State Board of
3 Education appointed by the chair of the State Board of Education;

4 (4) two members who are superintendents of public
5 school districts appointed by the governor;

6 (5) two members who are district technology directors
7 or coordinators appointed by the governor;

8 (6) two members who are principals from a public
9 school campus or open-enrollment charter school appointed by the
10 governor;

11 (7) three members who are teachers from a public
12 school campus or open-enrollment charter school appointed by the
13 governor;

14 (8) three members who are business leaders from the
15 high-tech industry appointed by the governor; and

16 (9) one member who is a national expert on education
17 technology research appointed by the governor; and, be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the chairman of the Commission on Online
19 Learning be selected by the members of the commission; and, be it
20 further

21 RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby direct the
22 commissioner of the Texas Education Agency, from the state's
23 allotment for educational technology under Title II, Part D, No
24 Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. Section 6751 et seq.), to
25 transfer to The University of Texas System the amount of \$252,671
26 for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2008, and the amount of
27 \$212,670 for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2009; and, be it

1 further

2 RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby direct The University
3 of Texas System to use the transferred funds to pay for the
4 necessary and reasonable expenses of the commission, including the
5 compensation of any staff necessary to conduct the work of the
6 commission, and authorize any member, committee, or agency of the
7 legislature to provide staff support and other resources to the
8 task force; and, be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the commission be authorized to request
10 assistance and information, excluding confidential information,
11 from any state agency in the expectation that the agency will
12 provide the assistance and information requested; and, be it
13 further

14 RESOLVED, That the commission submit a report, including
15 findings, recommendations, and possible legislation, to the
16 governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of
17 representatives not later than December 1, 2008; and, be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the commission be abolished January 1, 2009.