

New law requires the state Dept. of Education to develop and implement a statewide educational technology plan for public elementary and secondary schools to ensure that every classroom has sufficient infrastructure and capacity to provide a high quality, digital instructional environment.

Provides that the technology plan shall:

- (1) Establish recommended standards for devices, Internet bandwidth, software applications, and local network capacity.
- (2) Establish clear short-term and long-term goals and standards for school technology readiness and develop a realistic strategy, timeline, and cost estimates to meet both minimum and optimal standards.
- (3) Ensure that every classroom has reliable, high speed, wireless, broadband Internet access and connectivity for computers, white boards, smart boards, and other interactive devices.
- (4) Consider the technology needs of high poverty and rural areas.
- (5) Identify and use all available Internet bandwidth assets provided through a request for proposal process through which both public and private entities are considered.
- (6) Provide for ongoing professional development for teachers and other school level staff.
- (7) Require every school and school system to develop and implement an Internet safety policy that protects students from harmful materials, prevents unauthorized access to content and resources, and complies with all state and federal student laws.

Requires the department, in developing the plan, to:

- (1) Conduct a technology needs assessment of all schools and school systems, including an inventory of existing hardware and software, internal and external networks, servers, workstations, and operating systems.
- (2) Evaluate the current technology readiness status of every public elementary and secondary school, including hardware, software, and broadband capacity.

Requires the state superintendent of education to:

- (1) Identify the costs for upgrading existing software and equipment, acquiring new software and equipment, ongoing maintenance, and technical support and develop a funding strategy, including state contracts to provide for cost savings wherever possible.
- (2) Identify and develop funding mechanisms to support implementation of the plan.
- (3) Inform schools and school systems of available technology funding sources and applicable timelines and deadlines and encourage local schools and school systems to maximize the use of existing local, state, and federal funding sources for technology purposes.
- (4) Conduct and publish a technology readiness assessment of each public school twice a year including a review of devices, Internet bandwidth, school and school system expenditures on technology, and use of state technology contracts.
- (5) Provide ongoing guidance and technical assistance to schools and school systems.
- (6) Evaluate the statewide school technology plan and update as often as necessary, but not less than once per year, to keep current with technological advances.

Requires the Board of Regents to collaborate and cooperate with the department to develop policies and procedures to allow public elementary and secondary schools access to all

available Internet assets provided through a request for proposal process through which both public and private entities are considered.

Requires the department annually to submit a written report to the Senate and House education committees by January 15th regarding implementation of the statewide education technology plan and the status of technology readiness of each public school and school system.

Effective August 1, 2014.

(Adds R.S. 17:3921.2)