
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

SB 767 (Becker) - Educational technology: Digital Education Equity Program: regional consortia: State Digital Equity Plan

Version: April 5, 2021

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: May 3, 2021

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill establishes the Digital Education Equity Program to be administered by the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide a regionalized network of technical assistance to schools and school districts on the implementation of education technology.

Fiscal Impact:

- The bill includes an appropriation of \$18 million Proposition 98 General Fund for the implementation of education technology services to be provided by the 11 existing regional consortia of county offices of education. The bill also includes an appropriation of \$3 million General Fund for purposes of the development, preparation, submission, and adoption of the State Digital Equity Plan.
- The CDE estimates General Fund costs of approximately \$918,000 over a four-year period for various administrative activities necessary to comply with the bill's requirements.

Background: A system of educational technology support services used to exist at both the state and regional levels, known as the Educational Technology program and included the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP) and Statewide Education Technology Services (SETS). Along with a majority of the state's categorical programs, funding for these programs, projects and services were "flexed" and subsumed into the Local Control Funding Formula; they are no longer directly funded by the state.

Proposed Law: This bill establishes the Digital Education Equity Program (DEEP) to be administered by CDE, to provide a regionalized network of technical assistance to schools and school districts on the implementation of education technology as set forth in policies of SBE. The bill provides that the DEEP is to be composed of existing 11 regional consortia of county offices of education, and will work collaboratively with school districts and county offices of education to meet locally defined educational needs that may be effectively addressed with the use of technology, including specified areas.

This bill requires the SBE, with recommendations from CDE, to authorize grants to fund a county office of education in each of the 11 existing regional consortia of county offices of education, to act as the lead agencies to administer the services to school districts and county offices of education located within that region. The bill prohibits the term of a grant from exceeding three years, yet authorizes grants to be awarded and

received for subsequent three-year terms. The bill also requires the lead agency for each region to be chosen based on the extent to which it provides a plan that clearly documents or describes specific components.

This bill requires the lead agency, in order to receive funding for the second and subsequent years of a grant, to submit an annual report to the SBE for approval that describes the services provided, the persons served, and the funds expended for those services in the prior year. This bill requires that school districts and county offices of education within a DEEP region have an opportunity to comment on the report.

This bill requires the SPI, by an unspecified date, to develop guidelines and criteria for including the education technology plan as a component of a LCAP. This bill requires the guidelines and criteria to include, but not be limited to, units designed to educate students and their teachers about specific components.

This bill requires the educational technology plan to also include a documented needs analysis that leads the school district to providing teachers with training and support on effective online and hybrid learning strategies, addresses student and teacher connectivity, digital citizenship for students and staff, data privacy implications, cybersecurity and online safety, and information documenting the total cost of ownership or replacement of appropriate technological devices.

This bill require CDE to establish an Office of Educational Technology with sufficient staff to administer the provisions of this bill, and provides that funding for the office is to be provided through the annual Budget Act for a minimum of three full-time equivalent staff to plan, coordinate, and support, as needed, the provisions of this bill.

This bill requires CDE to prepare a comprehensive State Digital Equity Plan that reflects the overall needs and priorities related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the access and use of technology to support teaching and learning, as specified. The bill also requires the SPI, by January 31, 2022, to submit the plan to SBE for adoption, and requires SBE adopt the plan by March 31, 2022.

This bill requires funding to be provided through the annual Budget Act to the SPI to provide centralized statewide educational technology services that address locally defined needs and are more efficiently and effectively provided on a statewide basis, and provides that, beginning with the 2025–26 fiscal year, the provisions of this bill are to be operative only in fiscal years when sufficient funding for its implementation is appropriated in the Budget Act or in another statute.

This bill appropriates \$18,000,000, without regard to fiscal years, from the General Fund to CDE for the planned implementation of educational technology services by the 11 existing regional consortia of county offices of education. The bill provides that the receipt of a grant by each regional consortium of county offices of education is contingent on the consortium having a plan approved by CDE, and that the funding level provided to each consortium is to be based on criteria developed by CDE.

This bill also appropriates \$3,000,000, without regard to fiscal years, from the General Fund to CDE for purposes of the development, preparation, submission, and adoption of the State Digital Equity Plan.

Related Legislation: ACR 268 (Thurmond, Resolution Chapter 221, Statutes of 2018) resolved that the Legislature considers education technology of the highest priority and that the Legislature convene a state level summit conference to address improvements in education technology and related topics.

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