

ASSEMBLY, No. 1860

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MAY 2, 1996

By Assemblymen WOLFE, ROCCO and Doria

1 AN ACT establishing an Educational Technology Grant Program in  
2 the Department of Education and supplementing chapter 58 of Title  
3 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Educational  
9 Technology Grant Program Act."

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11 2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

12 a. Current New Jersey students will comprise the workforce for the  
13 early 21st century, and their success depends on making technology  
14 available to them and the development of instructional methods  
15 which support the students' ability to access, manipulate and  
16 communicate information with technological tools;

17 b. Teachers need to understand the potential of technology to  
18 support curriculum goals and to be proficient in the use of  
19 technologies appropriate for the education of their students;

20 c. Educational technology also has the capability of assisting  
21 school districts in achieving administrative efficiency and a  
22 corresponding reduction in administrative costs;

23 d. It is imperative that technological resources be available to all  
24 of New Jersey's teachers, administrators and students, regardless of  
25 the circumstances, financial or otherwise, of the local school district;

26 e. Although educational technology is available and used by some  
27 school districts, relatively few districts within the State have been able  
28 to avail themselves adequately of the enormous potential for teaching  
29 and learning offered by educational technology; and

30 f. There is a need for the State to provide grants which will enable  
31 school districts to formulate a five-year plan for the acquisition and  
32 integration of educational technology into their school programs and  
33 to provide an adequate source of funding for those plans.

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35 3. There is established in the Department of Education the  
36 Educational Technology Grant Program. The purpose of the program  
37 shall be to provide grants to school districts for the funding of five-

1 year technology plans. A grant shall be in the amount of \$80 per pupil  
2 per year and shall be paid to a district for five years. The district may  
3 use the grant for:

- 4 a. The acquisition of technological equipment and related services,  
5 including hardware, software, subscription fees for  
6 telecommunications and data base services, and other related services;  
7 or
- 8 b. Facility modification to meet the needs for educational  
9 technology.

10 A minimum of 30 percent of the total grant shall be used for the  
11 training of staff members in the use of technological resources.

12 4. An application for a grant to fund a five-year plan shall be  
13 submitted by a school board to the Office of Technology in the  
14 Department of Education. The application shall include a description  
15 of the five-year plan for the acquisition and utilization of technological  
16 resources and a discussion of the alternatives which the district  
17 considered. In reviewing an application, the office shall consider the  
18 relative cost-effectiveness of the district's plan. If the office  
19 determines that the plan does not address technology alternatives  
20 which are likely to have substantially higher educational impact at  
21 approximately the same or lower cost, it shall return the application to  
22 the district for revision until the rejection of those alternatives is  
23 satisfactorily addressed. The department shall provide technical  
24 assistance to school districts in the development of a five-year plan.  
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26 5. The aid received by a school district under the grant program  
27 shall be placed in a special revenue fund. Unless a district can  
28 adequately explain a delay in expenditure, the department shall reduce  
29 any State aid payable to the district in the following year in an amount  
30 equal to the unexpended technology aid received by the district.  
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32 6. There is established within the Department of Education an  
33 advisory council which shall be designated the Educational Technology  
34 Advisory Council. The council shall have seven members as follows:  
35 the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, and six members to be  
36 appointed by the commissioner, in consultation with the Commission  
37 on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools, for terms of three years;  
38 except for the initial appointments, two members shall be appointed  
39 for terms of one year; two members shall be appointed for terms of  
40 two years; and two members shall be appointed for terms of three  
41 years. In the case of a vacancy, the successor shall be appointed in the  
42 same manner for the unexpired term only. The advisory council shall  
43 assist the Office of Technology as it develops the process for the  
44 evaluation of applications for grants under the program and shall meet  
45 with the office at least semi-annually to review the implementation of  
46 the program and recommend revisions as deemed appropriate.

1       7. The Department of Education shall issue an annual report to the  
2 Governor and the Legislature including, but not limited to, the  
3 number of school districts with technology plans, the status of the  
4 implementation of those plans, a description of exemplary plans which  
5 might serve as models for other districts, and an evaluation of the  
6 effectiveness of the grant program. In the first annual report, which  
7 shall be issued no later than one year following the effective date of  
8 this act, the department shall include an analysis of the state of  
9 educational technology in New Jersey prior to the implementation of  
10 the grant program.

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12       8. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

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17       This bill establishes the Educational Technology Grant Program in  
18 the Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to  
19 provide grants to school districts for the funding of five-year  
20 technology plans. A grant would be in the amount of \$80 per pupil  
21 per year and would be paid to a district for five years. The district  
22 could use the grant for the acquisition of technological goods and  
23 services or facility modification to meet the needs for educational  
24 technology. A minimum of 30 percent of the total grant must be used  
25 for the training of staff members in the use of technological resources.

26       An application for a grant to fund a five-year plan would be  
27 submitted by a school board to the Office of Technology in the  
28 Department of Education. The application would include a description  
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31 considered. In reviewing an application, the office would consider the  
32 relative cost-effectiveness of the district's plan. If the office  
33 determines that the plan does not address technology alternatives  
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35 approximately the same or lower cost, it would return the application  
36 to the district for revision until the rejection of those alternatives is  
37 satisfactorily addressed.

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39 would be placed in a special revenue fund. Unless a district can  
40 adequately explain a delay in expenditure, the department would  
41 reduce any State aid payable to the district in the following year in an  
42 amount equal to the unexpended technology aid received by the  
43 district.

44       An Educational Technology Advisory Council would be established  
45 within the Department of Education consisting of seven members as  
46 follows: the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, and six members

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2 Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools for terms of  
3 three years. The advisory council would assist the Office of  
4 Technology as it develops the process for the evaluation of  
5 applications for grants under the program and would meet with the  
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7 program and recommend revisions as deemed appropriate.

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11 implementation of those plans, a description of exemplary plans which  
12 might serve as models for other districts, and an evaluation of the  
13 effectiveness of the grant program. In the first annual report, the  
14 department is to include an analysis of the state of educational  
15 technology in New Jersey prior to the implementation of the grant  
16 program.

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