

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA



Session 2007

Legislative Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 119 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: School Internet Safety Act.

SPONSOR(S): Representatives Howard, Goforth, and Ray

FISCAL IMPACT					
	Yes (X)	No (X)	No Estimate Available ()		
	<u>FY 2007-08</u>	<u>FY 2008-09</u>	<u>FY 2009-10</u>	<u>FY 2010-11</u>	<u>FY 2011-12</u>
REVENUES:					
EXPENDITURES:					
State Public School Fund (in thousands)	\$0 to \$720	\$0 to \$729	\$0 to \$741	\$0 to \$753	\$0 to \$765
POSITIONS (cumulative):	N/A				
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED:	State Public School Fund, Department of Public Instruction, Department of Justice				
EFFECTIVE DATE:	The bill is effective when it becomes law.				

BILL SUMMARY: The bill amends GS 115C-102.6A(c) to require that there be an acceptable use policy (AUP) component to the State school technology plan to ensure that students use the Internet safely, responsibly, and effectively. The bill requires the State AUP to include, at a minimum, that students receive instruction regarding the need to be discreet in sharing personal information online, the need to be alert to inappropriate overtures, and how to handle and report those overtures. The policy shall further provide for the development and distribution of an information sheet to provide parents with basic information about computers and offer tips for ensuring that all students have safe, productive, and enjoyable experiences on the Internet.

The bill also directs the Attorney General, using funds available to the Department of Justice, to develop and implement a public education program concerning Internet safety.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

Background

The “North Carolina Educational Technology Plan 2007-2009”¹ already requires that all local education agencies (LEAs) “adopt an adequate Acceptable Use Policy.” The State-produced “IMPACT: Guidelines for North Carolina Media and Technology Programs”² provides recommendations and guidelines for the production of LEA-level AUPs. Per the regulations set forth in this document, all LEA AUPs should include:

- Expected behaviors and proper use of computer time
- Inappropriate behaviors: (i.e., illegal activities, vandalism, destructive behavior)
- Password security
- File storage on network drives
- System safety
- Copyright issues
- Academic integrity
- Privacy and personal safety
- Appropriate language and material with electronic communications and content
- Consequences of misuse³

Regional instructional technology consultants check all LEA AUPs annually to ensure that they include these items, among others. While these elements are contained in LEA school technology plans, they are *not* currently included in the State school technology plan.

Fiscal Impact of New Acceptable Use Policy

This bill specifies that an AUP must be included in the *State’s* technology plan. To do so would require a re-writing of the current State technology plan (“North Carolina Educational Technology Plan 2007-2009”). A re-write of the State technology plan requires input from stakeholders from across the State. Stakeholders would be reimbursed for travel based on the current State reimbursement rates:

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, hotel:	\$97.75
Gas – 300 miles at .485 per mile:	\$145.00
Number of stakeholders:	10
Total Cost:	\$2,427.50

Fiscal Impact of Distribution of Information Sheet

The bill requires the development and distribution of an information sheet to provide parents with basic information about computers and offer tips for ensuring that all students have safe, productive, and enjoyable experiences on the Internet. Potential costs would vary depending on how the information is to be distributed.

¹ The “North Carolina Educational Technology Plan 2007-2009” can be found at: <http://tps.dpi.state.nc.us/TechPlan0509/TECHPLR1106.pdf>.

² NC Department of Public Instruction, “Guidelines for North Carolina Media and Technology Programs.” Found at: www.newiseowl.org/Impact/docs/IMPACT.pdf.

³ Ibid, p. 224.

One option for distributing information on Internet safety is to distribute this information via a website. Such a website already exists and can be found at:

<http://www.ncwiseowl.org/zones/parent/safety.htm>. The website includes links to:

- The U.S. Department of Education's "Parents' Guide to the Internet";
- The NC Department of Justice Internet Safety Video; and
- Links to various other Internet safety organizations.

If this option is deemed sufficient, there would be no fiscal impact for distribution of the information sheet.

A second, more expensive alternative would be to design and print a new information sheet on Internet safety, and mail the information sheet to parents of students. According to the Department of Public Instruction, this alternative would cost about \$0.50 per student. For 2006-07, there were 1,435,475 students in North Carolina. At \$0.50 per student, it would cost approximately \$717,738 to produce and mail an Internet safety information sheet to parents of North Carolina school children. Costs in future years would increase as the number of students increases. Over the past ten years, the student population has grown by an average of 1.60% per year, so costs are projected to rise accordingly in future years.

Fiscal Impact of Department of Justice Education Program

The bill instructs the Department of Justice to develop and implement a public education program *using existing funds*. As such, there would be no additional State expenditures as a result of this section of the bill.

SOURCES OF DATA: Department of Public Instruction Instructional Technology Division, The North Carolina Educational Technology Plan 2007-2009, NCWiseOwl.org

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

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