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HOUSE BILL NO. 512

Offered January 18, 2000

A BILL to establish the Computer Proficiency Enhancement Project.

Patrons—Plum, Almand, Amundson, Brink, Callahan, Darner, Moran, Scott, Van Landingham and Watts; Senators: Byrne, Colgan, Howell, Puller, Ticer and Whipple

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *The General Assembly finds that obtaining proficiency in computer skills is an essential part of learning in grades K through 12. The General Assembly recognizes that the more opportunities a child has to interact with a computer the better the child will be in obtaining a desirable level of computer skills; thus, a child should ideally be exposed to computers both in and out of classrooms. The General Assembly also finds that due to economic diversities, many students have access to computers only in classroom settings. The General Assembly desires to remedy this digital divide, and thus hereby creates the Computer Proficiency Enhancement Project ("Project").*

§ 2. *Administration of the Computer Proficiency Enhancement Project.*

The Virginia Department of Education ("Department") shall designate six schools located in economically disadvantaged areas of the Commonwealth as Project schools. The locations of the schools should reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth's economic areas, for example, rural areas, inner-cities, and areas of limited English proficiency. Two of the designated schools shall be elementary schools, two shall be middle schools, and two shall be high schools. In designating project schools, the Department shall develop a procedure for allowing interested schools to apply to be the Project schools. For each Project school, the Department shall provide portable computers, commonly referred to as "laptops" or "notebooks." The number of portable computers to be distributed to each school shall be determined by the Department and the principal of that school or his designee. The portable computers may be used for in-school purposes; however, the portable computers shall be made available to the students to take home for use at home. The funding for the Project shall be appropriated by the General Assembly.

§ 3. *Length of the Project; procedures.*

The Project shall start in the fall semester of 2000 and conclude in the spring semester of 2003, or their equivalents. Before the beginning of the fall semester of 2000, the Department shall designate the Project schools as required under § 3 of this act. Within thirty days of designating the Project schools, the Department shall develop and adopt procedures for implementing the Project. In developing and adopting the procedures, the Department shall consult the principals of the Project schools or their designees and shall be exempt from the Administrative Process Act (§ 9-6.14:1 et seq.).

§ 4. *Reporting requirement.*

The Department shall submit a report detailing the successes and shortcomings of the Project, including the Department's recommendations on whether the Project shall be modified, expanded, continued, or terminated. The report shall be submitted to the Governor and the 2004 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents. In addition, after the conclusion of each academic year, the Department shall provide an interim report to the Joint Commission on Technology and Science.

2. That the provisions of this act shall expire on July 1, 2004.

INTRODUCED

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