

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 2893
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Technology Immersion Project (TxTIP), created by the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, was built on the assumption that immersion in technology, rather than a gradual introduction over time, leads to more effective technology use and positive academic outcomes in schools. Under TxTIP, participating public schools were equipped with laptops for every teacher and student, as well as technology-based learning resources, training for teachers, and technical support. In order to monitor the progress of the program, the Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER) partnered with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to conduct a four-year evaluation of TxTIP and to look at the impact of technology immersion on teaching and learning. One major finding of the study was that home learning, or the extent to which students use laptops outside of school for homework or learning games, was the strongest predictor of students' TAKS reading and mathematics scores.

This bill establishes the technology demonstration sites project, which builds on the findings of the TCER study and expands TxTIP. The technology demonstration sites project extends technology immersion for in-school and at-home use to include technologies and electronic devices other than laptop computers. Additionally, the bill requires TEA to develop guidelines for a distribution and checkout plan for home use of electronic devices. Through the project, the bill seeks to extend learning opportunities from school to home and use multiple technologies to enrich teaching and learning both inside and outside of school.

H.B. 2893 amends current law relating to the technology demonstration sites project.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Education Agency is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 32.151, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends the heading to Subchapter D, Chapter 32, Education Code, to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION SITES PROJECT

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 32.151, 32.152, 32.153, and 32.154, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 32.151. New heading: ESTABLISHMENT OF PROJECT. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Authorizes the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by rule to establish the technology demonstration sites project (project), rather than the technology immersion pilot project, to demonstrate the use of technology for improving teaching and learning, use digital tools and resources to extend learning opportunities from school to home, and exemplify instructional practices and lessons that support academic learning in the classroom and at home.

(b) Requires the project to use existing home electronic devices or provide access through electronic device checkout options to extend learning at home, rather than provide a wireless mobile computing device. Requires the project to make electronic devices available to each student in a participating school to allow students, at school and at home, to use, rather than implement the use of,

software, online courses, and other appropriate learning technologies that have been shown to improve academic achievement and the progress measures listed in Section 32.155(e) (relating to an annual progress report covering certain topics).

Sec. 32.152. New heading: PROJECT ADMINISTRATION. Requires TEA, if TEA establishes the project, rather than pilot project, under Section 32.151, to establish a procedure and develop criteria for the administration of the project, rather than pilot project. Requires TEA, in administering the project to, among other things, define the conditions for the distribution and use of electronic devices not currently available to all students, develop guidelines for a distribution and checkout plan for home use of electronic devices, monitor local project implementation, and review the progress made through each demonstration site included in the project. Deletes existing text requiring TEA, in administering the pilot project, to define the conditions for the distribution and use of computer equipment and other technologies, purchase and distribute computer equipment and other technologies, enter into contracts as necessary to implement the pilot project, monitor local pilot project implementation, and conduct a final evaluation of the pilot project.

Sec. 23.153. New heading: PROJECT FUNDING. (a) Makes conforming changes.

(b) Makes a conforming change.

(c) Requires the participating school districts and schools, rather than TEA, to use project funds for the purchase of electronic devices, rather than of wireless mobile computing devices, so that each student in a participating classroom has an electronic device, rather than a wireless mobile computing device, for use at school and at home; the purchase of other equipment, including computer hardware and software, rather than including additional computer hardware and software; the hiring of pedagogical and technical support staff for school districts or schools participating in the project and the purchase of technology-based learning materials and resources. Makes conforming changes.

(e) Makes a conforming change.

Sec. 32.154. DISTRICT OR SCHOOL SELECTION. (a) Authorizes a school district to apply to TEA for the establishment of a technology demonstration sites project, rather than a technology immersion pilot project, for the entire district or for a particular school or group of schools in the district.

(b) Requires TEA to select the participating districts and schools for the project, rather than pilot project, based on each district's or school's need and technological readiness for the project, rather than pilot project. Deletes existing text requiring TEA, in selecting participants to consider the following criteria: whether the district or school has limited access to educational resources that could be improved through the use of wireless mobile computing devices and other technologies, whether the district or school has certain problems and whether those problems can be mitigated through the use of wireless mobile computing devices and other technologies, the district's or school's readiness to incorporate technology into its classrooms, the possibility of obtaining a trained technology support staff and high-speed Internet services for the district or school, and the methods the district or school will use to measure the progress of the pilot project in the district or school in accordance with Section 32.155(e).

(c) Requires TEA, rather than requires TEA if possible, to select at least five school districts, rather than schools, to participate in the project, rather than pilot project. Provides that at least one demonstration site included in the project, rather than pilot project, should include students in grades 6-12. Authorizes TEA to select at least one school district in which each school in the district participates in the project, rather than at least one entire school district and at least one entire school in a second district to participate in the pilot project.

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 32.155(a), (c), (d), and (e), Education Code, to make conforming changes.

SECTION 4. Amends Sections 32.156 and 32.157, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 32.156. New heading: ELECTRONIC DEVICE RETENTION. Deletes existing text authorizing the student to retain the wireless mobile computing device after the expiration of the pilot project. Makes conforming changes.

Sec. 32.157. New heading: PROJECT EVALUATION; EXPIRATION. Authorizes TEA to include the review of the project, rather than pilot project, in the comprehensive annual report required under Section 39.182 (Comprehensive Annual Report) that covers the 2012-2013, rather than 2010-2011, school year. Makes conforming changes.

(b) Provides that this subchapter expires August 31, 2013, rather than 2011.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2009.