

House Bill No. 765

An act relating to discounted computers and Internet access for students; creating a program to offer discounted computers and Internet access to public school students and students in home education programs in grades 5 through 12; requiring the Department of Education to negotiate terms with computer manufacturers, certain nonprofit corporations, and broadband Internet access providers; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules, including rules for provision of technical training to students; requiring the Digital Divide Council to implement a pilot project to assist low-income students with purchasing discounted computers and Internet access services; requiring the council to identify eligibility criteria for participation in the pilot project; providing for funding and authorizing the council to accept grants to implement the pilot project; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Discounted computers and Internet access for students.—

(1) There is created a program to offer computers and Internet access at a discounted price to students enrolled in grades 5 through 12 in a public school, including a charter school, or a home education program in the state.

(2) The Department of Education shall negotiate with computer manufacturers and with nonprofit corporations that obtain reconditioned computer hardware concerning:

(a) The prices of discounted computers and whether computer accessories such as printers or scanners will be offered to the students at reduced prices.

(b) Specialized software and hardware packages, including, but not limited to:

1. A word processor.

2. Software and hardware necessary to enable broadband Internet access.

3. An operating system.

(c) The type of warranty that is to be provided to the students and whether an extended warranty will be available to the students and under what terms.

(3) The Department of Education shall negotiate with broadband Internet access providers concerning the prices of discounted broadband Internet access packages. In areas in which broadband Internet access is not currently available, the department shall negotiate with non-broadband Internet access providers.

(4) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules concerning:

(a) How to integrate into this program the provision of computer or technical training to students in their respective school districts.

(b) How parents and students may be notified of the discounted computer and Internet access choices available.

(c) The distribution of eligibility certificates to the students, the locations at which discounted computers and Internet access services are available for purchase, and how students may obtain and pay for the equipment and services covered by this program.

Section 2. Discounted computers and Internet access for low-income students; pilot project.—

(1) The Digital Divide Council, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall implement a pilot project to assist low-income students to purchase discounted computers and Internet access services as negotiated by the department. The council shall identify counties, grade levels, and low-income eligibility criteria for participation in the pilot project.

(2) The pilot project shall be funded in an amount to be determined in the General Appropriations Act. The Digital Divide Council is authorized to accept grants from additional public and private sources to implement the pilot project.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.

Approved by the Governor June 9, 2006.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 9, 2006.