

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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SENATE DRS75016-LEz-2A* (11/27)

Short Title: Internet Access for Public Schools. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Soucek, Hise, and Rucho (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INVENTORY OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT
3 ROBUST DIGITAL LEARNING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND AN INVENTORY
4 OF INTERNET ACCESS IN ALL NORTH CAROLINA COUNTIES, AS
5 RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION STUDY
6 COMMITTEE ON DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

7 Whereas, digital learning is becoming an integral component of a 21st Century
8 education for all students in all schools across North Carolina; and

9 Whereas, effective digital learning requires a variety of resources, including
10 infrastructure requirements, digital devices, educational software, high-quality teachers, and
11 perhaps most essentially, reliable internet connectivity; and

12 Whereas, while all LEAs currently have internet access, wireless access on a school
13 building level may be either unavailable or unreliable due to funding or infrastructure
14 limitations; and

15 Whereas, effective digital learning continues after the school day ends, and access to
16 digital devices and connectivity outside of the school environment are also critical for 21st
17 Century learning; and

18 Whereas, many local school administrative units (LEAs) report limited connectivity
19 in their students' homes and community; and

20 Whereas, currently, there is no Statewide estimate on the costs for wireless access
21 and sufficient bandwidth to support robust digital learning on a school building level, nor a
22 detailed inventory of the current bandwidth and wireless capabilities of each LEA at the school
23 building level; Now, therefore,

24 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

25 **SECTION 1.(a)** The State Board of Education shall establish a standard for
26 sufficient classroom wireless connectivity for a digital learning environment and conduct an
27 inventory of the wireless access and bandwidth capacity of each public school in the State
28 based on that standard.

29 The State Board of Education shall report to the Joint Legislative Education
30 Oversight Committee and to the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology by
31 December 1, 2013, on the inventory results, its recommendations on ways to achieve a
32 sufficient standard of wireless access and bandwidth in all classrooms, and the cost of
33 achieving that standard.



1 **SECTION 1.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
2 Public Instruction the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for the 2012-2013 fiscal
3 year to implement the provisions of this section.

4 **SECTION 2.** The Department of Commerce shall conduct a survey of currently
5 available and planned community broadband connectivity and identify ways to assist in the
6 expansion of readily accessible internet in all North Carolina counties. The Department shall
7 report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and to the Joint Legislative
8 Committee on Information Technology by December 1, 2013, on the survey results and make
9 recommendations on ways to expand access across the State and the cost of doing so.

10 **SECTION 3.** Section 1(b) of this act becomes effective July 1, 2013. The
11 remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.