

SCHOOL INTERNET FILTERING POLICY

House Bill 6030

Sponsor: Rep. Jason Allen

Committee: Education

Complete to 9-29-00

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 6030 AS INTRODUCED 9-28-00

House Bill 6030 would amend the Revised School Code to require that not later than the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, the board of a local school district or intermediate school district, or the directors of a public school academy, adopt an Internet filtering policy.

Internet filtering policy and methods. Under the bill, the Internet filtering policy would be required to establish measures to restrict access to the Internet so that a minor could not view obscene or illegal matter, or sexually explicit matter that was harmful, when he or she used a school's computer (including a computer program, network, system, or connectivity from an Internet service provider). The policy could include installation of filtering or blocking technology, or the use of filtering services provided through connectivity with an Internet service provider.

Under the bill, the school board would be required to make available to the public, upon request, a) the Internet filtering policy; and, b) if applicable, information about the filtering or blocking technology that was installed, and the types of sites the technology filtered or blocked.

Responsibilities of DMB. The bill would require the Department of Management and Budget to provide the filtering technology at no charge to the districts and public school academies that elected to participate in the program. Under the bill, DMB also would be required to make the technology available at cost to the state's nonpublic schools.

Specifically, not later than 30 days after the effective date of the legislation, the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) would be required to notify each school district and public school academy that the state would provide Internet filtering technology upon request. The bill would require this notice to include a description of the procedure for notifying DMB of the school district's intent to participate in the program. The bill also specifies that the Department of Education would assist DMB as necessary.

Under the bill, DMB would be required to initiate the process to solicit bids on Internet filtering technology for schools, not later than March 1, 2001. The technology would be designed to prevent viewing obscene or illegal matter, or sexually explicit matter that is harmful to minors. After receiving bids, DMB would be required to consult with the superintendent of public instruction (or his or her designee), and the director of the Center for Educational Performance and Information (or his or her designee), on the appropriate vendor to select from the bids, if any. Then DMB would notify participating districts and public school academies of the decision regarding the acceptance of a bid, and any relevant information about product delivery to the schools.

Duties of the school principal. The principal of each school building in which the Internet filtering technology was installed would be required to designate which computers at the school were equipped with the Internet filtering technology, or which used filtering services provided through connectivity, and which would not. In making the designation, the principal would be required to take into consideration computer use by participants in adult education, community college, or other programs that may require unfiltered access to the Internet. The bill would require those computers that were not equipped with filtering software and did not use filtering services provided through connectivity would have to be easily identifiable.

Protection from liability. Under the bill, a school district or public school academy would not be liable for damages that could arise from a minor gaining access on the Internet to obscene or illegal matter or sexually explicit matter, if a) the board of the school district or public school academy had adopted an Internet filtering policy that met the requirements specified in the bill, and b) the computer (including the computer program, network, and system, or the connectivity) was equipped with Internet filtering technology or used filtering services provided through connectivity.

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