

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the
5 I-Connect Computer Technology Act.

6 Section 5. Purpose. The General Assembly finds that in the
7 modern, knowledge-based economy of the 21st century it is
8 critical that all students have access to modern educational
9 technology. The General Assembly further finds that universal
10 access to portable computers has been found to increase student
11 assessment test scores and encourage student and parent
12 collaborations in learning. It is the duty of the State to
13 provide new ways to equalize and advance educational
14 opportunities for all students in public schools. In order to
15 meet the goal of universal access to modern educational
16 technology, the General Assembly finds it necessary to provide
17 students in public schools with access to portable computers.

18 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

19 "Board" means the I-Connect Computer Technology Board.

20 "ISBE" means the Illinois State Board of Education.

21 "Low income student" means a pupil aged 3 to 17, inclusive,
22 who is (i) from a family receiving public aid, (ii) living in
23 an institution for neglected or delinquent children, (iii)
24 being supported in a foster home with public funds, or (iv)
25 eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.

26 "Program" means the I-Connect Computer Technology Program.

27 Section 15. I-Connect Computer Technology Program.

28 (a) The Board shall, in conjunction with the Illinois State
29 Board of Education, establish and implement the I-Connect
30 Computer Technology Program, which must meet all of the

1 following standards:

2 (1) Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year and each
3 school year thereafter, each student entering 7th grade who
4 attends a public school meeting the criteria established in
5 Sections 22 and 23 of this Act shall receive a portable
6 computer. Additionally, each teacher teaching 7th grade
7 students in a classroom at a public school shall receive a
8 portable computer. Portable computers shall be delivered
9 to each school district and shall become the property of
10 the school district. School districts are responsible for
11 distributing the computers to students and for
12 establishing rules for student use of the computers. Each
13 portable computer must include software and other learning
14 technologies capable of being used in a classroom
15 environment.

16 (2) Each school taking part in the I-Connect Computer
17 Technology Program shall receive teacher technology
18 training and professional development. Teachers that take
19 part in technology training courses, seminars, or other
20 related courses of instruction may credit that time towards
21 their continuing professional development requirement,
22 pursuant to Sections 21-2 and 21-14 of the School Code.
23 Professional development provided in accordance with this
24 Act must be sufficient to ensure optimal use of software
25 and other learning technologies associated with using
26 portable computers.

27 (3) A statewide or regional plan for external and
28 internal network and technical support must be created to
29 allow for contracts for technical support with private
30 businesses, governmental entities, colleges or
31 universities, or not-for-profit corporations.

32 (4) A set-aside funding mechanism must be established
33 to cover the costs of replacement portable computers and
34 parts. Nothing in this Section shall preclude a contract
35 with a vendor that places the financial duty on the vendor
36 to cover those costs in part or in whole.

1 (b) ISBE is authorized to enter into contracts and
2 memorandums of understanding with private parties and other
3 State agencies to carry out its functions under this Act. ISBE
4 shall cooperate with each Regional Office of Education in
5 establishing a competitive procurement process for the
6 selection of vendors for the purchase of portable computers and
7 related technical support and professional development for
8 program recipients.

9 Section 20. I-Connect Computer Technology Board.

10 (a) There is created the I-Connect Computer Technology
11 Board. The Board shall be comprised of 11 members as follows:
12 the Lieutenant Governor as Chair; 5 members appointed by the
13 Governor; one member appointed by the President of the Senate,
14 one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, one
15 member appointed by the Speaker of the House of
16 Representatives, and one member appointed by the Minority
17 Leader of the House of Representatives; and the State
18 Superintendent of Education or his or her designee.

19 (b) Each of the Governor's appointees must have a
20 background in at least one of the following areas:

21 (1) computer technical support;

22 (2) education administration at the grade K through 12
23 level;

24 (3) teaching 6th through 12th grade students;

25 (4) community outreach;

26 (5) the Illinois Century Network or other means of
27 accessing the internet in schools; or

28 (6) working with a Regional Office of Education.

29 (c) All members shall serve 4-year terms, except that
30 members appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the
31 remainder of the vacated term. Vacancies shall be filled in the
32 same manner as the initial appointment.

33 (d) Board members shall receive no compensation other than
34 reimbursement for necessary travel expenses, which shall be
35 reimbursed by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

1 Section 22. Program participants.

2 (a) Subject to appropriation, participation for each
3 school year shall be limited to (i) no more than 2 public
4 schools in each Regional Office of Education region, (ii) no
5 more than 30 public schools in non-Chicago Cook County, and
6 (iii) no more than 30 public schools in Chicago. Nothing in
7 this Section shall be construed to limit the number of schools
8 that may apply for the Program.

9 (b) Priority shall be given to those schools where at least
10 40% of the students are low income students, as defined in
11 Section 10 of this Act.

12 (c) All participating schools must comply with requests
13 from ISBE and the Board for information relating to the annual
14 report requirement of Section 25 of this Act.

15 (d) All participating schools shall designate at least one
16 teacher or administrator who shall have the primary
17 responsibility for ensuring that computers are being used and
18 maintained.

19 Section 23. Application.

20 (a) After a majority of members of the Board are appointed,
21 an application shall be developed by the Board and mailed to
22 the principal of every public school in Illinois that educates
23 7th grade students.

24 (b) The application shall, at a minimum, contain all of the
25 following:

26 (1) A deadline for returning the application for
27 entrance into the Program.

28 (2) An inquiry into the adequacy of the school's
29 infrastructure to manage the computers.

30 (3) A requirement to provide the name of the school
31 coordinator required under Section 22 of this Act.

32 (4) A requirement to provide the number of 7th graders
33 anticipated for the attendance center for the school year
34 in which the portable computers would be delivered.

1 Section 25. Annual Report. By no later than October 1st of
2 each year, the Board, in conjunction with ISBE, shall submit an
3 annual report to the Governor and the members of the General
4 Assembly on the progress of the I-Connect Computer Technology
5 Program. The report must include, at a minimum, all of the
6 following:

7 (1) The number of students receiving portable
8 computers.

9 (2) An accounting of all State, local, and federal
10 funds used to implement the Program.

11 (3) A projection for the cost of implementing the
12 Program in the next school year.

13 (4) If available, the identification of software
14 included on computers provided under the Program.

15 (5) The academic progress of the students using the
16 computers.

17 (6) If available, a comparison of academic progress
18 between those students using the computers in a specific
19 curriculum and those who are not.

20 (7) If available, the quality and quantity of increased
21 student proficiency with technology.

22 (8) If available, teacher involvement and performance.

23 (9) Of those students taking the computer home, the
24 number of households in which persons other than the
25 student use the computer.

26 (10) Recommendations for Program improvement.

27 Section 30. I-Connect Computer Technology Fund.

28 (a) The I-Connect Computer Technology Fund is created as a
29 special fund in the State treasury. All funds deposited into
30 the I-Connect Computer Technology Fund shall be used, subject
31 to appropriation, for the purposes of this Act.

32 (b) Any funds appropriated by the General Assembly for the
33 purposes of the I-Connect Computer Technology Program, as well
34 as any gift, grant, or donation of any kind given for the

1 I-Connect Computer Technology Program from any source,
2 including from a foundation, private entity, governmental
3 entity, or institution of higher education, may be used to
4 implement the I-Connect Computer Technology Program.

5 Section 35. Local authority. It is the sole duty of school
6 districts, school administrators, and school teachers to make
7 decisions relating to the use of portable computers provided
8 under this Act, including determining: (i) standards for
9 allowing students to take computers off school property; (ii)
10 the courses or curriculums best suited for the computers; and
11 (iii) the use of particular software or learning technologies.

12 Section 40. Rules. ISBE shall adopt rules to implement and
13 administer this Act.

14 Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
15 Section 5.663 as follows:

16 (30 ILCS 105/5.663 new)

17 Sec. 5.663. The I-Connect Computer Technology Fund.

18 Section 98. The State Mandates Act is amended by adding
19 Section 8.30 as follows:

20 (30 ILCS 805/8.30 new)

21 Sec. 8.30. Exempt mandate. Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 8
22 of this Act, no reimbursement by the State is required for the
23 implementation of any mandate created by this amendatory Act of
24 the 94th General Assembly.

25 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
26 becoming law.