State of South Dakota

EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2013

389U0162

HOUSE BILL NO. 1183

Introduced by: Representatives Sly, Hawks, Lust, Magstadt, May, Munsterman, Rasmussen, Rozum, Tulson, Tyler, and Verchio and Senators Maher, Adelstein, Buhl, Holien, Johnston, Kirkeby, Lucas, Rave, and Tieszen

1 FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish a pilot program that uses home-based

2 educational technology to prepare certain preschool children for school.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

4 Section 1. Terms used in this Act mean:

5 (1) "Contractor," the educational technology provider selected by the Department of

6 Education pursuant to section 3 of this Act;

7 (2) "Low income families," families whose annual household income does not exceed

8 the federal poverty level as updated annually on the website of the Department of

9 Social Services; and

10 (3) "Preschool children," children who are age four or five and have not entered

11 kindergarten.

12 Section 2. There is hereby established within the Department of Education a pilot program

13 that uses a home-based technology program to develop the school readiness skills of preschool

14 children from low-income families. The purpose of the pilot program is:

1   (1)   To evaluate the effectiveness of giving preschool children access, at home, to

2   interactive individualized instruction delivered by computers and the Internet to

3   prepare them academically for success in school; and

4   (2)   To test the feasibility of scaling a home-based curriculum in reading, math and

5   science delivered by computers and the Internet to a greater number of preschool

6   children from low-income families in South Dakota.

7   The pilot program is a three-year program in which children will begin participating on or

8   before January 1, 2014.

9   Section 3. The Department of Education shall contract with an educational technology

10   provider for the delivery of a home-based educational technology program for preschool

11   children who are selected to participate in the pilot program established in section 2 of this Act.

12   The contractor selected by the department shall meet the following requirements:

13   (1)   The contractor shall provide computer-assisted instruction for preschool children on

14   a home computer connected by the Internet to a centralized file storage facility;

15   (2)   The contractor shall provide technical support to families for the installation and

16   operation of the instructional software;

17   (3)   The contractor shall provide for the installation of computer and Internet access in

18   homes of participating families who cannot afford the equipment and service;

19   (4)   The contractor shall have the capability of performing through the Internet the

20   following tasks:

21   (a)   Communicating with parents;

22   (b)   Updating the instructional software;

23   (c)   Validating user access;

24   (d)   Collecting usage data;

1   (e)   Storing research data; and

2   (f)   Producing reports for parents, schools, and the Legislature;

3   (5)   The contractor shall have the capability to quickly and efficiently modify, improve,

4   and support the product;

5   (6)   The contractor shall work in cooperation with personnel from participating education

6   service agencies who will provide administrative and technical support to the

7   program as provided in section 4 of this Act; and

8   (7)   The contractor shall solicit families to participate in the program as provided in

9   section 5 of this Act.

10   The program provided by the selected contractor shall include the following components:

11   (1)   Computer-assisted, individualized instruction in reading, mathematics, and science;

12   (2)   A multisensory reading tutoring program; and

13   (3)   A validated computer adaptive reading test that does not require the presence of

14   trained adults to administer and is an accurate indicator of reading readiness for

15   children who cannot read.

16   The contract entered into pursuant to this section shall provide funding for a home-based

17   educational technology program for preschool children for one year with an option to extend the

18   contract for additional years or to expand the program to a greater number of preschool children

19   as funding permits.

20   Section 4. An education service agency may participate in the program established pursuant

21   to section 2 of this Act if the agency agrees to work in cooperation with the contractor to

22   provide administrative and technical support for the pilot project. A participating education

23   service agency shall:

24   (1)   Receive funding for staff, and any necessary travel, materials, and meeting costs

1   associated with the program;

2   (2)   Participate in program training by the contractor; and

3   (3)   Agree to adopt standardized policies and procedures in implementing the pilot

4   project.

5   Section 5. The contractor shall solicit families to participate in the program established

6   pursuant to section 2 of this Act through a public information campaign and referrals from

7   participating education service agencies. Preschool children who participate in the program shall

8   be from low-income families, and shall reside in different regions of the state. Any participating

9   family that cannot afford a computer and Internet service to operate the instructional software

10 may obtain a computer and peripheral equipment on loan and receive free Internet service for

11 the duration of the family's participation in the program.

12 The contractor shall make the home-based educational technology program available to low-

13 income families at an agreed upon cost if the number of families who want to participate in the

14 program exceeds the number of participants for which available funding allows.

15 Section 6. The Department of Education may purchase computers, peripheral equipment,

16 and Internet service for low-income families participating in the program established in section

17 2 of this Act who cannot afford them through cooperative purchasing contracts administered by

18 the Bureau of Administration.

19 Section 7. The Department of Education may accept and expend for the purposes of this Act

20 any funds obtained from federal sources, gifts, contributions, or any other source if such

21 acceptance and expenditure is approved in accordance with § 4-8B-10.

22 Section 8. The Board of Education shall promulgate rules pursuant to chapter 1-26 to

23 establish the application process and timelines for education service agencies and for families

24 who want to participate in the program established in section 2 of this Act.

1   Section 9. The contractor shall cause an annual audit to be made by an independent certified

2 public accountant of the contractor's use of the funds provided for the program established in

3 section 2 of this Act, and the contractor shall provide the audit to the Department of Education.

4   The Department of Education shall annually contract with an independent, qualified

5 evaluator to evaluate the program, and the department shall annually provide the financial audit

6 and the evaluation required pursuant to this section to the Legislature. In addition, the

7 department shall report to the Legislature on the following:

8 (1)   The extent to which the program is accomplishing the purposes established in section

9   2 of this Act;

10 (2)   The number of families participating in the program, the number of families

11   requesting computers, and the number of families to whom computers were

12   furnished;

13 (3)   The frequency of use of the instructional software;

14 (4)   Any obstacles that were encountered with software usage, hardware, or providing

15   technical assistance to families; and

16 (5)   Student performance on pre-kindergarten and post-kindergarten assessments

17   provided by the contractor for students who participated in the program and those

18   who did not participate in the program.