

6-19-124. Mobile Learning Technology Pilot Program.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) In rural areas of the state, public school students may spend hours of unproductive time on the school bus being transported to and from school;

(2) The state has a critical need to increase its workforce in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics for national and global economic competitiveness;

(3) Long, unproductive bus commutes are transformed into productive learning environments in the fields of mathematics and science through the use of mobile learning technology and the accompanying personalized learning experiences; and

(4) A statewide pilot program using mobile learning technology will develop untapped talent for the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics workforce.

(b) (1) The Mobile Learning Technology Pilot Program is created as a three-year pilot program to provide the mobile learning technology under this section to a total of up to twenty-five (25) public school districts.

(2) Each congressional district in the state may have up to five (5) public school districts participating in the pilot program.

(c) The Department of Education shall begin the pilot program with the 2010-2011 school year and continue the pilot program through the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

(d) (1) Each public school district participating in the pilot program shall equip up to three (3) school buses with wireless Internet service and purchase or obtain the following technology:

(A) Fifteen (15) laptop computers;

(B) Forty (40) portable devices for storing video files;

(C) Two (2) sets of media screens; and

(D) Math and science software for use with the laptop computers and video portable devices for storing video files.

(2) The public school district may use foundation funding provided for technology or other funding sources for purchases made under this subsection.

(e) The pilot program also shall provide:

(1) For each public school district participating in the pilot program, a community classroom teacher who is available for student questions and meets with pilot students weekly in a community classroom environment;

(2) Partnerships with institutions of higher education, the school district community, and corporate entities that will expose the pilot students to careers and professionals in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;

(3) Measurements of specified outcomes, including without limitation:

(A) The number and types of courses completed by pilot students;

(B) The number and types of Advanced Placement courses completed by the pilot students and the Advanced Placement examination scores; and

(C) The results of Arkansas benchmark assessments for the pilot students;

(4) A comparison of the state benchmark assessments in pilot and nonpilot public school districts; and

(5) A survey of the pilot students' interests in careers and courses of study in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

(f) As funds are appropriated and available, the department may hire consultants or experts with the knowledge of and appropriate experience with mobile learning technology for use on school buses as well as other qualifications established by the department.

(g) (1) At the end of the three-year period, the department or its consultants or experts shall prepare an evaluation of the pilot program and report on the evaluation to the House Committee on Education and to the Senate Committee on Education.

(2) Consultants or experts hired by the department shall be available to answer questions or provide information as requested by the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education.