

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2005**

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**HOUSE BILL 1071\***

Short Title: Business Educ. Tech. Alliance Legislation. (Public)

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Sponsors: Representatives Tolson; Coleman, Faison, and Jones.

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Referred to: Education, if favorable, Appropriations.

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March 31, 2005

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUSINESS  
3 EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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6 **PART I. PLAN AND FUNDING FOR A VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL**

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8 **SECTION 1.(a)** The State Board of Education, the Board of Governors of  
9 The University of North Carolina, the Independent Colleges and Universities, and the  
10 State Board of Community Colleges shall develop E-learning standards and plans for  
11 infrastructures that provide virtual learning opportunities accessible to students and  
12 other citizens through all North Carolina schools, universities, and community colleges.  
13 In developing the plan for the public schools, the State Board of Education shall focus  
14 initially on high schools while also researching and developing, where appropriate,  
15 E-learning for Middle/Junior High and Elementary schools. E-learning programs shall  
16 support both teachers and students.

17 **SECTION 1.(b)** It is the intent of the General Assembly to give public  
18 schools the highest priority in funding for and development of E-learning. Funding for  
19 E-learning should be a new appropriation and not come exclusively from existing funds.

20 **SECTION 1.(c)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
21 Department of Public Instruction the sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars  
22 (\$150,000) for the 2005-2006 fiscal year. The State Board of Education shall use these  
23 funds to establish and implement during the 2005-2006 school year a pilot virtual high  
24 school.

25 **SECTION 1.(d)** If the pilot program is successful, it is the intent of the  
26 General Assembly to provide funding to implement virtual high school on a statewide  
27 basis for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

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1 **PART II. FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR DEVELOPING REGIONAL**  
2 **EDUCATION NETWORKS**

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4 **SECTION 2.(a)** The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center  
5 and the E-NC Initiative, in collaboration with representatives from Local Education  
6 Agencies, The University of North Carolina, the State Board of Education, the State  
7 Chief Information Officer, and the Community College System shall perform a  
8 feasibility study on developing regional education networks that are centrally managed  
9 to provide and sustain broadband connectivity to individual students and teachers in  
10 schools, community colleges, and universities.

11 The study shall include an evaluation of existing technology infrastructures,  
12 such as the statewide infrastructure, the North Carolina Research and Education  
13 Network, or the regional infrastructure, Winston-Net. These state-of-the-art  
14 infrastructures may be capable of supporting growth in traffic and thus serve as a  
15 backbone infrastructure for delivering high-speed access to underserved regions.

16 The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center and the E-NC  
17 Initiative shall report the results of the study to the Regular 2006 Session of the 2005  
18 General Assembly.

19 **SECTION 2.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North  
20 Carolina Rural Economic Development Center the sum of one hundred thousand dollars  
21 (\$100,000) for the 2005-2006 fiscal year to perform the feasibility study pursuant to  
22 subsection (a) of this section.

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24 **PART III. PLAN FOR PROJECTING SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY FUNDING**  
25 **NEEDS**

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27 **SECTION 3.(a)** The State Board of Education and the State Chief  
28 Information Officer shall ensure that the State Technology Education Plan, which  
29 establishes criteria for Local Education Agency (LEA) School Technology Plans,  
30 includes a baseline template for:

- 31 (1) Technology infrastructure including broadband connectivity, personnel  
32 recommendations and other resources needed to operate effectively  
33 from the classroom desktop to local, regional and State networks, and  
34 (2) An evaluation component that provides for LEA accountability for  
35 maintaining quality upgradeable systems.

36 **SECTION 3.(b)** The Department of Public Instruction shall hold regional  
37 workshops for LEAs to provide guidance in developing School Technology Plans that  
38 meet the criteria established in the State Technology Plan. The State Chief Information  
39 Officer will assist with the regional meetings as needed to provide technical assistance.  
40 The Department shall randomly check local school technology plans to ensure that  
41 LEAs are implementing their plans as approved. The Department shall report to the  
42 State Board of Education and the State Chief Information Officer on which LEAs are  
43 not complying with their plans. The report shall include the reasons the LEAs are out of

1 compliance and a recommended plan of action to support each such LEA in carrying out  
2 its plan.

3         **SECTION 3.(c)** The State Board of Education shall determine the total  
4 amount of funds needed for the recurring total cost of ownership to implement,  
5 maintain, and upgrade technology infrastructures and instructional technology as  
6 specified in the revised LEA School Technology Plans. This shall include personnel  
7 costs for both technical and instructional needs so that a three- to five-year budget plan  
8 can be developed for the General Assembly.

9         **SECTION 3.(d)** The State Board of Education shall also study and identify  
10 the types of resources needed to operate schools designed to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup>-  
11 century learners.

12         The State Board shall report the results of this study to the Regular 2006  
13 Session of the 2005 General Assembly.

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15 **PART IV. ANNUAL REPORT THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPACT OF**  
16 **EDUCATION PREPARATION ON ECONOMIC GROWTH**

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18         **SECTION 4.** The North Carolina Board of Science and Technology shall  
19 provide an annual report by county on the status of trends that reflect the impact of  
20 education on economic growth for the 21st century. This report shall be available for  
21 citizens and shall contain information about the status of each county with regard to  
22 education and economic growth.

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24 **PART V. PROCESS FOR MORE ASSISTANCE FOR E-RATE**

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26         **SECTION 5.** The Department of Public Instruction shall provide assistance  
27 with E-rate applications and ensure that adequate staffing is available for this purpose.  
28 The staffing shall include a minimum of one full-time coordinator who has technical  
29 knowledge and skills. The Department shall notify school systems about the person or  
30 office assigned the responsibility.

31         The Department shall provide the State Board of Education with an annual  
32 report on e-rate, including funding, commitments, and enrollment by local education  
33 agencies.

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35 **PART VI. PLANNING FOR A STATE CENTRAL INFRASTRUCTURE**  
36 **OFFICE**

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38         **SECTION 6.(a)** The Office of State Budget and Management shall conduct  
39 a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a State Central Infrastructure Office  
40 that would collect and manage information for technology, water, sewer, and other  
41 utility infrastructures needed to assist communities in becoming and remaining  
42 economically viable.

43         **SECTION 6.(b)** The Office of State Budget and Management shall report  
44 the results of this study to the Regular 2006 Session of the 2005 General Assembly.

1 The report shall include legislative proposals, including a proposal to define the term  
2 "infrastructure" in the General Statutes to include technology.

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4 **PART VII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

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6 **SECTION 7.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2005.