


Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note
FINAL
FISCAL NOTE

Drafting Number: LLS 12-0173
Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Massey
 Sen. Johnston

Date: June 6, 2012
Bill Status: Signed into Law
Fiscal Analyst: Josh Abram (303-866-3561)

TITLE: CONCERNING A STUDY OF DIGITAL LEARNING IN COLORADO.

Fiscal Impact Summary	FY 2012-2013	FY 2013-2014
State Revenue	\$25,000	
State Expenditures	\$25,000	
FTE Position Change		
Effective Date: The bill was signed into law by the Governor and took effect May 24, 2012.		
Appropriation Summary for FY 2012-2013: None required.		
Local Government Impact: None.		

* *State revenue and expenditures are **conditional**, contingent on support from public or private gifts, grants, and donations.*

Summary of Legislation

Subject to the receipt of sufficient money from public and private donations, this bill requires the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to commission a study of digital learning in Colorado. At a minimum, the study must address issues including:

- student eligibility for and access to digital learning;
- the quality of available digital learning content and instruction;
- funding models for digital learning that create incentives for performance;
- other state experience integrating digital learning into K-12 education;
- information technology infrastructure;
- current state statutes and rules concerning digital learning; and
- the extent to which current school accountability measures are appropriate and sufficient to measure the performance of online students.

No later than July 1, 2012, the bill requires the CDE to select a Colorado-based vendor to conduct the study, and report its name to the State Board of Education (SBE), the Governor, and the education committees of the General Assembly. The vendor cannot be a provider of digital learning or related technologies, or otherwise have a conflict of interest in conducting the study.

The CDE is authorized accept and spend gifts, grants, or donations to fund the study; however, the department is not required to solicit funding, and the study will not be commissioned unless and until the CDE receives sufficient moneys. If commissioned, the CDE must submit the completed study to the SBE, the Governor, and the education committees of the General Assembly no later than January 31, 2013.

Background

Digital learning includes any learning assisted by technology, but especially the use of online and computer-based instruction. Some online learning is distance learning, where both the instructional content and the teacher/student interaction is provided via the Internet. Other online learning may use computers and Internet applications as instructional tools within a traditional classroom setting. Some K-12 students take online courses to supplement the courses available within a school district. Other students are enrolled full-time in online schools.

State Revenue

The bill allows the CDE to accept and spend donations to fund the study. Based on the estimated study costs described below, the CDE will need at least \$25,000 from private sources in FY 2012-13 to commission the study and report findings. To date, no revenue source has been identified.

State Expenditures

A report meeting the criteria outlined in House Bill 12-1124 is estimated to cost \$25,000 in FY 2012-13. No examples of research studies of digital learning on which to base estimates have been identified; however, in 2011, the Unit of Online Learning at CDE contracted with outside vendors to prepare the annual Summary Report of the Operations and Activities of Online Programs in Colorado. That contract and other contracts the unit is currently managing to study online education programs were used to estimate the costs provided in this fiscal note. These expenditures are conditioned on the CDE receiving sufficient donations.

State Appropriations

This bill does not require an appropriation clause. If sufficient funds are provided, the CDE has the authority to spend any donations it receives.

Departments Contacted

Education