



HOUSE BILL 79: Student Digital Learning Access.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:	House Education - K-12. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	February 23, 2021
Introduced by:	Reps. Blackwell, Clemmons, Elmore, Hurley	Prepared by:	Linda Wang Legal Extern, Brian Gwyn Committee Co-Counsel
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H79-CSBE-1		

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 79 would require the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish and maintain a publicly available digital learning dashboard that would display information on student access to digital devices both in-school and out-of-school, as well as out-of-school internet connectivity. Public school units would be required to update the information annually.*

Additionally, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Department of Information Technology (DIT) would be required to conduct a statewide assessment of digital device access and out-of-school internet connectivity during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, when public school units moved to remote instruction due to COVID-19. The PCS would make various technical and clarifying changes.

BILL ANALYSIS: The PCS would require the SBE to establish and maintain a publicly available digital learning dashboard that would display specified categories of information on student access to digital devices both in-school and out-of-school, as well as out-of-school connectivity. The information would be required to be disaggregated by public school unit, school, and grade level.

Public school units would be required to update the information by November 15 every year. The SBE would be required to report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) on statewide trends reflected in the dashboard and associated recommendations by February 15 every year.

Additionally, the PCS would require DPI and DIT, in collaboration with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University, to collect data from public school units at the most granular level possible for a statewide assessment of student internet and device access during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Departments would use the assessment to make recommendations for policies to close the student digital access gap and for approaches to maintain current data on the student digital access gap. The Superintendent of Public Instruction would be designated to coordinate and oversee the assessment and reporting of recommendations, and would be required to report on the assessment by October 15, 2021, to JLEOC.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The PCS would be effective when it becomes law.

BACKGROUND: As introduced, HB 79 was identical to proposed legislation from the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee’s [report to the 2021 General Assembly](#).

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