

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 800
By Southerland

A RESOLUTION in support of the Tennessee comprehensive K-12 e-Learning initiative (e⁴TN: effective, engaging, e-Learning, environment) in its efforts to provide challenging, rigorous, and engaging educational options to Tennessee's students.

WHEREAS, meeting the educational needs of children in Tennessee's schools is of the greatest importance to the future welfare of the State; and

WHEREAS, closing the achievement gap between high-performing students, including the gap between minority and non-minority students, and between economically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers, is a significant and present challenge; and

WHEREAS, providing a broader range of educational access to students and utilizing e-Learning technologies to break down barriers of time and eliminate the limitations of geography may help students in Tennessee improve their academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, e-Learning is defined as electronic learning that includes a wide set of applications and processes, such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration, including the delivery of content via Internet, intranet/extranet (LAN/WAN), audiotape, videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive television, and CD-ROM; and

WHEREAS, technology literacy is evidenced when students and teachers are using technological (e-Learning) tools as part of their everyday learning challenges; and

WHEREAS, many Tennessee Local Education Agencies, students, and parents desire e-Learning options; and

WHEREAS, the e-Learning option offers students access to individualized instruction, a flexible anytime and anywhere schedule, a personalized and responsive learning environment,

student choice of multi-leveled (including advanced and Advanced Placement) courses, and solutions that respond to the needs of individual learning in unique situations; and

WHEREAS, many Tennessee school districts currently lack the capacity to provide these e-Learning options; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of Education has authorized and established the Tennessee e-Learning initiative (e⁴TN) and has committed the resources of the Department of Education to the tenants of the e⁴TN program, which are to provide secondary and elementary students' access to highly qualified, endorsed, and certified teachers and challenging, rigorous, engaging State academic content so that students may benefit from the affordances of technology in education; and

WHEREAS, e⁴TN provides for and supports the development and utilization of challenging and engaging Tennessee-owned and disseminated secondary and elementary academic content through on-line curriculum aligned and correlated to Tennessee and national standards; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education is authorized to revise and/or promulgate rules and regulations pertaining to K-12 e-Learning. Such rules and regulations, if established, shall initially focus on secondary (high and middle) schools, and e-Learning programs shall support both teachers and students; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of Education shall monitor the performance of e⁴TN and report its performance to the State Board of Education and the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the General Assembly to give public schools the highest priority in funding for and development, implementation, and sustainability of e-Learning.

Funding for e-Learning should be a new appropriation and not come exclusively from existing funds or grants; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the General Assembly to provide funding to implement an e⁴TN program on a statewide basis for the 2007-2008 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that a comprehensive K-12 Tennessee e-Learning Program (e⁴TN) be pursued with all due diligence and supported with appropriate resources in its efforts to provide elementary and secondary students' access to highly qualified, endorsed, and certified teachers and challenging, rigorous, engaging State academic content delivered with e-Learning technologies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the intent of this General Assembly shall be to enact legislation to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, to include the fundamental elements to provide for and sustain the infrastructure of the e⁴TN Tennessee Comprehensive K-12 e-Learning initiative.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.