

By Ms. Spilka of Ashland, petition of Karen Spilka and Deborah D. Blumer relative to increasing access to educational technology in the public schools. Education, Arts and Humanities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Three.

AN ACT TO INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or
2 special law to the contrary, the department of education is hereby
3 authorized and directed to establish a system to enable the aggregate
4 procurement by school districts of computers, both hardware
5 and software, and internet access appliances that can be made
6 available for purchase or lease, at the lowest possible cost, by, or
7 on behalf of, students in local school districts. Any such purchase
8 arrangements may provide for payments to be made on an install-
9 ment basis. Said purchases shall be exempt from taxation in
10 accordance with Chapter 64H.

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12 SECTION 2. The department of education is authorized and
13 directed to establish a grant program to help further reduce the
14 cost of acquiring computers or internet access appliances obtained
15 by school districts through the aggregate procurement system
16 authorized in Section 1 of this act, for students in low income
17 households as determined by the federal school lunch program.
18 Said grants shall fully fund the acquisition or lease of such equip-
19 ment to students qualifying for the federal free lunch program and
20 half said costs for students qualifying for the federal reduced
21 lunch program, provided, however, that participating school dis-
22 tricts shall contribute a minimum of twenty-five percent of the

23 cost of said grants. The department is authorized to establish such
24 rules, regulations, or guidelines, as it deems necessary for imple-
25 mentation of the grant program, including, but not limited to, any
26 matching grant requirements and income eligibility standards.