

- (8) Video and audio tapes or other technologies; AND
- (9) WEB-BASED RESOURCES AND COURSES.

7-902.

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Technology applications can propel the State's school systems into immediate and dramatic reform, without which the State will not meet the very ambitious National Education Goals [by the target year 2000];

(2) Creative uses of technology can reshape the State's outdated method of providing education and empower teachers to create an environment where students can be challenged through rigorous, rich classroom instruction at a pace that suits the learning style of each individual student;

(3) The acquisition and use of technology in education throughout the State has been [inhibited] ENHANCED by:

(i) The [limited] INCREASED exposure of students and teachers to the power of technology as a cost-effective tool to improve student learning and achievement;

(ii) The [inability] ABILITY of the State and [local educational agencies] COUNTY BOARDS to invest in and support needed technologies;

(iii) The [lack of appropriate electrical and telephone connections in the classroom] INCREASED NETWORKING INFRASTRUCTURE AND INTERNET ACCESS IN SCHOOLS AND IN CLASSROOMS; and

(iv) The [limited] INCREASED availability of technology-enhanced curriculum, staff development, and administrative support resources and services in the educational marketplace;

(4) Advancements in technology offer new and interesting possibilities to promote new partnerships among teachers, students, parents, communities, and industry in the quest for knowledge and the process for learning;

(5) The use of technology will cultivate and maintain a technologically literate citizenry and internationally competitive workforce when used as an essential tool in the learning process;

(6) In support of the overall national technology policy, the State Department of Education and the Department of Business and Economic Development must assume a vital leadership and coordinating role in providing the State's vision and strategy to infuse advanced technology throughout all educational programs;

(7) State support can ease the burden at the local level by enabling the acquisition of advanced technology, teacher training and support, WEB-BASED DISTANCE-LEARNING RESOURCES, and market development for new educational products;