THE SENATE
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2007
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 897

JAN 19 2007

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY TRAINING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The EAST (Environmental and Spatial Technology) project originated in Arkansas in 1995 and was the result of a close collaboration between industry, school districts, community organizations, and institutions of higher learning. The components for schools participating in the project EAST program include:

(1) Involving business partners to provide technology to rural areas through industry donations of hardware, software, and technical assistance;

(2) Partnering the business sector with school districts and universities to develop and implement high technology curriculum and methodology for kindergarten to sixteen year-old students;

(3) Creating and implementing confidence-building curricula steeped in emerging technologies so that students can become life-long thinkers, learners, and

problem solvers, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds or prior academic achievements; and

(4) Creating an effective program from which students can use the latest hardware and software applications to apply to real world applications through the execution and proficiency in computer aided design, visualization, computer generated animation, database design, webpage design, programming, office automation, global positioning systems, and geographical information systems.

During the 2000-2001 academic year, two of Maui's most technically-challenged high schools adopted EAST programs. Within one year, Lahainaluna High School went from being ranked as one of the least technologically proficient schools in the State, to being named the best EAST project nationwide. Since then, Maui has added EAST programs in several schools with outstanding results. Project EAST is currently in eight schools throughout the State - five on Maui and one on Molokai, Kauai (Aloha 'Ike Program), and the Big Island. Oahu schools have shown great interest in adopting and establishing EAST programs in its curriculum. Currently four Oahu pre-EAST schools have strong robotics programs, LEGO leagues, and botballs.

The cost of each EAST program is approximately $100,000 per school (not counting direct costs of technology equipment and supplies, which are generally donated by business partners). The benefits of student achievement in technology expertise far outweigh the costs per individual school. The Women in Technology Project has endorsed and joined forces with project EAST schools because the program offers the kind of science, technology, engineering, and math learning environments that are needed for girls to remain interested in science- and math-related careers.

Women in Technology organizes a series of career days and special events every year on intermediate, high school, and college campuses to introduce project-based learning with participation by project EAST students and teachers. Science Day at the Capitol has been held for the past four years and features project EAST school presentations, educates legislators, businesses, and academia, and features department of education teachers and project EAST trainers.

Each year, the Women in Technology program organizes and pays for department of education professionals to complete project EAST training. Currently the department of education

does not pay the annual license fee for project EAST programs, which is approximately $4,000 for each project EAST school.

In 2004, the legislature established the Hawaii 3Ts school technology laboratories fund under Act 218, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004. The 3Ts fund was modeled after the Hawaii 3R's school repair and maintenance fund established in 2001 for Hawaii public schools to meet the formidable backlog of repair and maintenance of its facilities. Act 218 supports potentially successful private-public economic initiatives by establishing the Hawaii 3Ts school technology laboratories fund outside of the state treasury for the continuation and expansion of the project EAST initiatives or similar programs on all islands.

Approximately two hundred seventy students have enrolled in project EAST programs over the past four years of project EAST's existence in Hawaii with the endorsement and assistance from the Women in Technology program. Project EAST's influence has touched at least two thousand five hundred students statewide by stimulating new interest through its attendance and participation at science and technology events, such as robotics, LEGO league, academic decathlon, regional and national competitions, and positive press.

Eighty per cent of project EAST students are pursuing higher educational high technology directions. Furthermore, within the past four years of the program's development, approximately seventy-five per cent of the technical and non-technical jobs on Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island can be directly attributable to project EAST. This percentage will increase exponentially as the project expands on Oahu.

Project EAST and its influence continues to make an impact on education in Hawaii. The Ho'ike Technology Foundation challenge grant of $50,000 is expected to generate more private sector interest and program participation for schools on Oahu. Programs are tentatively projected for Oahu high schools with feeder middle and elementary schools that are heavily involved in robotics training. Furthermore, two major national forums are taking place in Honolulu in 2007: the National Botball Symposium in April 2007 and the National Conference on Education Robotics in July, 2007. The July conference is expected to attract thousands of interested individuals.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds into the Hawaii 3Ts school technology laboratories fund for the purpose of expanding project EAST programs to Oahu, and growing project EAST programs on the neighbor islands.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $1,000,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008, for deposit into the Hawaii 3Ts school technology laboratories fund established pursuant to section 302A-1314, Hawaii Revised Statutes; provided that no funds shall be expended unless matching funds are provided.

The Hawaii 3Ts school technology laboratories fund shall be administered by Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii, Inc., in accordance with section 302A-1314, Hawaii Revised Statutes, or in partnership with county economic development boards for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.

INTRODUCED BY:

S.B. NO. 897

Report Title:
Project EAST; Technology Training; Appropriation

Description:
Appropriates funds into the Hawaii 3Ts school technology laboratories fund for the economic development alliance of Hawaii to expand project EAST programs to public schools.