Government Initiatives Promoting Technology in Education

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No Child Left Behind Act (2001)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the current incarnation of President Lyndon Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), whose purpose was to raise achievement levels and close achievement gaps. No Child Left Behind Act which was passed by Congress in 2001 supports standards-based education reform, which is based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The Act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades, if those states are to receive federal funding for schools. The Act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state.

No Child Left Behind requires all government-run schools receiving federal funding to administer a state-wide standardized test annually to all students. This means that all students take the same test under the same conditions. The students' scores determine whether the school has taught the students well. Schools which receive Title I funding through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in test scores (e.g. each year, its fifth graders must do better on standardized tests than the previous year's fifth graders). If the school's results are repeatedly poor, then steps are taken to improve the school.

Although No Child Left Behind does not affect promoting technology, the reporting process and administrative tasks to comply to this to receive Title 1 funding create the demand for a reliable network infrastructure. For more information, go to:
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

The Federal Communications Commission and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) facilitate the efficient management and oversight of the Commission's federal universal service program, also known as the Universal Service Fund (USF). The FCC is responsible for the administration of the USF, including all USF policy decisions. For more information, go to:
http://www.fcc.gov

Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)

USAC was designated as the USF Administrator in 1997 and made the permanent Administrator in 1998 to administer the four universal service programs: high cost, low income, rural health care, and schools and libraries. The USAF is an independent, not-for-profit corporation designated to help provide communities across the country with affordable telecommunications services. For more information, go to: http://www.usac.org/default.aspx

E-Rate

The E-rate program is administered by the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of the USAC. The program was set up in 1997 when the FCC adopted a Universal Service Order implementing the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

- The Schools and Libraries Program supports connectivity - the conduit or pipeline for communications using telecommunications services and/or the Internet. Funding is requested under four categories of service: telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance of internal connections.

- The Order was designed to ensure that all eligible schools and libraries have affordable access to modern telecommunications and information services. Up to $2.25 billion annually is available to provide eligible schools and libraries with discounts under the E-rate program for authorized services.
- Non-profit private schools -- along with public schools and libraries -- can receive discounted telecommunications services through the E-rate program.
- Discounts can be applied to commercially available telecommunications services, Internet access, and internal connections. Eligible services range from basic local and long distance phone services, and Internet access services, to acquisition and installation of equipment to provide internal connections.
- Applicants must provide additional resources including end-user equipment (e.g., computers, telephones, etc.), software, professional development, and the other elements that are necessary to utilize the connectivity funded by the Schools and Libraries Program.

For more information on E-rate, go to: http://transition.fcc.gov/learnnet/

National Broadband Plan (March 2010)

FCC released the National Broadband Plan to provide a blueprint for connecting all Americans to broadband capability. The National Broadband Plan recognizes the crucial task of improving high-speed Internet access for learners in schools and homes and calls for a number of changes to the E-Rate that would dramatically improve learners' access to broadband-enabled learning experiences. For more information, go to: http://www.broadband.gov/

U.S. Department of Education - Office of Education Technology (OET)

The Office of Educational Technology (OET) is located in and supports the Office of the Secretary (OS) and the U.S. Department of Education. OET provides leadership for powering education at all levels of learning with technology. OET develops national educational technology policy and ensures that Department programs take advantage of the productivity and learning opportunities technology can provide. OET supports the Department's Mission and the President's and Secretary's priorities by leveraging the best modern technology to support:

- progress toward college and career-ready standards;
- the development of assessments that will improve both teaching and learning;
- better connections for teachers with the data, tools, resources, experts and peers to ensure all students have access to highly effective teaching;
- turnaround of low-performing schools; and
- improved student learning, teacher performance, and college and career readiness through enhanced data systems.
- Provides several grants to state educational agencies to implement statewide data systems to accurately manage and analyze student data to meet reporting requirements and to eliminate achievement gaps. Here are some other grants/programs:

Enhancing Education Through Technology is to provide grants to schools to aid in students becoming technologically literate by the end of eighth grade.

The Ready-To-Teach program provides grants to nonprofit telecommunications organizations or a partnership of such organizations to carry out national telecommunications-based programming to improve teaching in core curriculum areas.

National Education Plan (2010)

Under the OET, the National Education Technology Plan (NETP), *Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology*, calls for applying the advanced technologies used in our daily personal and professional lives to our entire education system to improve student learning, accelerate and scale up the adoption of effective practices, and use data and information for continuous improvement.
It presents five goals with recommendations for states, districts, the federal government, and other stakeholders. Each goal addresses one of the five essential components of learning powered by technology: Learning, Assessment, Teaching, Infrastructure, and Productivity.

Under the Obama administration, education has become an urgent priority driven by two clear goals:

- Raise the proportion of college graduates from where it now stands (around 41 percent) so that 60 percent of our population holds a two-year or four-year degree by 2020.
- Close the achievement gap so that all students graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and careers.

For more information, go to: http://www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010

Digital Promise (2011)

Digital Promise is a new national center created by Congress with bipartisan support to advance technologies that can transform teaching and learning. It was launched with startup funds and support from the Department of Education as well as from private affiliates -- Carnegie Corporation of New York and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies (which is called Digital Promise), was authorized by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (P.L. 110-315), passed in August 2008, as a 501(c)3 that will be able to accept contributions from the public and private sectors to support the R&D needed to transform learning in America. Its unique charter is to identify the key research and development challenges in the education field and coordinate the best combination of expertise for addressing them. Created by Congress and governed by an independent board of leaders in business, media, and academia, the Center will promote game-changing learning technologies that can help all Americans—and America—prosper in the 21st Century in better preparing our students to become competitive globally. For more information, go to: http://www.digitalpromise.org

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