

What's this "Low-cost Laptop" bill all about?



House Bill 5000 is the Children's Low-Cost Laptop Act. Here's the scoop:

In 2005, Illinois started the Technology Immersion Pilot Project (TIPP) by law. In its first two years (2006 and 2007), 18 schools representing roughly 5,000 middle school students, teachers and administrators received Gateway and Apple laptops. Because of its positive impact on participating schools, many in the education and computer technology community feel a larger-scale companion program for elementary kids is in order.

The Children's Low Cost Laptop Act calls on the Illinois State Board of Education to administer a pilot project that would allow up to 300 elementary schools in Illinois to receive grant funding for low-cost (under \$400) laptops. Support for professional development (teacher training), school infrastructure readiness and laptop repair are accounted for in the bill.

At least one-third of the selected schools must be from the City of Chicago; at least one-third from the collar counties, and at least one third from the remainder of the state.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of manufacturer sells computers for less than 400 bucks? At least three. (L to R above: The Asus "Eee," the One Laptop Per Child "XO," and the Intel "Classmate.") Any other vendor willing to sell laptops to schools for less than \$400 per unit is also invited to participate in the pilot.

Why laptops? Laptops encourage...

- fundamentals (reading, writing, math, science, etc.).
- tech literacy ("21st century skills").
- creativity and expression. They represent new outlets for art, music, and new ideas.
- learning outside the classroom walls.

Why (elementary school) children? In a technology-rich world, we should not wait for high school to make our kids confident, competent computer users. Training kids in responsible computer and internet use early on can deter misuse later in life.

Why low-cost? Sub-\$400 machines are equally as powerful for fundamental skills and computer literacy training as any \$1,000+ machine. Children—especially young children—do not need to learn how to use really expensive software. Giving them an early start with low-cost laptops will make it easy for them to one day, if necessary, master really expensive equipment and software. In a world where money for education is limited, a low-cost mandate ensures that more children will benefit.

For more FAQs and a list of HB5000 supporters, visit <http://illinoisbroadbanddeployment.pbwiki.com/LCL>