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( ) Action Required
(X) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 90-99 LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
Chief School District Administrators

FROM: Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Surplus Computers Available for K12 Public Schools

The 1999 Washington Legislature passed ESSB 5175, which states that "state-owned, surplus computers and computer-related equipment may be donated to any school district or educational service district under the guidelines and distribution standards established pursuant to ..... guidelines and distribution standards [that] shall include considerations for quality, school-district needs, and accountability, and shall give priority to meeting the computer-related needs of children with disabilities, including those disabilities necessitating the portability of laptop computers."

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has worked collaboratively with the Department of General Administration, the Department of Corrections, K12 school districts, educational service districts (ESDs), and other state agencies to develop these guidelines and distribution standards. The purpose of this bulletin is to outline the procedures and let you know the next steps in the implementation of this new program.

It is important to note that state agencies, community colleges, and universities can NOT donate their surplus computers and computer related equipment directly to school districts. Instead, to ensure equity and quality, they will first donate surplus equipment to Computers 4 Kids, part of the Spokane Community College Foundation. Computers 4 Kids, in partnership with the Department of Corrections, will identify and refurbish working computers and recycle or dispose of nonworking equipment. They will then work with OSPI and ESDs to redistribute surplus computers to interested public schools.

The distribution process of surplus computers to public schools will be different for "standards-based" and "nonstandards-based" computers. "Standards-based" donated computers, as defined below (and subject to annual updates), will ONLY be available to public school buildings that meet a needs-based criteria (see below*):

Pentium 90 Mhz or higher, VGA or SVGA color monitor, keyboard and mouse, min. 12 MB RAM (preferably 16 MB or higher), Ethernet preferably 2X CD-ROM or higher with sound card and speakers.

PowerPC Macintosh or higher, color monitor, keyboard and mouse, min. 12 MB RAM (preferably 16 MB or higher), preferably 2X CD-ROM or higher, System 7.6.1 or higher.

*The initial needs criteria for buildings will be based on three factors (or comparable data):

1. Free and reduced lunch percentage (or Title I eligibility percentage; OSPI already has this data).
2. Percentage of special education students out of total served (OSPI already has this data).
3. Number of standards-based computers per instructional space (or certificated teachers; interested buildings must supply this information). One goal of this program is to help every school get up to an average of one computer per instructional space as soon as possible in an equitable manner.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will gather data from school building principals within the next month on their number of "instructional spaces" (classrooms, library, computer labs) and/or number of certificated teachers, as well as the number of standards-based computers currently in their building. Based upon these factors, OSPI will establish a priority list of school buildings to guide the distribution of standards-based computers and will make this list publicly available via the ESDs and the OSPI Web site.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will also work with the Special Education Technology Center and special education directors at the ESDs to identify children whose disabilities may necessitate the portability of laptop computers. As standards-based laptop computers are received by Computers 4 Kids, they will be targeted for these students.

"Nonstandards-based" donated computers, defined as those that do not meet the criteria for standards-based computers, will also be made available to interested schools, although not on a needs-based criteria. OSPI will work with the ESDs to survey schools interests and then match available computers with the interests in ESD regions. If more than one region is interested, distribution will be rotated numerically by ESD until each is served. Distribution will be directly to schools whenever possible or by arrangement through the ESD and Computers 4 Kids.

Donated computers received by Computers 4 Kids will be tracked and reported regularly, as well as the number of standards-based and nonstandards-based computers donated to public school buildings. In addition, recipient school buildings will be asked to fill out a brief survey about their instructional use of the donated computers within nine months after they receive computers donations.

Please share this information with the district technology director and school building principals. We will be contacting principals directly (via e-mail, whenever possible) to

find out their interest in participating in the program and to gather data on their buildings current computer base.

If you have questions or concerns about the program, check the OSPI Web site at http://www.k12.wa.us/edtech/surplus.html, or e-mail or call Dennis Small at dsmall@ospi.wednet.edu or (360) 664-3111.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

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