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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would rename technology coordinators who serve public K-12 schools as technology directors and provide for the minimum qualifications of those technology directors and would provide a waiver process under certain circumstances.

This bill would require individuals serving in the role of technology directors to complete a training program and continuing education instruction provided by the Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology.

Under existing law, the K-12 Capital Grant Program was created by Act 2023-389 of the 2023 Regular Session, now appearing as Section 29-4-51, Code of Alabama 1975, to authorize the Lieutenant Governor to award grants to local school systems to assist with capital project, deferred maintenance, or technology needs of the school systems.

This bill would provide that a recipient of K-12 Capital Grant funds must return any unused grant funds to the state in certain circumstances, would allow grant funds to be used for pay off debt, and would allow grant recipients to amend their grant proposal to allow full utilization of funds for eligible purposes.

This bill would also repeal the Distressed Institutions of Higher Education Revolving Loan Program



29 created by Act 2023-560 of the 2023 Regular Session,  
30 now appearing as Sections 16-5A-1 through 16-65A-7,  
31 Code of Alabama 1975.

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33

34

A BILL

35

TO BE ENTITLED

36

AN ACT

37

38 Relating to public K-12 education; to create the K-12  
39 Technology and Cybersecurity Leadership Act; to rename the  
40 position of technology coordinator to technology director; to  
41 provide for the minimum qualifications of technology directors  
42 for each school system; to provide a waiver process for  
43 certain school systems; to require each individual serving in  
44 the role of technology director to complete a training program  
45 and continuing education instruction by the Alabama Leaders in  
46 Educational Technology; to amend Section 29-4-51, Code of  
47 Alabama 1975, regarding the K-12 Capital Grant Program Fund,  
48 to provide that a recipient of K-12 Capital Grant funds must  
49 return any unused grant funds to the state in certain  
50 circumstances; to allow grant funds to be used for pay off  
51 debt; to allow grant recipients to amend their grant proposal  
52 to allow full utilization of funds for eligible purposes; and  
53 to repeal Act 2023-560 of the 2023 Regular Session, now  
54 appearing as Sections 16-65A-1 through 16-65A-7, inclusive,  
55 Code of Alabama 1975, relating to the Distressed Institutions  
56 of Higher Education Revolving Loan Program.



57 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

58 Section 1. (a) This section shall be known and may be  
59 cited as the K-12 Technology and Cybersecurity Leadership Act.

60 (b) (1) The position of technology coordinator in public  
61 K-12 schools is renamed technology director and must be filled  
62 by an employee of the local board of education on a 12-month  
63 contract. Any reference to the term technology coordinator in  
64 this code or other document shall be interpreted as a  
65 reference to a technology director. The position may not be  
66 filled by a contractor nor the local superintendent of  
67 education.

68 (2) The minimum qualifications for an individual hired  
69 or assigned to serve as a technology director after October 1,  
70 2024, shall include professional training and work experience  
71 commensurate with the position's responsibilities, including:

72 a. A degree in a technology-related curriculum from a  
73 regionally accredited two-year or four-year institution of  
74 higher education; or

75 b. A degree in another field from a regionally  
76 accredited two-year or four-year institution of higher  
77 education and full-time work experience in a technology  
78 support or management position; or

79 c. A diploma from a regionally accredited high school  
80 with at least one current certification in industry recognized  
81 technologies including, but not limited to, networking,  
82 cybersecurity or data management, and full-time work  
83 experience in a technology support or management position.

84 (3) School systems unable to fill the position with a



85 candidate meeting the minimum qualifications may request a  
86 waiver from the State Superintendent of Education.

87 (c) (1) The Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology, a  
88 professional organization, shall establish and administer a  
89 professional development program for technology directors in  
90 public K-12 school systems.

91 (2) The professional development program shall provide  
92 a mandatory orientation with the Chief Technology Officer  
93 Academy and Continuing Education Units program established by  
94 the Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology and shall  
95 address all of the following:

- 96 a. Roles and responsibilities;
- 97 b. Laws, ethics, and policies;
- 98 c. Data management and governance;
- 99 d. Teaching and learning;
- 100 e. Information technology management and cybersecurity;

101 and

- 102 f. Technology planning and budgeting.

103 (3) The Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology shall  
104 routinely review and update the program.

105 (d) (1) Technology directors shall satisfactorily  
106 complete an orientation program and annual continuing  
107 education units as follows:

108 a. Newly hired or appointed technology directors shall  
109 complete the chief technology officer academy training program  
110 within 24 months of beginning service in the position.

111 b. All other technology directors shall complete 12  
112 in-person contact hours of continuing education unit credits



113 for each fiscal year.

114 (2) Continuing education unit hours shall be offered or  
115 preapproved by the Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology  
116 program.

117 (3) The Alabama Leaders in Educational Technology shall  
118 maintain records for the professional development program and  
119 verify completion annually to the State Department of  
120 Education.

121 Section 2. Section 29-4-51, Code of Alabama 1975, is  
122 amended to read as follows:

123 "§29-4-51

124 (a) The following words and phrases, whenever used in  
125 this section, have the following meanings:

126 (1) ELIGIBLE K-12 ENTITY. Any public school in  
127 operation in the current fiscal year, the Alabama School of  
128 Math and Science, the Alabama School of Fine Arts, the Alabama  
129 School for Cyber Technology and Engineering, the portion of  
130 the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind providing appropriate  
131 elementary/secondary instruction, and may include the  
132 Department of Youth Services School District.

133 (2) GRANT. The award by the Office of the Lieutenant  
134 Governor of funds appropriated by the Legislature to an  
135 eligible K-12 entity.

136 (3) GRANT PROPOSAL. A written plan for the expenditure  
137 of funds by an eligible K-12 entity, which meets one or more  
138 of the purposes outlined in subsection (c), subject to the  
139 approval by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and expended  
140 under the direction of the head of the eligible K-12 entity.



141 (b) There is created the Alabama K-12 Capital Grant  
142 Program within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to award  
143 grants to local school systems to assist with capital project,  
144 deferred maintenance, or technology needs of the school  
145 systems. The Legislature may appropriate funds into the K-12  
146 Capital Grant Program Fund which is established within the  
147 State Treasury to facilitate the grant program. An amount  
148 determined necessary by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor,  
149 but not to exceed ~~one-quarter of~~ one percent of the available  
150 fund monies, may be used for the administrative costs of  
151 implementing the grant program. No funds shall be withdrawn or  
152 expended except as budgeted and allocated in accordance with  
153 Article 4 of Chapter 4 of Title 41, and only in the amounts  
154 provided by the Legislature in an appropriation bill. Any  
155 unencumbered and unexpended balance of this fund remaining at  
156 the end of any fiscal year shall not lapse or revert, but  
157 shall be carried forward for the purposes of this section  
158 until expended, or until the Legislature does not appropriate  
159 funds for the program for two consecutive fiscal years. Any  
160 unobligated funds remaining in the K-12 Capital Grant Program  
161 Fund at the conclusion of the second consecutive fiscal year  
162 without an appropriation shall revert to the Education Trust  
163 Fund.

164 (c) K-12 Capital Grants shall be made to an eligible  
165 K-12 entity for only the following purposes:

166 (1) To assist with the total cost of capital projects  
167 that will enhance the educational environment of students,  
168 including the construction, reconstruction, or renovation of



169 permanent buildings containing classrooms, offices, libraries,  
170 laboratories, teaching facilities, training facilities,  
171 cafeterias, alternative schools, physical education  
172 facilities, including athletic facilities, facilities for the  
173 performing arts and arts education, together with tangible  
174 personal property that becomes a part of such facilities.

175 (2) To provide funds to assist with the payment of  
176 existing debt or debt service related to capital projects.

177 (3) To assist with the total cost of necessary deferred  
178 maintenance for existing facilities.

179 (4) To assist with the total cost of projects that will  
180 improve school security and safety.

181 (5) For technology and equipment for schools or  
182 students that will provide access to expanded educational  
183 opportunities.

184 (d) (1) The Office of the Lieutenant Governor shall  
185 evaluate grant proposals based upon the following criteria:

186 a. The total amount of state funds available for  
187 grants, with the maximum grant amount from state funds not to  
188 exceed five million dollars (\$5,000,000) for any grant  
189 proposal.

190 b. The purposes for which the grant funds are intended.

191 c. The availability of local matching funds, so long as  
192 there is not a required match of more than 35% percent of the  
193 total cost of the project.

194 d. The extent to which the grant proposals benefit  
195 eligible K-12 entities in each geographic area of the state,  
196 understanding the number of students and school systems



197 located within each geographic area vary throughout the state.

198 (2) All applications for grants shall be endorsed by a  
199 member of the Senate and House of Representatives from the  
200 affected delegation in order to be considered.

201 (3) The Office of the Lieutenant Governor shall utilize  
202 a sliding scale of matching requirements for grant proposals,  
203 taking into consideration the financial capacity of the  
204 eligible K-12 entity to provide matching funds. The office  
205 shall ensure that grant proposals from eligible K-12 entities  
206 with considerable populations of at-risk students receive  
207 priority consideration for review.

208 (4) Any eligible K-12 entity receiving grant funds  
209 pursuant to this section may amend their grant proposal once  
210 within 12 months of receipt of the grant to allow funds to be  
211 fully used by the K-12 entity for an eligible purpose. Any  
212 eligible K-12 entity that does not file an amended grant  
213 proposal within 12 months of receipt of the grant shall return  
214 any unobligated grant funds to the Office of the Lieutenant  
215 Governor.

216 ~~(4)~~ (5) Any eligible K-12 entity receiving grant funds  
217 pursuant to this section shall file a report with the Office  
218 of the Lieutenant Governor within one year following the  
219 receipt of the funds. The report shall indicate that  
220 expenditures are in accordance with the associated grant  
221 proposal and other state laws. Upon a finding that grant  
222 expenditures are not in accordance with these conditions, the  
223 Office of the Lieutenant Governor shall suspend the release of  
224 further grant funds to the entity.





225           ~~(5)~~ (6) The Department of ~~the~~ Examiners of Public  
226 Accounts shall examine compliance of the recipient K-12  
227 entities with the grant program.

228           ~~(6)~~ (7) The Office of the Lieutenant Governor shall  
229 design and distribute a grant proposal instrument to the State  
230 Department of Education to make available to eligible K-12  
231 entities. The ~~Office~~ office shall maintain electronic records  
232 of all grant proposals for all grants currently in effect and  
233 all completed grants and may adopt reasonable rules necessary  
234 to implement the provisions of this section.

235           Section 3. (a) Act 2023-560 of the 2023 Regular  
236 Session, now appearing as Sections 16-65A-1 through 16-65A-7,  
237 inclusive, Code of Alabama 1975, establishing the Distressed  
238 Institutions of Higher Education Revolving Loan Program, is  
239 repealed.

240           (b) (1) Any funds in the Distressed Institutions of  
241 Higher Education Loan Program Fund shall be transferred to the  
242 Education Trust Fund within 30 days of the effective date of  
243 this section.

244           (2) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the  
245 contrary, funds transferred to the Education Trust Fund  
246 pursuant to subdivision (1) shall be considered nonrecurring  
247 revenue for purposes of Chapter 9 of Title 29, Code of Alabama  
248 1975, and available for supplemental appropriation for the  
249 fiscal year ending September 30, 2024.

250           Section 4. Section 1 of this act shall become effective  
251 July 1, 2024. Sections 2 and 3 of this act shall become  
252 effective immediately.