

SENATE No. 2237

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Patrick M. O'Connor

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to safe internet access in schools.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Patrick M. O'Connor

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Plymouth and Norfolk

SENATE No. 2237

By Mr. O'Connor, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2237) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Patrick M. O'Connor for legislation relative to safe internet access in schools. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)

An Act relative to safe internet access in schools.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking the language
2 of Section 93 and inserting thereof the following:-

3 SECTION 93. POLICY REGARDING INTERNET SAFETY MEASURES FOR
4 SCHOOLS PROVIDING COMPUTER ACCESS TO STUDENTS

5 (a) Each school district providing computer access to students shall adopt an Internet
6 Safety Policy for the safe and efficient use of online resources. For the purposes of this Section,
7 an Internet Safety Policy shall be designed by the school committee in conjunction with the
8 superintendent or the board of trustees of a charter school. Any such policy shall:

9 (1) Require the notification of the parents, guardians, students, and additional
10 stakeholders of the policy and any changes to it every two years at the beginning of the academic
11 year with opportunity for public input and recommendations; and

(2) Make publicly available the specific measures to block, filter, or alter websites by the Internet Protection Measures pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the basis for including those categories, and the individuals who are responsible for making those decisions; and

(3) Be evaluated at least every two years by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent or board of trustees of a charter school to ensure that the policy conforms to current internet practices and technical requirements of teachers, provided that the results of the evaluation are made subject to a public hearing to accept public comment and input; and

(4) Employ a primary, secondary, and tertiary model of online risk protection including digital citizenship curriculum as part of the school's approach to social emotional learning. For the purposes of this section, digital citizenship curriculum shall be designed by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent or the board of trustees of a charter school and the department and shall include, but not be limited to, practices in safe and responsible internet use, behavior, and communication. For the purposes of this section, social emotional learning shall be interpreted and defined by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent or the board of trustees of a charter school and shall include, but not be limited to teaching methods to help students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions; and

(5) Protect students from visual depictions that are obscene, pornography, or harmful to minors (U.S.C. 54.520) within the statutes required herein addressing the use of internet protection measures for computer access in its schools.

(b) Each school district shall adopt written practices and procedures regarding the implementation of Internet Protection Measures. For the purposes of this section, Internet Protection Measures shall be selected or designed by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent or the board of trustees of a charter school. Any such practices and procedures shall:

(1) Be managed, maintained, and operated by the superintendent or their designee; and

(2) Maximize access to educationally appropriate online content, inquiry-based research, and universal design instruction; and

(3) Restrict access to online content that contains obscenity, pornography, or material harmful to minors (U.S.C. 54.520); and

(4) Include a procedure for teachers to override a website that has been blocked by Internet Protection Measures, provided that the website does not contain obscenity, pornography, or material harmful to minors (U.S.C. 54.520); and

(5) Establish criteria for the overruling of a request by a teacher to allow access to a website that is blocked by the internet protection measures, a procedure to provide the requesting party with an explanation of the reasons for denial of a request, and a procedure to record and submit any requests and overrulings to the school committee every two years.

(c) The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall develop a template internet protection policy for use by school districts, state schools, and charter schools. The template may include, but not be limited to, the provisions contained in subsection (a) of this section. Upon the completion of the template, which shall be no later than July 30,

55 2018, all districts shall be notified of its contents and the department shall make the template
56 available on the department website.

57 (d) This act shall take effect upon its passage.