

## RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_

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2 A RESOLUTION launching the Great Student Initiative, a City of Seattle effort to form new  
3 partnerships with information, communication and technology companies, and financial  
4 institutions to provide low-cost, high-speed Internet access, computer, software and services  
5 for low-income students in the Seattle Public Schools, and create a steering committee to  
6 advance the goals of the initiative.

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8 WHEREAS, the Race and Social Justice Roundtable, a partnership of twenty-six members from  
9 community organizations, government, social service agencies, and philanthropic  
10 organizations working together to achieve racial equity in our communities, has identified  
11 racial equity in education as their focused strategy to eliminate institutional racism in Seattle  
12 and has identified affordable high-speed Internet access as an important component to  
13 achieve an equal opportunity for a successful education; and

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15 WHEREAS, the Race and Social Justice Roundtable have examined racial inequity in graduation  
16 rates, incidences of discipline and pathways from high school to vocational training, college  
17 and universities; and

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19 WHEREAS, of the approximately 47,000 students in Seattle Public Schools, 39% are enrolled in  
20 the Free or Reduced-Price Meals program; 57% are students of color; 12% have a non-  
21 English speaking background; and

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23 WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has identified the three key barriers  
24 to Internet adoption in their National Broadband Plan: 1) the cost of broadband access for  
25 low-income households, 2) the lack of an affordable computing device in the home, and 3)  
26 the absence of digital literacy; and

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28 WHEREAS, in 2009, the Seattle City Council Budget Committee passed a Statement of legislative  
Intent (SLI 92-1-A-1) to study high-speed Internet Access assistance programs for low-  
income households; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2009 Department of Information Technology Residential Survey, 84%  
of households with incomes above \$50,000 receive high-speed Internet, but only 46% of  
households in Seattle with incomes averaging under \$30,000 receive high-speed Internet;  
and

WHEREAS, in a major initial step for the Great Student Initiative, Comcast has launched a program  
called Internet Essentials for low-income households seeking broadband in Comcast service  
areas and is working with local school districts to offer families with children eligible for a  
free lunch under the National School Lunch Program a \$9.95 per month high-speed Internet  
service, quality computer equipment for less than \$150, and access to basic digital literacy  
training; and

WHEREAS, Microsoft employs approximately 40,000 employees in the Puget Sound region and  
runs a program called Shape the Future which is designed to build public-private

1 partnerships that helps governments make technology solutions more affordable, accessible  
2 and relevant for low-income communities; and

3 WHEREAS, companies such as Intel and Microsoft have created innovative public-private  
4 programs to transform education and boost economies in countries like Portugal, United  
5 Kingdom, Argentina, Guatemala, and Serbia.

6 WHEREAS, the City of Seattle will continue its standing as one of America's most wired cities in  
7 terms of broadband adoption, access options, and public wireless Internet hot spots and is  
8 committed to doing everything possible to provide high-speed Internet, personal computers,  
9 and software to low-income students.

10 WHEREAS, a steering committee comprised of members from non-profit organizations  
11 specializing in promoting technology and connecting underserved communities, local  
12 financial institutions, local Internet service providers, Seattle Public Schools, and local  
13 software companies will assist the City of Seattle in executing the City's plan of providing  
14 every student in the Seattle Public Schools the opportunity and resources to have access to  
15 high-speed Internet at home and a current generation computer; and

16 WHEREAS, the vision for the Great Student Initiative is to become a financially-stable technology  
17 access program and an inclusive resource in the Seattle Public Schools system for years to  
18 come.

19 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, MAYOR**  
20 **CONCURRING, THAT:**

21 Section 1. Findings. The City Council finds the following:

22 1. High-speed Internet access is essential to prepare students for higher education and a  
23 competitive labor market in a new global economy. Success for students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
24 economy will be largely dependent upon an individual's ability, technology skills, media literacy,  
25 effective communication skills, critical & systems thinking, problem solving, collaboration, self-  
26 direction, global awareness, and civic literacy and educators have stated that ownership of a  
27 computer at home is linked with higher knowledge attainment, a greater capacity to learn  
28 independently.

2. Families who have a computer at home connected to the internet are able to take  
advantage of other broad social and economic benefits, examples being the ability to pay bills,

1 shop online, look for jobs, post resumes, connect to city services, take online learning courses,  
2 up-skill or retrain new careers. There are a multitude of benefits when the access is at home  
3 versus just at school.

4 3. Improving the achievement gap by increasing educational opportunities are a means to  
5 recognize racial and socioeconomic inequities. Pairing technology access with appropriate content  
6 and learning programs can reduce the achievement gap and potentially help parents become more  
7 active participants in their children's education through home access.  
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9 Section 2. Based on these findings, the Mayor and the City Council shall work  
10 collaboratively with the Seattle School District and non-governmental organizations and technology  
11 companies to develop a sustainable deployment of solutions to address the Internet access and cost  
12 issues identified above by launching the Great Student Initiative. Seattle's Office for Education,  
13 Department of Information Technology and any other applicable City departments are requested to  
14 consider the findings above when defining their work plans, policies and allocation of resources that  
15 may serve as opportunities to effectuate positive outcomes based on the findings.  
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17 Section 3. Steering Committee. The City of Seattle will convene a Great Student Initiative  
18 Steering Committee comprised of willing organizational participants that have agreed with the  
19 findings defined in this Resolution and have agreed to commit resources and energy relative to  
20 expanding Internet and computer access to Seattle Public School students who are in most need of  
21 such access. The members of the Great Student Initiative Steering Committee will include at a  
22 minimum representatives from the following:  
23

- 24 1. Seattle Public Schools
- 25 2. Comcast, Broadstripe, and other Internet Service Providers
- 26 3. One Economy Corporation
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- 28

- 1           4. Citizens' Telecommunications and Technology Advisory Board
- 2           5. City of Seattle Department of Information Technology
- 3           6. City of Seattle Office for Education
- 4           7. City of Seattle Office for Civil Rights

5 The Great Student Initiative Steering Committee will promote broadband adoption by low income  
6 school aged children, and assist efforts and activities between the Seattle Public Schools, private  
7 technology and communication companies, non-profits and the City of Seattle. As an initial task,  
8 the Steering Committee is requested to develop a work plan and identify strategies and next steps  
9 for implementing the goals of the initiative. The chair of the Council's Technology Committee (or  
10 successor committee) will facilitate the coordination of the Steering Committee's activities with  
11 assistance from the Department of Information Technology and the Office for Education. The  
12 Steering Committee is requested to submit a preliminary draft report outlining a proposed work  
13 plan, resource mapping and strategies for advancing the goals of the Great Student Initiative to the  
14 Energy, Technology and Civil Rights Committee within 120 days of the adoption date as a means to  
15 evaluate the progress of this initiative.  
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