

A bill for an act
relating to education; authorizing general education access grants for students;
amending Minnesota Statutes 2006, sections 126C.05, by adding a subdivision;
126C.13, subdivision 4; 126C.20; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota
Statutes, chapters 124D; 126C.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **[124D.097] GENERAL EDUCATION ACCESS GRANTS.**

Subdivision 1. **Enrollment.** (a) For purposes of this section, a student may enroll
in a Minnesota elementary or secondary school accredited by an accrediting agency
recognized according to section 123B.445, or recognized by the commissioner, and is
eligible to receive an access grant for the cost of attendance if:

(1) the household income of the student's parent or guardian is less than or equal
to 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size, at the time of
initial application;

(2) the student resides within and is enrolled in either Special School District No.
1, Minneapolis, or Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, at the time of initial
application; and

(3) the student's application for an access grant is approved by the commissioner.

(b) Subject to the requirements of paragraphs (c) and (d), applications that are
properly submitted in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner shall be
pooled and acted on by March 1 for the following school year and subsequent applications
must be acted on in the order they are received. The commissioner shall notify an
applicant in writing of the status of the application.

(c) In fiscal year 2008, the total number of approved student access grant applications
for residents of each school district shall not exceed ten percent of the previous year's

enrollment for each school district. If the number of initial applications exceeds the limit established by this paragraph as of the date established by the commissioner, the approved access grants shall be selected by lot.

(d) In fiscal years 2009 through 2013, the limit on the total number of approved student access grant applications for residents of each school district shall annually increase by five percent. Eligible applications submitted by current student access grant recipients for initial action by March 1 shall be approved and not be subject to random selection. If other initial student access grant applications combine to exceed the limit established by this paragraph, the approved access grants shall be selected by lot. In fiscal year 2014 and thereafter, no limit shall apply to the total number of approved applications for residents of each school district.

Subd. 2. **Funding.** (a) On a regular basis, as determined by the commissioner but at least quarterly, access grant payments shall be made to the parent or guardian of an approved student applicant in the form of a check that must be restrictively endorsed by the parent or guardian for the school providing the instruction. Access grant payments are considered financial assistance solely to the parent or guardian who is primarily responsible for ensuring that the child acquires knowledge and skills under section 120A.22.

(b) The total amount of the access grant for any school year shall not exceed the tuition and fees charged at the school where the student is enrolled and attending, or the formula allowance under section 126C.10, subdivision 2, whichever is less. The commissioner shall only recognize tuition and fees that are equal to what comparable students are charged who do not receive access grants.

(c) Prior to distribution of payments, the commissioner must require of the parent or guardian, and must receive in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, information necessary to validate the cost of attendance and enrollment status of the student. The commissioner shall prorate the access grant if the student is enrolled for only part of the school year.

(d) The commissioner must withhold access grant payments while it is reasonably believed that false information concerning the cost of attendance and enrollment status of the student has been intentionally submitted by an involved party. The commissioner shall audit and verify submitted information according to program integrity guidelines adopted by the commissioner.

Subd. 3. **Assessment.** A student receiving an access grant under this section shall participate in the statewide testing and reporting system under section 120B.30. The commissioner shall arrange for the time and location of any required assessments.

Individual student results shall be reported to the parent or guardian of the student and to the school providing instruction. Aggregate results shall be reported to the public.

Subd. 4. **Conference.** The commissioner shall offer an informal conference to applicants and recipients adversely affected by an agency action to attempt to resolve the dispute.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 126C.05, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 21. **Access grant pupil units.** Access grant pupil units equal the sum of:
(1) the number of resident students who are in their second consecutive year of receiving a general education access grant; and
(2) the number of resident students who are in their third consecutive year of receiving a general education access grant.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 126C.13, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

Subd. 4. **General education aid.** (a) For fiscal year 2006, a district's general education aid is the sum of the following amounts:

- (1) general education revenue, excluding equity revenue, total operating capital, and transition revenue;
- (2) operating capital aid according to section 126C.10, subdivision 13b;
- (3) equity aid according to section 126C.10, subdivision 30;
- (4) transition aid according to section 126C.10, subdivision 33;
- (5) shared time aid according to section 126C.01, subdivision 7;
- (6) referendum aid according to section 126C.17; and
- (7) online learning aid according to section 124D.096.

(b) For fiscal year 2007 and later, a district's general education aid is the sum of the following amounts:

- (1) general education revenue, excluding equity revenue, total operating capital revenue, alternative teacher compensation revenue, and transition revenue;
- (2) operating capital aid under section 126C.10, subdivision 13b;
- (3) equity aid under section 126C.10, subdivision 30;
- (4) alternative teacher compensation aid under section 126C.10, subdivision 36;
- (5) transition aid under section 126C.10, subdivision 33;
- (6) shared time aid under section 126C.01, subdivision 7;
- (7) referendum aid under section 126C.17; ~~and~~
- (8) online learning aid according to section 124D.096; and

4.1 (9) access grant adjustment aid according to section 126C.37.

4.2 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 126C.20, is amended to read:

4.3 **126C.20 ANNUAL GENERAL EDUCATION AID APPROPRIATION.**

4.4 There is annually appropriated from the general fund to the department the amount
4.5 necessary for general education aid and general education access grants. This amount
4.6 must be reduced by the amount of any money specifically appropriated for the same
4.7 purpose in any year from any state fund.

4.8 Sec. 5. **[126C.37] ACCESS GRANT ADJUSTMENT AID.**

4.9 (a) A district is eligible for access grant adjustment aid if any resident students from
4.10 the district are eligible to participate in the general education access grant program under
4.11 section 124D.097, subdivision 1.

4.12 (b) For fiscal year 2009 and later, an eligible district's access grant adjustment
4.13 allowance equals \$3,000.

4.14 (c) An eligible district's access grant adjustment aid equals the product of its access
4.15 grant pupil units multiplied times the district's access grant adjustment allowance.