

**SENATE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
NINETY-SECOND SESSION**

**S.F. No. 241**

(SENATE AUTHORS: CWODZINSKI and Putnam)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
01/21/2021	133	Introduction and first reading
		Referred to Education Finance and Policy
03/09/2022	5263	Author added Putnam

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to education; establishing a funding program for distance learning

1.3 equipment; requiring a report; appropriating money.

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

1.5 Section 1. **DISTANCE LEARNING BROADBAND ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM.**

1.6 Subdivision 1. Definition. For purposes of this section, "commissioner" means the

1.7 commissioner of education.

1.8 Subd. 2. Establishment. A distance learning broadband access grant program is

1.9 established in the Department of Education to provide wireless or wire-line broadband

1.10 access for a limited duration to students currently lacking Internet access so that the students

1.11 may participate in distance learning offered by school districts and charter schools during

1.12 the peacetime public health emergency period that relates to the infectious disease known

1.13 as COVID-19.

1.14 Subd. 3. Eligible expenditures. A grant awarded under this section may be used to:

1.15 (1) provide a student with the equipment necessary for the student to use a broadband

1.16 connection to access learning materials available on the Internet through a mobile wireless

1.17 or wire-line broadband connection;

1.18 (2) reimburse a school district or charter school for actual costs incurred to provide

1.19 emergency distance learning wireless or wire-line broadband access during the 2019-2020

1.20 or 2020-2021 school years; and

2.1 (3) reimburse a school district or charter school for the cost of wireless or wire-line  
2.2 broadband Internet access for households with students who did not otherwise have Internet  
2.3 access before March 13, 2020, for the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years.

2.4 Subd. 4. **Eligible applicants.** A Minnesota school district or charter school may apply  
2.5 for a grant award under this section.

2.6 Subd. 5. **Application review.** (a) An applicant for a grant under this section must file  
2.7 an application with the commissioner on a form developed by the commissioner.

2.8 (b) An application for a grant under this subdivision must describe a school district's or  
2.9 charter school's approach to identify and prioritize access for students unable to access the  
2.10 Internet for distance learning and may include a description of local or private matching  
2.11 grants or in-kind contributions.

2.12 (c) A school district or charter school may develop its application in cooperation with  
2.13 the school district's or charter school's community education department, the school district's  
2.14 or charter school's adult basic education program provider, a public library, an Internet  
2.15 service provider, or other community partner.

2.16 (d) The commissioner must prioritize applicants based on an evaluation of the following  
2.17 factors:

2.18 (1) the location of a school in or near an unserved area of the state;

2.19 (2) the percent of students who live in a household without wired or wireless broadband  
2.20 service; and

2.21 (3) the percent of students who were provided Internet access by the district or charter  
2.22 school under subdivision 3, clause (3).

2.23 (e) The commissioner must develop administrative procedures governing the application  
2.24 and grant award process.

2.25 Subd. 6. **Grant amount.** The commissioner must establish a minimum and maximum  
2.26 per-pupil amount for grants awarded under this section based on (1) the number of districts  
2.27 and charter schools that apply for a grant, (2) the total amount of money requested in the  
2.28 applications, and (3) the availability of federal money for a similar purpose.

2.29 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

3.1 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

3.2 \$15,000,000 in fiscal year 2022 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner  
3.3 of education for grants to provide wireless or wire-line broadband access for students during  
3.4 distance learning under section 1. Up to five percent of the appropriation under this section  
3.5 may be used to reimburse reasonable costs incurred by the Department of Education to  
3.6 administer section 1. This is a onetime appropriation. Any funds that remain unexpended  
3.7 on April 15, 2022, are canceled. By May 15, 2022, the commissioner of education must  
3.8 report to the legislature regarding the districts and charter schools that received grants under  
3.9 section 1, the per-pupil amount for each grant, and the number of students who were provided  
3.10 Internet access. The report must also identify the costs to administer the grant program and  
3.11 the amount canceled.

3.12 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.