



January 20, 2021

Chair Pelowski  
463 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for HF14 Broadband Grant Program Transfer

Dear Chair Pelowski and members of the Committee,

EdAllies is writing to express support for House File 14. When all of the state's schools closed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19, this left about 17% of Minnesota's students—particularly low-income and rural students—without access to the internet and even more without access to devices.<sup>1</sup> While there has been some investments to increase access from private-public partnerships<sup>2</sup> and federal CARES money,<sup>3</sup> these are not sustainable sources of funding that will ensure in the long-term that all Minnesota's families will have access to high-quality internet.

HF14 would make a more intentional and substantial state investment—\$60 million in FY2022 and \$60 million in FY23—that is needed to ensure that all Minnesota students and families are able to access the internet so that they can fully engage in distance and hybrid learning. Furthermore, access to the internet will also help students and families with engaging in interventions and support to address learning loss and long-term COVID-19 recovery.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Matt Shaver  
Policy Director

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<sup>1</sup> Callaghan, P. (March 2020). "What internet providers are doing to keep Minnesotans online during the pandemic." MinnPost.

<sup>2</sup> BBC Wires. (July 2020). "Public-Private Partnership to Support Technology Needs of Minnesota Students."  
<https://www.bbcmag.com/breaking-news/public-private-partnership-to-support-technology-needs-of-minnesota-students>

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Department of Education CARES Act Funding Information. Accessed January 18, 2021.  
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/cares/#:~:text=Of%20the%20%24150%20billion%20available,safety%20of%20students%20and%20staff.>