

TO: Members  
Industrial Education and Economic Development Finance and Policy  
Committee

FROM: Brad Lundell  
Executive Director, Schools for Equity in Education

RE: Support for HF 14

Schools for Equity in Education strongly supports HF 14, which proposes to add \$60 million in broadband grants in each of the next two fiscal years. The organization thanks Representative Ecklund and his co-authors for introducing this important piece of legislation.

Schools for Equity in Education's mission statement is "All public school children must have equal access to a high quality education regardless of where they live in Minnesota." Unfortunately, many students live in communities with little or no access to broadband, which adversely affects their educational opportunities. Even in communities where the school has broadband access, it can be difficult for students to fully participate in their education if broadband access outside of school is limited. The inequities that exist due to inadequate broadband coverage became more pronounced during the pandemic with students in areas without access to broadband placed at further disadvantage.

The initiative proposed in HF 14 would go a long way toward remedying the current situation and will help not only students in schools, but entire communities and businesses. The world has become increasingly interconnected and broadband access is crucial if opportunity is going to be accorded to all. Schools for Equity in Education looks forward to working with Representative Ecklund as HF 14 moves through the legislative process.

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