

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Brynaert and others

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Analyst: Tim Strom

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Overview

School districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools are eligible for state aid to pay for a portion of their telecommunications and Internet access costs. The telecommunications/Internet access aid program grants school districts and charter schools aid equal to 90 percent of the schools' unreimbursed telecommunications costs exceeding \$15 per pupil unit, unless the district is a member of a telecommunications cluster, in which case the aid equals 90 percent of the unreimbursed cost.

In order to qualify for the aid, school districts and charter schools must submit their actual telecommunications and Internet access costs to the Commissioner of Education and file applications for federal Internet funds (commonly referred to as e-rate funds). Under current law, the state aid amount is prorated to the state appropriations cap of \$3.75 million per year, which substantially reduces each school district's aid payment.

Section

- 1 Equity in telecommunications access.** Increases the annual state aid for schools' telecommunications access by \$6 million per year, beginning in fiscal year 2015.