

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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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 that belong to a telecommunication cluster state aid equal to 90 percent of the schools' unreimbursed telecommunications costs.

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). The aid amount is prorated to the state appropriations cap, which substantially reduces each school district's aid payment. For the last several years, the school telecommunications aid has been capped at \$3.75 million, or about 40 percent of the actual formula amount.

This bill increases the annual school telecommunications aid from \$3.75 million to \$9.75 million and the annual regional library telecommunications aid from \$2.3 million to \$3.3 million.

Section

- 1 Appropriations.** Appropriates \$3.3 million each year for regional library telecommunications aid and \$9.75 million each year for aid for schools for telecommunications/internet access aid.