

April 27, 2020

Members of the House Greater Minnesota Jobs and Economic Development Finance Division:

On behalf of the education organizations listed below, I am writing in support of the DE1 amendment to HF3029, specifically Section 1, the "Distance Learning Broadband Access Grant Program." This section would provide up to \$8,000,000 in desperately needed funding to reimburse Minnesota school districts and charter schools for costs incurred in providing equitable access to distance learning for our students during this world-wide pandemic.

Districts and charter schools across the state have taken measures to address the needs of our families to have adequate Internet access in order to participate equitably in digital distance learning programs. These families may be in areas of no or poor Internet access or may not be able to afford the Internet options available to them. Districts and charter schools have incurred costs to provide these families with temporary solutions such as mobile hotspots and access devices and to pay recurring service fees to get these families connected. Other districts have installed Wi-Fi devices to extend access into parking lots and outfitted busses with Wi-Fi, temporarily parking them in public locations, to allow students to download and upload necessary materials.

School districts statewide are working overtime to help provide some level of access to as many families as possible and they are doing great work, but additional funding is needed to ensure equitable access to the students we serve. Thank you for recognizing this need and for advancing this proposal.

Please feel free to reach out if I or any of the organizations listed can provide additional information to help inform your decisions.

Thank you for all you are doing during this time.

Kindest Regards,



Marc Johnson, Executive Director
East Central MN Educational Cable Cooperative

Association of Metropolitan School Districts
Minnesota Association of School Administrators
Minnesota Association of School Business Officials
Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association
Minnesota Rural Education Association
Minnesota School Boards Association
Schools for Equity in Education