

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

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SENATE BILL 859

Short Title: Student Internet Connectivity Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Garrett (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 27, 2020

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO EXPAND THE SCHOOL CONNECTIVITY  
3 INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE HOME MOBILE INTERNET ACCESS POINTS TO ALL  
4 PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED  
5 FREE OR REDUCED-COST SCHOOL MEALS

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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8 **PART I. EXPAND SCHOOL CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVE/HOME MOBILE**  
9 **INTERNET ACCESS POINTS FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS**

10 **SECTION 1.(a)** The State Board of Education and the Department of Public  
11 Instruction, in collaboration with the Friday Institute at North Carolina State University, shall  
12 expand the School Connectivity Initiative to improve student access to broadband Internet  
13 outside the classroom by providing home mobile Internet access points to all students in public  
14 schools who are eligible for federally subsidized free or reduced-cost school meals.

15 **SECTION 1.(b)** To the extent permitted by law, the State Board of Education and  
16 the Department of Public Instruction shall leverage any funds made available for community and  
17 home mobile Internet access points for students in public schools to achieve the purposes  
18 identified in subsection (a) of this section. These funds shall include any of the following:

- 19 (1) Federal funds received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic  
20 Security (CARES) Act, P.L. 116-136.  
21 (2) Federal funds received from any other federal law.  
22 (3) State allocations of federal funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as  
23 provided in S.L. 2020-4.  
24 (4) Any other State allocations or appropriations of federal or State funds.

25 **SECTION 1.(c)** The State Board of Education shall include the following  
26 information in its January 15, 2021, report, required pursuant to Section 7.28(d) of S.L. 2007-323:

- 27 (1) Recommendations for ensuring that all students have access to broadband  
28 Internet inside and outside the classroom.  
29 (2) Results from the expansion authorized pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
30 section and recommendations for future programs related to improved student  
31 access to broadband Internet services.

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33 **PART II. APPROPRIATION**

34 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
35 Public Instruction for the 2020-2021 fiscal year the sum of one hundred seventy-six million



1 dollars (\$176,000,000) in nonrecurring funds to expand the School Connectivity Initiative to  
2 provide home mobile Internet access points for students as provided in Section 1 of this act.

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4 **PART III. MISCELLANEOUS**

5 **SECTION 3.(a)** The provisions of the State Budget Act, Chapter 143C of the  
6 General Statutes, are reenacted and shall remain in full force and effect and are incorporated in  
7 this act by reference.

8 **SECTION 3.(b)** Except where expressly repealed or amended by this act, the  
9 provisions of any other legislation enacted during the 2019 Regular Session of the General  
10 Assembly expressly appropriating funds to an agency, a department, or an institution covered  
11 under this act, shall remain in effect.

12 **SECTION 3.(c)** If House Bill 966, 2019 Regular Session, becomes law, and any  
13 provision of that act or a provision of the Committee Report described in Section 42.2 of that act  
14 conflicts with this act, this act shall control.

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16 **PART IV. EFFECTIVE DATE**

17 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2020.