



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Drew Lovelace
Broadband Acting Director

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Contact: Mike Curtis
Public Relations Coordinator
Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
Michael.curtis@connect.nm.gov
(505) 231-4477

FCC approves \$500,000 for Statewide Education Network

ALBUQUERQUE—Today, the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced that the Federal Communications Commission has green-lighted more than \$500,000 to go toward operations of the Statewide Education Network (SEN).

The federal funding comes from the FCC’s Schools & Libraries USF Program, known as the E-rate program, which helps schools obtain internet service.

SEN has begun connecting public schools in what will become a statewide broadband network, enabling students to share classes, resources and information and to access educational websites. About 50 schools have been connected since July 1.

“This funding is a tremendous financial shot in the arm,” said **Ovidiu Viorica, Statewide Education Network Technology Manager**. “These federal dollars will help set this network on a path of sustainability for many years to come.”

The FCC funds supplement approximately \$4 million in annual state funding for SEN operations. The state’s financial responsibility will be reduced as future federal revenue is approved.

Each year OBAE applies for federal funds through the E-rate program for SEN to pay for internet service providers, maintain the broadband infrastructure and guarantee “last mile” broadband connections to schools. OBAE plans to apply for increased funding next year to help further defray state costs.

Viorica said the FCC funding will help provide broadband service and operations for up to 300 schools. SEN hopes to have 840 public schools connected to the network by 2027.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.