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**Senate passes Broadband for Education bill**

*Legislation transfers Statewide Education Network to Broadband Office*

SANTA FE – This afternoon, the Senate passed [SB 401](#), the Broadband for Education bill, by a vote of 23 to 6.

The Broadband for Education bill would transfer the Statewide Education Network (SEN) from the Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA) to the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE). The legislation would move all SEN staff, funds, projects and operations to the state’s broadband office.

SB 401 will make SEN run more efficiently, and such a transfer will allow for better broadband resiliency.

“Today’s Senate passage of SB 401 signifies another step toward ensuring that all our students have high quality broadband and schools receive support to go after federal funds,” said **Drew Lovelace**, acting director of OBAE. “This legislation will also help leverage more school-related broadband programs and, in turn, surrounding communities will benefit with improved connectivity in rural parts of the state. We look forward to SB 401 advancing in the House.”

SEN is currently run by OBAE, so the transfer will be seamless, and the move also provides OBAE with autonomy. PSFA also supports the bill.

SEN launched its broadband infrastructure program last July, connecting dozens of schools through a school-centric broadband network. The network will allow students and teachers to share classes, resources and educational and social services.

SEN plans to connect all New Mexico schools through this bold, high-tech program by 2027.

Passage of SB 401 will also allow for more middle mile broadband for SEN, something that will benefit broadband providers, schools and students. SEN middle mile could also be used in communications emergencies statewide.

The legislation, which has bipartisan support, will now be assigned to a House committee.

The sponsors of SB 401 are Sen. Michael Padilla, Senate Majority Whip, Sen. Nicole Tobiassen, Rep. Debra Sarinana, Rep. Tara Lujan and Rep. Joy Garratt.

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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.*