



MISSISSIPPI
CONNECTS



House Bill 1788

Questions and Answers

Q: Who do we send notification if my district decides not to use any or part of the funds granted?

A: Send the district name and amount not to be used to grantapp@mdek12.org

Q: Can we use HB1788 funds to pay for data plans this school year?

A: The MDE is in communications with the Office of the State Auditor regarding clarification of data plan eligibility and the duration of data plans under HB1788. We hope to have that clarification early next week.

Q: What is the deadline for returning the grant agreement to the MDE via grantapp@mdek12.org?

A: The deadline is a soft deadline. Please submit the information as soon as possible. Please note that you will not be able to request a reimbursement under this program until all of the information is submitted and approved.

Q: What items are eligible for purchase under HB 1788?

A: Any expense that supports connectivity of students and teachers – whether at home (e.g., hotspots and data plans), mobile or fixed towers in the community, strengthening wifi signals in and around your school sites. Examples of eligible items includes but is not limited to the following:

- Antennas, connectors, and related components used for external broadband connections
- Hotspots (individual devices or installed on bus)
- Cell boosters for the home
- Portable towers
- Cabling to external devices

- Firewall services and firewall components separate from basic firewall protection provided as a standard component of a vendor's Internet access service
- Racks
- Routers
- Switches
- Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)/Battery Backup
- Access points used in a local area network (LAN) or wireless local area network (WLAN) environment (such as wireless access points)
- License for Access points
- Wireless controller systems
- Software supporting the components on this list used to distribute high-speed broadband
- Installation of equipment listed

Q: If hotspots are not feasible to purchase for students to use at home, can we extend access to the school parking lots?

A: Yes. HB 1788 allows schools to purchase devices to extend internet access to school parking lots.

Q: Can equipment / internet be purchased for other locations in the community that are not part of the school?

A: This is allowable if you are using wifi devices provided by HB1788.

Q: Can the district place cellular devices in buildings that serve students/community to help cover areas in the county (rural areas) that have no or limited broadband service (churches, local businesses, or other buildings)?

A: Yes

Q: Can items be purchased with one year of service bundled in?

A: Yes. Items can have service included through June 30, 2021.

Q: Can we provide external access in parking lots on campus?

A: Yes. External access points can be purchased to provide access to the internet in parking lots on school campus.

Q: Can we pay for a vendor to do a walkthrough and evaluation for any further needed wifi APs around the district?

A: Yes

Q: Can we purchase Kajeets, MiFi/Cradle Points with one year baked in service for student access / check out throughout the District?

A: Per the OSA, hotspot and cellular devices are acceptable as well as the data plans, if the cost of the plan is bundled in with the device cost and the service only runs through June 30, 2021.

Q: Will a Plan need to be submitted for approval?

A: We will need to revisit your TechDLP.xlsx file at some point and make sure everything you use HB1788 money is reflected in the question about HB1788.

Q: Can we purchase access points for both inside and outside our schools?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the time frame for reimbursement of eligible items purchased?

A: Eligible items purchased after March 14, 2020 (declaration of state of emergency) are reimbursable.

Q: Can we use the funds to have a vendor do a professional network survey to ensure that we are in good network health since we are adding additional devices?

A: Yes

Q: When do purchases need to be completed?

A: By December 1, 2020