

A bill for an act
relating to education; creating a grant program to allow rural school districts to
share services; appropriating money.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **COMMONWEALTH DISTRICT GRANTS.**

Subdivision 1. **Commonwealth districts.** The Minnesota Department of Education
may make up to three grants of up to \$100,000 to groups of school districts to plan and
implement the creation of Commonwealth Districts. A Commonwealth District is a
consortium of at least three rural Independent School Districts and other governmental
agencies who agree to share administrative and program services. Administrative services
that may be shared include: superintendent, financial management, transportation, food,
property, technology, purchasing, evaluation and accountability, and communications
services. Instructional and learning services that may be shared include: faculty, online
learning, project based learning, and computer based learning.

Subd. 2. **Grants to implement program.** A group of at least three rural
Independent School Districts may apply to the commissioner of education for a planning
grant. Grant applications must be in the form and manner specified by the commissioner,
but must give preference to applications showing the greatest cost advantages. Once a
Commonwealth District planning group has completed its planning process, it may apply
for an implementation grant.

Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

2.1 Subdivision 1. **Department of Education.** The sums indicated in this section
2.2 are appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Education for the fiscal
2.3 year designated.

2.4 Subd. 2. **Grants for Commonwealth Districts.** For grants to school districts to
2.5 plan and implement Commonwealth Districts under section 1:

2.6	<u>\$</u>	<u>300,000</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>2010</u>
2.7	<u>\$</u>	<u>300,000</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>2011</u>

2.8 The 2010 appropriation is for planning grants.

2.9 The 2011 appropriation is for implementation grants.

2.10 The base budget for this program is \$300,000 per year for fiscal years 2012 and
2.11 2013 for implementation grants.