

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2603

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 25, 2020

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 2603.

This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to distribute to school districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools, within 30 days of the bill's effective date, the amount of funding necessary for the acquisition of connected devices for all enrolled students who do not have access to such devices. The bill defines a "connected device" as a laptop computer, tablet computer, or similar device that is capable of connecting to broadband Internet access service, either by receiving such service directly or through the use of Wi-Fi.

The bill includes a provision requiring a school district, charter school, or renaissance school that receives funding under the bill's provisions to reimburse the Department of Education for that funding from any moneys received under the federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act," Pub.L. 116-136, or any other federal assistance available to address the impact of COVID-19 on schools. This bill is intended to address the barriers to remote learning that many students are experiencing, so that all students may fully participate in the virtual classroom experience.