February 1, 2016 – Introduced by Senators TIFFANY and MOULTON, cosponsored by Representatives TRANEL, QUINN, E. BROOKS, NOVAK, NERISON, SWERINGEN, BERNIER, PETRYK, EDMING, KRUG, MACCO, KITCHENS, T. LARSON, HORNELLER, MURSAU, SPIROS, MURTHA, MURPHY, KULP, VANDERMEER, TAUCHEN, A. OTT, BALLWEG, CZAJA and RIPP. Referred to Committee on Education.

AN ACT to amend 20.255 (2) (ds); and to create 115.45 of the statutes; relating to: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics grants for rural school districts, providing an exemption from emergency rule procedures, requiring the exercise of rule-making authority, and making an appropriation.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the Department of Public Instruction to award grants to rural school districts for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, and expanding educational programming related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Under the bill, a rural school district is defined as a school district with a membership of not more than 1,000 pupils and a population density of less than 12 pupils per square mile of the school district’s area. A condition for receiving one of these grants is that the recipient must secure or provide matching funds equal to at least 10 percent of the grant amount. Finally, the bill establishes a minimum grant amount of $3,000 and a maximum annual grant amount of $20,000.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 20.255 (2) (ds) of the statutes is amended to read:
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SENATE BILL 661

SECTION 1

20.255 (2) (ds) STEM grants; rural school districts. Biennially, the amounts in the schedule to award grants for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses under 2013 Wisconsin Act 20, section 9134 (5q) s. 115.45.

SECTION 2. 115.45 of the statutes is created to read:

115.45  Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics grants; rural school districts. (1) In this section:

(a) “Membership” has the meaning given in s. 121.004 (5).

(b) “Rural school district” means a school district that satisfies all of the following criteria:

1. The school district’s membership in the previous school year was no more than 1,000 pupils.

2. The school district’s membership in the previous school year divided by the school district’s area in square miles is less than 12.

(2) Beginning in the 2016–17 school year, the department shall award to rural school districts grants to establish, maintain, and expand educational programming related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The department may not award a grant under this subsection unless the rural school district secures or provides from private or public sources matching funds equal to at least 10 percent of the amount of the grant. The match may be in the form of money or in–kind goods or services, or both.

(3) The department shall award grants under sub. (2) from the appropriation under s. 20.255 (2) (ds).

(4) The department shall promulgate rules to implement and administer this section. The rules shall include all of the following:
(a) The department may not award a grant under this section in an amount less than $3,000.

(b) The department may not award more than $20,000 under this section to a rural school district in any fiscal year.

(c) The department shall give priority to applications for grants under this section in the following order:

1. An application to establish science, technology, engineering, and mathematics educational programming in a rural school district that does not offer such educational programming.

2. An application to expand the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics educational programming offered in a rural school district that offers such educational programming.

3. An application to maintain the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics educational programming offered by a rural school district.


(1) STEM GRANTS; RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. The department of public instruction may promulgate emergency rules under section 227.24 of the statutes implementing section 115.45 of the statutes, as created by this act. Notwithstanding section 227.24 (1) (c) and (2) of the statutes, emergency rules promulgated under this subsection remain in effect until July 1, 2017, or the date on which permanent rules take effect, whichever is sooner. Notwithstanding section 227.24 (1) (a) and (3) of the statutes, the department is not required to provide evidence that promulgating a rule under this subsection as an emergency rule is necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety, or welfare and is not required to provide a finding of emergency for a rule promulgated under this subsection.
SECTION 4. Fiscal changes.

(1) STEM GRANTS; RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. In the schedule under section 20.005 (3) of the statutes for the appropriation to the department of public instruction under section 20.255 (2) (ds) of the statutes, as affected by the acts of 2015, the dollar amount for fiscal year 2016–17 is increased by $1,000,000 for the purpose for which the appropriation is made.

(END)