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Shared services grant applications to be available soon

PIERRE, S.D. – At its meeting earlier today, the state Board of Education approved rules related to shared services grants, which were included in Senate Bill 133 of the 2016 legislative session. These grants are designed to provide an incentive for school districts to share employees.

The Department of Education plans to make grant applications available to South Dakota public school districts later this summer.

The grant review committee will give priority to applications addressing rural or sparsity needs, increased opportunities or services for students or increased efficiency.

An individual grant may be used to fund up to three shared services employees. Grant funding is intended to help initiate the process of sharing services and will be awarded for up to three years, with a 50 percent reduction in year two and a 75 percent reduction in year three. Applicants must demonstrate a need for shared employees among participating districts and the ability to sustain the plan for sharing employee services.

House Bill 1182, which was also part of the 2016 education package, allocated 3 percent of new sales tax revenue for increasing instructor salaries to competitive industry levels at the state technical institutes. The board approved rules related to distribution of these funds as well.