

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5445

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2013

Title: An act relating to funding public school capital projects.

Brief Description: Funding public school capital projects.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Schoesler, Dammeier, Braun, Parlette, Litzow, Baumgartner, Carrell, Sheldon, Ericksen, Becker, King, Fain, Bailey and Tom).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/04/13, 2/07/13 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/11/13, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5445 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Bailey, Braun, Conway, Dammeier, Fraser, Hargrove, Ranking Member; Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Nelson, Assistant Ranking Member; Padden, Parlette, Ranker, Rivers, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: The state supports local school construction through a grant program administered by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) under RCW 28A.525.

Summary of Substitute Bill: \$475 million in general obligation bonds are authorized and appropriated for the 2013-15 school construction assistance program and for a \$10 million grant program to improve security at public schools.

Appropriation: \$544 million.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on the Original Bill: PRO: The school construction assistance program helps pay for modern, healthy, secure facilities that are conducive to learning. The funding formula should be updated to reflect the larger square footage requirements for current instructional programs. An OSPI sponsored taskforce found that the current formula assumes a square footage per student that is 25 percent below the actual state average and is below the national average. We support funding for improved school security and section 8 of the bill is our preferred approach. Please consider whether you have adequately provided funding for all-day kindergarten. Local voters have supported local bond measures in large part because of the availability of state grants. Clover Park is projected to receive \$39 million from the July 2013 release. We appreciate your efforts to get the appropriation passed early. Getting the school construction appropriation early will be a great relief and will help create jobs and economic development.

OTHER: The bill is a clear statement of your priorities. We have concerns about what is not stated in the bill. Please don't forget about programs such as the public works trust fund and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program that address some of the broader needs in our communities. With historically low interest rates and property values it is a good time to build parks and buy land for parks. We appreciate the comment that this is just an early action capital budget and a more comprehensive budget will follow. There are many needs around the state for capital projects, including clean up of toxic waste sites, forest health projects, stormwater projects and projects that improve recreational opportunities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Gary Kohn, Everett School District # 2; Debbie LeBeau, Clover Park School District; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Educational Assn.

OTHER: Bill Riley, WA Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, WA REALTORS(r); Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy.