

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6080

As of March 18, 2015

Title: An act relating to financing public school facilities necessary to support state-funded all-day kindergarten and class size reduction in kindergarten through third grade.

Brief Description: Financing public school facilities necessary to support state-funded all-day kindergarten and class size reduction in kindergarten through third grade.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Keiser, Honeyford, Conway and Pedersen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 3/19/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: The state Legislature enacted class-size reduction goals to reach one teacher to 17 students in kindergarten through third grade (K–3) by the 2017-18 school year. A potential barrier to reaching the intent of those class-size reduction objectives is a shortage of classrooms.

The school construction assistance program (SCAP) provides school districts with financial assistance to expand and modernize school facilities. The amount of financial assistance is based on a formula that considers the amount of square feet needed for the number of students in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools; multiplied by an assumed cost per square foot for construction; multiplied by a state fund matching rate. The SCAP match rate depends on the relative value of assessed property in the district per student. SCAP only funds permanent school buildings, not portables.

The state Constitution authorizes school districts to issue bonds for the purpose of constructing schools. Schools are owned, designed, constructed, and maintained by local school districts. Authorization of general obligation bonds require a 60 percent majority vote.

Summary of Bill: To help school districts expand the number of classrooms in support of the K–3 class-size reduction objective, \$240 million in general obligation bonds are authorized and appropriated.

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.

The K–3 class-size reduction grants are determined by a four-step process:

- A verified count of necessary added classrooms in a district must be completed.
- If the number of needed classrooms is 12 or more, it is assumed that the added classrooms are provided by constructing a new school. If fewer than 12 classrooms are needed, it is assumed that the additional classrooms are provided with modular or portable classroom additions.
- The state grant amount must be calculated. If a new school is required, the cost is calculated at \$514,000 per added classroom. If modular or portable classroom additions are required, the cost is estimated at \$210,000 per classroom. These amounts are in 2014 dollars and will be inflated based on inflation rates assumed in the SCAP budget. The state match rate is the SCAP match rate plus 20 percent of the district's rate of free and reduced school lunch students.
- The school district must be ready to proceed, and the Office of Financial Management must confirm the grant calculations prepared by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction before K–3 class-size reduction grants can be awarded.

The K–3 class-size reduction grant program expires July 1, 2023.

Appropriation: \$240 million on State Building Construction Account bonds.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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