
SENATE BILL 5453

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senators Honeyford and Frockt

Read first time 01/25/17. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1 AN ACT Relating to school construction assistance grants for
2 small, rural school districts; and adding a new section to chapter
3 28A.525 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.525
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) School construction assistance program grants for small,
8 rural districts must be determined in accordance with this section.

9 (2) Eligibility. Small, rural district modernization grants are
10 for school districts with student enrollments under one thousand.
11 Districts with incomplete information in the inventory and condition
12 of schools data system are not eligible to apply.

13 (3) Prioritized grants and advisory committee.

14 (a) The small, rural district school modernization program must
15 propose a list of prioritized grants by September 1st of even-
16 numbered years. The superintendent of public instruction must appoint
17 an advisory committee to prioritize applications for small, rural
18 school districts. Committee members must have experience in
19 financing, managing, repairing, and improving school facilities in
20 small, rural districts but must not be involved in a small, rural
21 modernization program request for the biennium under consideration.

1 The office of the superintendent of public instruction must provide
2 administrative and staff support to the committee. The committee must
3 review and rank applications in the three-step process in this
4 subsection (3).

5 (b) Step one must involve a simplified application from
6 interested districts with a brief statement of the school condition,
7 its deficiencies, student enrollment, student achievement measures,
8 and financial limitations of the district. The advisory committee
9 created in (a) of this subsection must identify a preliminary list of
10 school districts with the most serious building deficiencies, the
11 most limited financial capacity, and the greatest student achievement
12 gaps.

13 (c) After identifying the list of school districts under (b) of
14 this subsection, the advisory committee created in (a) of this
15 subsection and the office of superintendent of public instruction
16 must offer technical assistance to the districts on the list to
17 develop affordable and effective proposals to resolve the most
18 serious building deficiencies.

19 (d) After offering technical assistance under (c) of this
20 subsection, the advisory committee created in (a) of this subsection
21 must evaluate final applications from the school districts on the
22 first list interested in pursuing a grant. The advisory committee
23 must submit a prioritized list of grants to the superintendent of
24 public instruction and the governor. The list must prioritize
25 applications to achieve the greatest improvement of school
26 facilities, in the districts with the most limited financial
27 capacity, for projects that are likely to improve student health,
28 safety, and academic performance for the largest number of students
29 for the amount of state grant support. The advisory committee must
30 develop specific criteria to achieve the prioritization. The
31 submitted prioritized list must describe the project, the proposed
32 state funding level, and the total project cost including other
33 funding and in-kind resources. The list must also indicate student
34 achievement measures that will be used to evaluate the benefits of
35 the project. The superintendent of public instruction and the
36 governor may determine the level of funding in their omnibus capital
37 appropriations act requests to support small, rural school district
38 grants, but their funding requests must follow the prioritized list
39 prepared by the advisory committee unless new information determines
40 that a specific project is no longer viable as proposed.

1 (4) Disbursement of grant funds and reporting requirements. The
2 office of the superintendent of public instruction must execute a
3 contract with school districts receiving small, rural school
4 modernization grants. The contract must not be executed until the
5 district has identified available local and other resources
6 sufficient to complete the approved project considering the amount of
7 the state grant. The contract must include provisions for disbursing
8 state funds for eligible project costs incurred. When a district has
9 used local funds for costs eligible for state fund reimbursement
10 under a small, rural modernization grant, if the state funds are not
11 applied to eligible project costs, use of the state funds must comply
12 with the requirements of the applicable source of local funds. The
13 contract must specify reporting requirements from the district, which
14 must include updating all pertinent information in the inventory and
15 condition of schools system and submitting a final project report as
16 specified by the office of the superintendent of public instruction
17 in consultation with the school facilities citizens advisory
18 committee specified in RCW 28A.525.025.

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