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**SENATE BILL 6596**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Honeyford, Cleveland, and Wagoner

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

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

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

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

(2)(a) School districts with enrollments that are less than or equal to one thousand students are eligible for small, rural district construction assistance grants. Districts with incomplete facility inventory and condition data in the information and condition of schools data system are not eligible to apply.

(b) For school districts that, because of low-assessed property values or high indebtedness, are not able to access school construction assistance program grants, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall recommend measures for those school districts to become eligible for the small, rural district school construction assistance program. The construction assistance grants may be used for modernization of existing instructional facilities and new construction of instructional facilities.

(3)(a) The superintendent of public instruction must appoint an advisory committee whose members have experience in financing and managing school facilities in small school districts to assist the office in designing the grant application process, developing the prioritization criteria, and evaluating the grant applications. Advisory committee members may not be involved in a small, rural district construction assistance program request for the biennium under consideration. The office of the superintendent of public instruction must provide administrative and staff support to the committee.

(b) The advisory committee must develop specific criteria to achieve the prioritization. The submitted prioritized list must describe the project, the proposed state funding level, and the estimated total project cost including other funding and in-kind resources. In addition to prioritization criteria developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the advisory committee, the office and the advisory committee must also prioritize projects that: (i) Improve student health, safety, and academic performance for the largest number of students; and (ii) provide the most available school district resources, including in-kind resources. The superintendent of public instruction and the governor may determine the level of funding in their omnibus capital appropriations act requests to support small, rural district construction assistance grants, but their funding requests must follow the prioritized list prepared by the advisory committee unless new information determines that a specific project is no longer viable as proposed.

(4) The superintendent of public instruction must submit a list of small, rural district construction assistance projects, as prioritized by the advisory committee, to the legislature by September 1st of even-numbered years.

(5) The grant may not be awarded until the district has identified available local and other resources sufficient to complete the approved project considering the amount of the state grant. When a district has used local funds for costs eligible for state fund reimbursement under a small, rural construction assistance grant, if the state funds are not applied to eligible project costs, use of the state funds must comply with the requirements of the applicable source of local funds. Upon completing the project, the grantee must submit a final project report as specified by the office of the superintendent of public instruction in consultation with the school facilities citizen advisory panel created in RCW 28A.525.025.

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