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SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5453

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford and Frockt)

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 enrollments that are less than or equal to  
11 one thousand students. For school districts that, because of low  
12 assessed property values or high indebtedness, are not eligible for  
13 school construction assistance program modernization grants, the  
14 office of the superintendent of public instruction shall recommend  
15 measures for those school districts to become eligible in the small,  
16 rural district school construction assistance program. Districts with  
17 incomplete information in the inventory and condition of schools data  
18 system are not eligible to apply.

19       (3) Prioritized grants and advisory committee.

20       (a) The small, rural district school modernization program must  
21 propose a list of prioritized grants by September 1st of even-

1 numbered years. The superintendent of public instruction must appoint  
2 an advisory committee to prioritize applications for small, rural  
3 school districts. Committee members must have experience in  
4 financing, managing, repairing, and improving school facilities in  
5 small, rural districts but must not be involved in a small, rural  
6 modernization program request for the biennium under consideration.  
7 The office of the superintendent of public instruction must provide  
8 administrative and staff support to the committee. The committee must  
9 review and rank applications in the three-step process in this  
10 subsection (3).

11 (b) Step one must involve a simplified application from  
12 interested districts with a brief statement of the school condition,  
13 its deficiencies, student enrollment, student achievement measures,  
14 and financial limitations of the district. The advisory committee  
15 created in (a) of this subsection must identify a preliminary list of  
16 school districts with the most serious building deficiencies, the  
17 most limited financial capacity, and the greatest student opportunity  
18 gaps given the condition of school facilities.

19 (c) After identifying the list of school districts under (b) of  
20 this subsection, the advisory committee created in (a) of this  
21 subsection and the office of superintendent of public instruction  
22 must offer technical assistance to the districts on the list to  
23 develop affordable and effective proposals to resolve the most  
24 serious building deficiencies.

25 (d) After offering technical assistance under (c) of this  
26 subsection, the advisory committee created in (a) of this subsection  
27 must evaluate final applications from the school districts on the  
28 first list interested in pursuing a grant. The advisory committee  
29 must submit a prioritized list of grants to the superintendent of  
30 public instruction and the governor. The list must prioritize  
31 applications to achieve the greatest improvement of school  
32 facilities, in the districts with the most limited financial  
33 capacity, for projects that are likely to improve student health,  
34 safety, and academic performance for the largest number of students  
35 for the amount of state grant support. The advisory committee must  
36 develop specific criteria to achieve the prioritization. The  
37 submitted prioritized list must describe the project, the proposed  
38 state funding level, and the estimated total project cost including  
39 other funding and in-kind resources. The list must also indicate  
40 student achievement measures that will be used to evaluate the

1 benefits of the project. The superintendent of public instruction and  
2 the governor may determine the level of funding in their omnibus  
3 capital appropriations act requests to support small, rural school  
4 district grants, but their funding requests must follow the  
5 prioritized list prepared by the advisory committee unless new  
6 information determines that a specific project is no longer viable as  
7 proposed.

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

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