

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION K-12 SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING FORMULA & ENROLLMENT STUDY

Assessment of School Construction Funding Information Provided to Voters

In order to make recommendations about how to achieve transparency of the State's school construction assistance formula, a review of voter materials related to local school construction bonds was conducted. The review was designed to include materials from a range of school districts in terms of enrollment, geographic location, and match ratio.

SAMPLE

- Thirty districts in 22 counties were selected for analysis, producing a sample of approximately 10% of the State's 295 districts and 24% of the total student population.
- Twenty-one of the 30 districts still had voter information available regarding the most recent bond measure.
- Exhibit 1 below presents the enrollment, 2008 state matching ratios, the year of the bond measure and whether it was approved or rejected, and whether the state match was mentioned in the voter materials for each of the 21 districts with current voter information available.

**Legislative Task Force Meeting – September 17, 2008
Key Findings from Assessment of School Construction Funding Information**

**Exhibit 1
Summary of the 21 School Districts with Current Information Available**

County	School District	Enrollment 2008	Matching Ratio 2008	Bond year	Matching Ratio Bond Year	Approved/ Rejected	State Matching Mentioned
Franklin	Pasco	13,236	86.93%	2006	84.64%	Approved	Yes
Grant	Moses Lake	7,446	76.82%	2007	76.96%	Approved	Yes
Spokane	Freeman	973	72.60%	2008	72.60%	Approved	Yes
Clark	Evergreen	25,397	68.52%	2002	70.15%	Approved	Yes
Spokane	Central Valley	12,398	69.95%	2006	69.45%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
Yakima	West Valley	4,923	72.92%	2006	68.66%	Approved	Yes
Clark	Evergreen	25,396	68.52%	2008	68.52%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
Pierce	Franklin Pierce	7,653	66.89%	2008	66.89%	<i>Rejected</i>	No
Walla Walla	Walla Walla	6,143	67.15%	2006	66.81%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
Lewis	Adna	590	68.08%	2007	64.88%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
Chelan	Wenatchee	7,671	67.32%	2007	63.67%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
Cowlitz	Woodland	2,261	63.63%	2008	63.63%	<i>Rejected</i>	No
Whatcom	Meridian	1,667	58.40%	2008	58.40%	<i>Rejected</i>	No
Kitsap	South Kitsap	10,479	56.79%	2007	57.12%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
Snohomish	Snohomish	9,572	54.78%	2008	54.78%	Approved	Yes
Chelan	Lake Chelan	1,356	40.40%	2008	40.40%	Approved	No
Lewis	White Pass	499	36.52%	2008	36.52%	Approved	Yes
Jefferson	Port Townsend	1,508	31.60%	2007	26.33%	<i>Rejected</i>	No
King	Seattle	45,581	20.00%	2008	20.00%	Approved	No
King	Bellevue	16,772	20.00%	2008	20.00%	Approved	No
Skagit	Anacortes	2,977	20.00%	2008	20.00%	<i>Rejected</i>	Yes
San Juan	Lopez	242	20.00%	2008	20.00%	Approved	No

Source: OSPI; The League of Education Voters' Levy Library; and individual districts' websites

FINDINGS

- Only a handful of district materials addressed the impact of bond failure or noted that local validation was required. Only five of the 11 materials that mentioned state funding noted that it is contingent upon local passage of the bond.
- Of the 21 districts for which voter materials were analyzed, ten made no mention of the state matching funds or any state assistance for capital projects. Ten districts referred to the state matching funds explicitly and one district discussed general state assistance. In all cases, the match was presented as a dollar amount rather than the ratio.
- Information regarding the state matching funds was often found in the Frequently Asked Questions sections of district websites or in more detailed community presentations, rather than in the widely distributed mailers. Community organizations allowed to actively campaign on behalf of a school bond also made little mention of state matching funds.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a wide range of information and level of detail in the voter materials reviewed.

- Overall, state matching funds are not well communicated in voter information.
- Providing information and materials that succinctly communicate the State's funding formula and program would help increase understanding and transparency and allow the school districts to highlight the potential for a state contribution in their voter materials.