

Joint Legislative Task Force on School Construction Funding Specialized Space

2009 Proviso Excerpt

"...The joint legislative task force on school construction funding, established in the 2007-09 capital budget, is continued to explore the following: (a) Changing the state funding assistance ratio used in the school construction assistance grant program formula; (b) **methods to accommodate specialized program space or unique building circumstances (such as all-day kindergarten and science labs)...**"

2009-11 Capital Budget

ESHB 1216, Chapter 497 Laws of 2009 (pv)

Excerpt Section 5017(1)

Background

The 2008 Joint Legislative Task Force on School Construction Funding considered, as one of the options for changing the School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP), making provisions for specialized space. Examples of "specialized space" include facilities for early-learning programs, science labs, or historic buildings.

The 2008 Task Force recommended consistency with the findings of the Basic Education Finance Task Force. The 2008 School Construction Funding Formula Work Group recommended that the state commission a study to determine the average-square-foot space needs for all spaces by grade span which would define the student square-foot-space allocation. The work group recommended that this base standard should include recent policy and educational requirements, such as all-day kindergarten and expanded science labs. The work group further recommended that future policies that result in changes to the demand for space be accompanied by updates to the square-foot allocation.

Update

Formula Allocation Study

The 2009-11 capital budget directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to: "...Conduct an analysis of the appropriate level for the state area cost allowance and the average square-foot space needs for use in the school construction funding formula. The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide recommendations regarding the appropriate levels for the area cost allowance and average square-foot space needs to the joint task force on school construction funding by September 1, 2009..."

2009-11 Capital Budget

ESHB 1216, Chapter 497 Laws of 2009 (pv)

Excerpt Section 5012(3)

The timeline established for such a study was optimistic and, in addition, the budget did not include additional resources for the purpose.

The OSPI has submitted a report entitled, "Analysis of the School Construction Assistance Program Formula Allocations," in which it recommends increasing the student-space allocation in the range of 20 square-feet-per-student in each grade span (elementary, middle, and high school). It further acknowledges the time and resource constraints that precluded more in-depth analysis and

recommends the state commission two studies to determine the average square-foot space needs and the appropriate level of the construction cost allocation.

Basic Education Finance Task Force

The Basic Education Finance Task Force, in its final recommendation, proposed defining basic education to include funding for pre-school programs for all children age three and four whose family income is at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level, and whose parents choose to enroll in the program.

The Basic Education bill enacted by the Legislature in the 2009 session (ESHB 2261) called for a work group to implement a program of early-learning for at-risk three- and four-year olds. This section of the bill was vetoed by the Governor who stated in her veto message that, "If early childhood education is to become part of our definition of basic education it cannot be made available only to at-risk children."

The bill further sets a structure for basic education funding based on a prototypical school model - factors such as class size, hours of instruction, and various categories of school-staff-per-building. The bill established a Funding Formula Working Group to recommend technical details to the Legislature. Their report is due December 1, 2009.

Any demand for specialized space resulting from this bill will not be known until the Legislature adopts detailed formulas, an implementation schedule, and determines the respective roles of the state and local school districts under the revised structure.