

1 Introduced by House Committee on Education

2 Date:

3 Subject: Education; school construction; facilities; grant program; PCBs

4 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to:

5 (1) create the Facilities Master Plan Grant Program to support
6 supervisory unions and independent career and technical education districts to
7 support the development of a master plan that complies with State construction
8 aid requirements;

9 (2) require the Department of Buildings and General Services to
10 establish a list of prequalified architecture and engineering consultants;

11 (3) create the State Aid for School Construction Working Group to
12 study and design a plan for a statewide school construction aid program;

13 (4) require the Joint Fiscal Office to model stable perpetual revenue
14 sources to fund a statewide school construction aid program; and

15 (5) pause PCB testing.

16 An act relating to the development of an updated State aid to school
17 construction program

18 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

19 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 3441 is added to read:

20 § 3441. FACILITIES MASTER PLAN GRANT PROGRAM

1 (a) There is established the Facilities Master Plan Grant Program to be
2 administered by the Agency of Education from funds appropriated for this
3 purpose to supervisory unions and independent career and technical education
4 districts to support the development of facilities master plans. Grant funds
5 may be used to hire a consultant to assist in the development of the master plan
6 with the goal of developing a final master plan that complies with State
7 construction aid requirements. Grants shall be issued on an annual basis for a
8 maximum of five consecutive years.

9 (b) The Agency shall develop standards for the disbursement of grant funds
10 in accordance with the following:

11 (1) Grants shall be awarded to applicants with the highest facilities
12 needs. The Agency shall develop a prioritization formula based on an
13 applicant's [TBD poverty metric] and average facilities condition index score.
14 The Agency may give priority to applications with a regionalization focus that
15 consist of more than one supervisory union or independent career and technical
16 education district that apply as a consortium.

17 (2) Award amounts shall be commensurate with the gross square
18 footage of buildings located within the applicable supervisory union or career
19 and technical education district.

1 (3) Grants shall include a funding match from other sources, including
2 grants from businesses, foundations, or other federal or local funding, in an
3 amount equal to [decision point—flat rate or tiered based on need]

4 (4) The Agency shall develop minimum requirements for master plan
5 development for each year of award eligibly beyond the first year of grant
6 funding.

7 (c) Annually on or before January 31, the Agency shall submit to the House
8 and Senate Committees on Education a written report with information on the
9 implementation of the grant program created in this section.

10 Sec. 2. REPEAL; FACILITIES MASTER PLAN GRANT PROGRAM

11 16 V.S.A. § 3441 (Facilities Master Plan Grant Program) as added by this
12 act is repealed on June 30, 2029.

13 Sec. 3. PREQUALIFIED ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING

14 CONSULTANTS

15 On or before October 15, 2025, the Department of Buildings and General
16 Services shall finalize a list of prequalified architecture and engineering
17 consultants with expertise in kindergarten through grade 12 facilities master
18 planning. The final list may include prequalified consultants from outside
19 Vermont.

1 Sec. 4. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION WORKING GROUP;
2 REPORT

3 (a) Creation. There is created the State Aid for School Construction
4 Working Group to study and design a plan for a statewide school construction
5 aid program.

6 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following
7 members:

8 (1) the Secretary of Education or designee;

9 (2) the Agency of Education School Facilities Program Manager;

10 (3) the Executive Director of the Vermont Bond Bank or designee;

11 (4) the Department of Buildings and General Services Director of the

12 Design and Construction Division;

13 (5) a school district director of facilities with a degree and experience in
14 architecture or engineering, appointed by the Secretary of Education;

15 (6) a member of the University of Vermont Design and Construction
16 Team, appointed by the Secretary of Education; and

17 (7) a previous member of the School Construction Team, appointed by
18 the Secretary of Education.

19 (c) Powers and duties.

20 (1) The Working Group shall study and create a recommended plan for
21 a statewide school construction aid program. The Working Group shall:

1 (A) build from the recommendations contained in the report of the
2 School Construction Aid Task Force, created in 2023 Acts and Resolves No.
3 78, Sec. E.131.1, as well as any additional priorities identified by the General
4 Assembly;

5 (B) review State statutes and State Board of Education rules that
6 concern or impact school construction and make recommendations to the
7 General Assembly for any amendments necessary to align with the Working
8 Group’s proposed construction aid program;

9 (C) identify areas where economizations or efficiencies might be
10 gained, including consideration of the following:

11 (i) a prequalification process for consultants with experience in the
12 planning, renovation, and construction of kindergarten through grade 12
13 schools; and

14 (ii) cost containment strategies such as the use of building
15 templates for new construction;

16 (D) align the proposed construction aid program with fiscal modeling
17 produced by the Joint Fiscal Office; and

18 (E) review the Vermont School Construction Planning Guide and
19 make recommendations for any amendments necessary to align with the
20 Working Group’s proposed construction aid program.

1 (2) The Working Group shall consult with the following entities in
2 developing its proposed plan to ensure all applicable areas of Vermont law are
3 taken into consideration:

4 (A) the Agency of Natural Resources;

5 (B) the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety;

6 (C) the Natural Resources Board;

7 (D) the Agency of Commerce and Community Development,
8 Division for Historic Preservation; and

9 (E) any other entity the Working Group deems relevant to its work.

10 (d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,
11 technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

12 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2025, the Working Group shall
13 submit a written report to House and Senate Committees on Education with its
14 proposed plan for a statewide school construction aid program and any
15 recommendations for legislative action.

16 (f) Meetings.

17 (1) The Secretary of Education or designee shall call the first meeting of
18 the Working Group to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

19 (2) The Working Group shall select a chair from among its members at
20 the first meeting.

21 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

1 (4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on May 15, 2025.

2 (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Working Group
3 who are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise
4 compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem
5 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010
6 for not more than 10 meetings. These payments shall be made from monies
7 appropriated to the Agency of Education.

8 Sec. 5. REVENUE SOURCES

9 Sec. 6. PCB PAUSE

10 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

11 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.