

Re: dr req 21-0782 – draft 1.4  
(2/19/2021 – RDW -1:17 pm)

John Carroll  
Chair, State Board of Education

24 February 2021

On behalf of the State Board of Education, thank you for inviting me to speak with you today about “*An act relating to addressing the needs and conditions of school facilities in the State.*” (dr req 21-0782 – draft 1.4).

Sec 2 (b) of the proposed legislation directs the State Board of Education to “*update and adopt the Capital Outlay Financing Formula*”, and to complete this work “*...on or before 1 December 2022*”.

As you know, the “*Capital Outlay Financing Formula*” is much more than just a formula. It’s actually a detailed facility specification and cost guide for school construction projects. The *Formula* specifies allowable footages for specific building functions (e.g. physical education, music instruction, nurses’ office, etc.), for different types of schools (e.g. elementary, middle school, etc.). For each type of school, the *Formula* also dictates allowable costs-per-square-foot for the main elements of school construction -- demolition, new construction, site work, and associated waste treatment facilities.

The allowable footages and per-square-foot costs of the *Formula* have not been updated since 2006 -- back in the heyday of School Construction Aid, 15 years ago. Needless to say, a lot has changed in school construction requirements -- school curricula and activities, national school construction standards, resource conservation standards, environmental health requirements, and educational best practices -- since the *Formula* was last updated.

The State Board has long-standing statutory responsibility for the Rules concerning School Construction, including the *Capital Outlay Financing Formula*. Current members of the Board have professional expertise in construction management and contract administration, so the Board is well-equipped to oversee the updating of the *Formula* and to take responsibility for this work. However, updating the *Formula* will require engineering expertise that is not available in the Agency of Education, nor anywhere else in State government.

To update the *Formula*, the Board will contract with an independent architectural / engineering firm with demonstrated expertise in current school construction standards and costs. This work is estimated to cost \$100,000. Since the Board’s total annual budget -- for *all* its annual costs and responsibilities -- is only a fraction of that amount, updating the *Capital Outlay Financing Formula* will require an appropriation in the amount of \$100,000 to enable the Board to retain the necessary engineering / technical expertise and to complete the updated *Formula* by 1 December 2022.