



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

March 15, 2024

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H.871 – An act relating to the development of an updated State aid to school construction program

As introduced by the House Committee on Education

Bill Summary

This bill proposes to:

- 1) Create the Facilities Master Plan Grant Program to support supervisory unions and independent career and technical education districts with the development of a master plan that complies with State construction aid requirements;
- 2) Require the Agency of Education (AOE) and Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS) to work together to establish a list of prequalified architecture and engineering consultants; and
- 3) Create the State Aid for School Construction Working Group to study and design a plan for a statewide school construction aid program.

Fiscal Impact

Section 4 would create the State Aid for School Construction Working Group, which would be authorized to meet up to 10 times in fiscal year 2025. Per diems, mileage, and expense reimbursements for the six legislative members of the Group will cost an estimated \$15,000 in fiscal year 2025.

Section 5 of the bill contains a \$15,000 General Fund appropriation to the General Assembly in fiscal year 2025 to pay for travel expenses associated with the School Construction Working Group.

Summary of Key Provisions

Section 1: Facilities Master Plan Grant Program

Section 1 would create a Facilities Master Plan Grant Program to grant funds to supervisory unions and independent career and technical education districts for developing supervisory union-level visions for school buildings. The program would be administered by AOE, which would be tasked with developing standards for disbursing grants based on various criteria. The bill does not contain an appropriation to fund the program. Section 2 would repeal the program on June 30, 2029.

Section 4: State Aid for School Construction Working Group; Report

Section 4 would create a seven-member State Aid for School Construction Working Group to study and design a plan for a statewide school construction aid program. The Group would consist of six legislators (three from each body) and the Secretary of Education (or designee).

The Group would be charged with studying and creating a recommended plan for a statewide school construction aid program, including recommendations for implementation. The Group would be authorized to travel to conduct site visits at schools or other states. Travel would be funded from a \$15,000 General Fund appropriation to the General Assembly in fiscal year 2025 (contained in Section 5).

The Group would be required to convene its first meeting on or before August 1, 2024, submit its findings and recommendations, in the form of proposed legislation, to the General Assembly by December 15, 2024, and cease to exist on December 31, 2024. The Group would be authorized to meet for up to 10 meetings, with members entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursements with funds from the General Assembly. These costs are estimated to be up to \$15,000 for ten meetings, with actual costs varying based on the number of meetings convened, attendance, and reimbursable expenses.

Section 5: Appropriation for Working Group Travel Expenses

Section 5 would appropriate \$15,000 from the General Fund to the General Assembly in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of funding the Group's travel.