
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 475

AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE STATUTES CONCERNING SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS.

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes the administrative services (DAS) commissioner to enter into grant commitments on behalf of the state for 21 new school construction projects. It authorizes state grants totaling \$180.7 million related to total project costs of \$309.3 million. It also reauthorizes and changes grant commitments, due to cost and scope changes, for (1) six previously authorized local projects and (2) three previously authorized technical high school projects. The reauthorizations result in a \$196.6 million increase in the state grant commitments. Under the state school construction grant program, the state reimburses towns and local districts for a percentage of eligible school construction costs.

The bill also authorizes the DAS commissioner to (1) under certain conditions, waive the requirement that a school construction project meet the school safety infrastructure standards (SSIS) and (2) require towns and regional boards of education to perform security assessments on proposed school construction projects.

The bill expands the membership of the School Safety Infrastructure Council (i.e., the "council") by adding one member the governor appoints who must be a licensed building official. Under current law, the council has nine members including the commissioners of administrative services, emergency services and public protection, and education.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage for school construction grant commitments and the additional member on the council, and July 1,

2014 for SSIS provisions.

§ 1 — NEW AUTHORIZATIONS & PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED PROJECTS WITH CHANGES

Table 1 shows the new school construction projects the bill authorizes. Tables 2 and 3 list changes in previously authorized school and technical high school projects.

Table 1: New School Construction Projects Authorized

District	School	Project	Estimated Project Costs	Estimated Grant	State Reimbursement %
Danbury	Mill Ridge Intermediate School	Extension & alteration/ roof repair	\$18,608,903	\$11,762,688	63.21%
Danbury	Park Avenue School	Extension & alteration	12,217,578	7,722,731	63.21%
Danbury	Shelter Rock School	Extension & alteration	5,650,019	3,571,377	63.21%
Danbury	Stadley Rough School	Extension & alteration	5,367,422	3,392,747	63.21%
East Hampton	East Hampton High School	Extension & alteration/roof replacement	51,695,000	27,139,875	52.5%
Fairfield	Riverfield School	Extension & alteration	14,485,766	3,828,588	26.43%
Fairfield	Fairfield Ludlowe High School	Extension & alteration/ energy conservation/ roof replacement	11,630,700	3,073,994	26.43%
Fairfield	Osborn Hill School	Extension & alteration; energy conservation	3,374,400	891,854	26.43%
New Britain	Gaffney School	Extension & alteration	30,000,000	23,787,000	79.29%
Newington	Martin Kellogg Middle School	Alteration	1,000,000	589,300	58.93%
Newington	John Wallace Middle School	Alteration	1,000,000	589,300	58.93%
Newington	Newington High School	Extension & alteration	1,500,000	883,950	58.93%
Putnam	Putnam High School	Extension & alteration/roof replacement	33,421,159	24,467,631	73.21%
Putnam	Central Administration (Putnam High School)	Alteration/roof replacement	3,188,841	1,167,275	36.6%

Regional District 14	Nonnewaug High School	Extension & alteration	63,820,605	30,544,542	47.86%
Stamford	Northeast School	Alteration/energy conservation	3,500,000	987,350	28.21%
Stamford	Toquam School	Alteration/roof replacement	2,550,000	719,355	28.21%
Stamford	Westhill High School	Alteration/energy conservation	2,075,000	585,358	28.21%
Torrington	Forbes School	Energy conservation	300,000	225,000	75%
West Hartford	Charter Oak International Academy	Diversity school/new construction	43,274,807	34,619,846	80%
Wethersfield	Central Administration (Wethersfield H.S.)	Alteration & renovation	652,065	165,331	25.36%

Table 2: Previously Authorized School Construction Projects with Substantial Changes in Scope or Cost

District	School	Project	Previous Grant Authorization	New Grant Authorization	Change
Berlin	Berlin High School	Renovation/extension	\$32,974,430	\$39,345,395	\$6,370,965
Bridgeport	Dunbar School	Alteration/energy conservation	6,888,032	6,888,032	0
CREC	Academy of Aerospace	Magnet school/facility purchase/extension & alteration	69,343,350	77,779,807	8,436,457
New Haven	UNH Science & Engineering Magnet	New magnet/site purchase	56,525,000	81,255,000	24,730,000
Regional District 18	Mile Creek School	Energy conservation	209,265	337,943	128,678
Weston	Weston Middle School	Energy conservation	298,981	526,830	227,849

Table 3: Previously Authorized Technical High School Construction Projects with Substantial Scope or Cost Changes

District	School	Project	Previous Authorization	Requested Authorization	Change
Ansonia	Emmett O'Brien	Extension/	\$77,746,501	\$94,315,000	\$16,568,499

		alteration			
Groton	Ella T. Grasso	Extension/ alteration	61,479,000	134,913,000	73,434,000
Milford	Platt	Extension/ alteration	57,886,000	124,566,000	66,680,000

§§ 3 & 4 — SCHOOL SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS

The bill authorizes the DAS commissioner to take two new actions related to implementing the requirement that all new school construction projects seeking a state grant, as of July 1, 2014, must meet the SSIS issued by the council. The council was formed last year and charged by law with the duty of issuing the SSIS, which it did in January 2014.

First, the commissioner may waive the requirement to meet the SSIS if he determines that the school construction grant application demonstrates that the applicant made a good-faith effort to address the standards and that compliance with the standards would be infeasible, unreasonable, or excessively expensive.

Second, the bill authorizes the commissioner to require any town or regional board of education applying for a school construction project grant to conduct a safety assessment of the project to measure compliance with the SSIS. The town or regional board must use either an assessment tool the commissioner designates or an alternative the commissioner determines provides a comparable safety and security assessment.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/24/2014)

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 50 Nay 0 (04/01/2014)