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## Fwd: Capitol Watch: School Construction Task Force Releases Final Report

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>  
To: Nicole Blodgett <nbloodgett@panaschools.com>

Mon, Mar 2, 2020 at 7:52 AM

March 16 Board Meeting

----- Forwarded message -----

From: IASA <iasa@iasaedu.org>  
Date: Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 5:32 PM  
Subject: Capitol Watch: School Construction Task Force Releases Final Report  
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>



### School Construction Task Force Releases Final Report

The Illinois School Construction Task Force released its [final report](#) Friday with recommendations for how the School Construction Grant Program should function.

One of the biggest takeaways is a recommendation to use equity principles embedded in the Evidence-Based Funding Formula to determine how much local match a district would have to contribute.

The local match would be based on a district's Local Capacity Percentage and could range from as low as 10 percent to as high as 90 percent. That's a change from the old state construction program, where the minimum level was 35 percent up to a maximum of 75 percent.

The report now heads to the Governor, General Assembly and the chairperson of the Illinois State Board of Education to review. I encourage you to read it, especially if you are in a district in need of building improvements.

What remains unclear at this time is how large a pool of money will be available for K-12 education. The overall figure, of course, will go a long way in determining how big of an impact the capital program will have on rebuilding and repairing deteriorating school buildings across Illinois.

What I want to do in this article is provide an educated guess about what the timeline of the School Construction Grant Program will be to help you plan. The stages I'm referring to below are those included in the [flowchart](#) found in the final report.

**Stage 1: ISBE Review – Possibly summer or early fall 2020**

We expect the first stage — where school districts apply for funds — to begin this summer or possibly early fall.

The recommendations in the report need to be approved by the General Assembly, and then ISBE needs to receive notice of the release/availability of funds from the governor's office before it can post the grant application online. That will take the process through the spring session and likely into early summer.

As mentioned above, the task force recommends ISBE use equity principles embedded in EBF to determine how much local match a district will have to contribute. For example, that would mean a Tier 1 district would have a lower local match than a Tier 3 district.

It's important to note the report does not detail how many projects will be funded or what type of projects will receive top priority. The General Assembly will weigh in more on those details as this legislative session progresses.

Once the applications are received, ISBE will review and send out a notice of grant eligibility with the estimated state/local share to school districts. A list of eligible applicants will be published and forwarded to the Capital Development Board (CDB).

**Stage 2: Capital Development Board Review – Possibly late spring or early summer 2021**

We expect it will take the CDB nine months once it gets a list from ISBE before it issues any conditional grant awards to schools. That would bring the timeline into late spring or early summer of 2021 before districts could be confident state funding will come through.

According to the report, the CDB will be responsible for verifying the total project cost a district puts into its application, as well as overseeing the distribution of state funds.

**Stage 3: Collection of Match – 2 years**

Following the issuance of a conditional grant award, school districts will have two years to collect the local match and provide proof to the CDB. That's a longer period than what districts had under the old grant program.

Once proof of collection has been provided, CDB will issue a final grant award. If a local match is not collected, state funds conditionally allocated are unallocated and rolled over into future School Construction Grant cycles.

**Stage 4: Disbursement of Funding**

The CDB will disburse grant funding (actual dollars) to districts when appropriate at various stages of project completion.

**What about the old construction list?**

There is one other important detail to share. [The report](#) includes a recommendation to allow FY 2004 school construction grant applicants to utilize the local match expended in prior years, as long as the expense was part of the FY 2004 application, for the local share of a future construction project. That means no prior approvals or lists from the old construction program will be carried over. One caveat to keep in mind is FY 2004 applicants must submit an additional application during the first year of funding to be considered.

Again, I want to remind you to read the report, if you haven't already. There are some good ideas included to prevent a backlog of districts awaiting funding and avoiding using entitlement language so districts don't take on massive debt loads and never get funding from the state.

To close, I want to remind you this is a report with recommendations for the General Assembly and governor. While I anticipate most of the recommendations to carry over, the program could change as the spring legislative session proceeds. As always, if any new development arises, we will be sure to keep you informed.

Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Diane Hendren  
Director of Governmental Relations  
Illinois Association of School Administrators

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