

Department of Education

Representatives **WHITMIRE** and **WHITE** proposes the following amendment:

New

IA.aci. (SDE-EIA: Abbeville Equity Districts Capital Improvement Plan): The funds appropriated for the Abbeville Equity Districts Capital Improvement Plan in Part IA, Section 1, VIII, I. Abbeville Equity Districts Capital Improvements and by provisos IA.50 and IA.RSLP shall be allocated by the Department of Education to eligible school districts for the purpose of funding school facility upgrades. Eligible school districts include any school district that is a plaintiff in the Abbeville law suit or districts with a poverty index of eighty percent or higher. For the purpose of this provision, "school facility" means only facilities necessary for instructional and related supporting purposes including, but not limited to, classrooms, libraries, media centers, laboratories, cafeterias, physical education spaces, related interior and exterior facilities, and the conduit, wiring, and powering of hardware installations for classroom computers or for area network systems. Eligible school facility projects shall include: (a) health and safety upgrades; (b) technology upgrades inside school facilities; (c) upgrades associated with career and technology education programs; and (d) deferred maintenance needs as described in the district's capital improvement plan. For purposes of this provision, school facilities shall not include unimproved real property, centralized district administration facilities, or other facilities, including those normally identified with interscholastic sports activities.

The department shall develop and maintain an application process for school districts to request funding for qualified school projects and establish policies, procedures, and priorities for the making of grants pursuant to this provision. At least twice a year and upon receipt of applications pursuant to the application process adopted by the department, the department shall prioritize the eligible projects with the greatest need and shall submit a list of recommended grant awards to the State Board of Education. Grants shall be awarded upon an affirmative vote of the State Board.

The financial assistance provided to school districts pursuant to this provision must be used for the eligible school facility project. The department is responsible for establishing policies and procedures to ensure that funds are expended in a manner consistent with this provision.

Following the close of the fiscal year, the department shall submit an annual report of its Abbeville Equity Districts Capital Improvement Plan activities for the preceding year to the Governor, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and the Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee.