

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R10708 KKA-D

S.B. 1700
By: Shapiro
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During the 79th Legislature, Third Called Session, 2006, legislation was passed requiring four years of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies to satisfy the recommended high school curriculum. These increased standards require school districts to offer one more laboratory-based science course than previously required. Since the curriculum standards apply to students entering the ninth grade in the 2007-2008 school year, school districts have three years to ensure that laboratory space is available to satisfy these requirements when these students reach 12th grade.

As proposed, S.B. 1700 establishes a competitive grant program for the construction and renovation of science laboratories and sets forth the program's eligibility requirements. The bill requires that the total amount of the grant be determined by appropriations.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 7.062, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 7, Education Code, by adding Section 7.062, as follows:

Sec. 7.062. SCIENCE LABORATORY GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "wealth per student."

(b) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner), through the use of appropriated funds, to establish a program (program) to provide competitive grants to school districts for the purpose of constructing or renovating high school science laboratories.

(c) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement the program, including rules addressing eligibility, application procedures, and accountability for use of grant funds.

(d) Requires that the rules set certain limitations on the amount of assistance provided through a grant for a construction project or renovation project; require a school district to demonstrate, as a condition of eligibility for a grant, that the existing district science laboratories are inadequate to comply with the curriculum requirements imposed for the recommended and advanced high school programs under Section 28.025 (b-1) (1); and provide for ranking school districts that apply for grants on the basis of wealth per student and giving priority in the award of grants to districts with low wealth per student.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.