

# Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST)

The Colorado Department of Education's Division of Public School Construction Assistance primarily administers a capital construction grant program known as Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST). The BEST program focuses on helping public schools with a multitude of capital construction needs, from new roofs and boilers to major renovations and new schools. The goal of the BEST program is to provide first class, high performing, 21st century facilities and to help alleviate health and safety concerns throughout Colorado.

The BEST Program is a competitive grant program available to all public school districts, charter schools, institute charter schools, boards of cooperative educational services and the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind.

Grant applications are reviewed on a yearly cycle and recommended for funding by the Capital Construction Assistance Board. The board consists of nine appointed members who, in conjunction with division staff, review grant applications for the current fiscal year.

## Revenue Sources

The BEST assistance fund has four revenue sources:

- State Land Trust Funds
- Marijuana Excise Taxes
- Colorado Lottery Spillover Funds
- Interest

To date, BEST has received more than \$662 million in revenue. State Land Trust funds have generated more than 76 percent of the program's funding; marijuana excise tax has generated 16 percent for the program, followed by Colorado Lottery spillover funds with just over 5 percent and interest at 2.2 percent.

## Facility Insight

The Division has hired 5 in-house assessors to reassess every public school facility throughout the state. A condition analysis and adequacy survey will be completed for every facility. The vision of the assessment is to continuously attain accurate and consistent data for every public school to be used as a state-wide resource for school facility data. Having an accurate state-wide inventory of all school facilities will help the state make informed decisions when evaluating BEST grant applications and about school facilities.

## BEST Accomplishments

- BEST has funded 292 grant applications in 128 school districts.
- BEST has funded \$1,407,230,209 in high need public school capital construction projects from \$3.09 billion in requests.
- BEST has improved health, safety and security in 409 school facilities.
- BEST has provided an environment that is conducive to learning for more than 166,180 students.
- BEST has helped create and support roughly 24,000 jobs. (As of Dec. 2016, includes direct, indirect and induced jobs. Analysis provided by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs).
- Through a statewide facility assessment, 8,419 facilities were inventoried and more than 139 million square feet were assessed to determine a need of \$17.9 billion in capital construction projected through 2018.

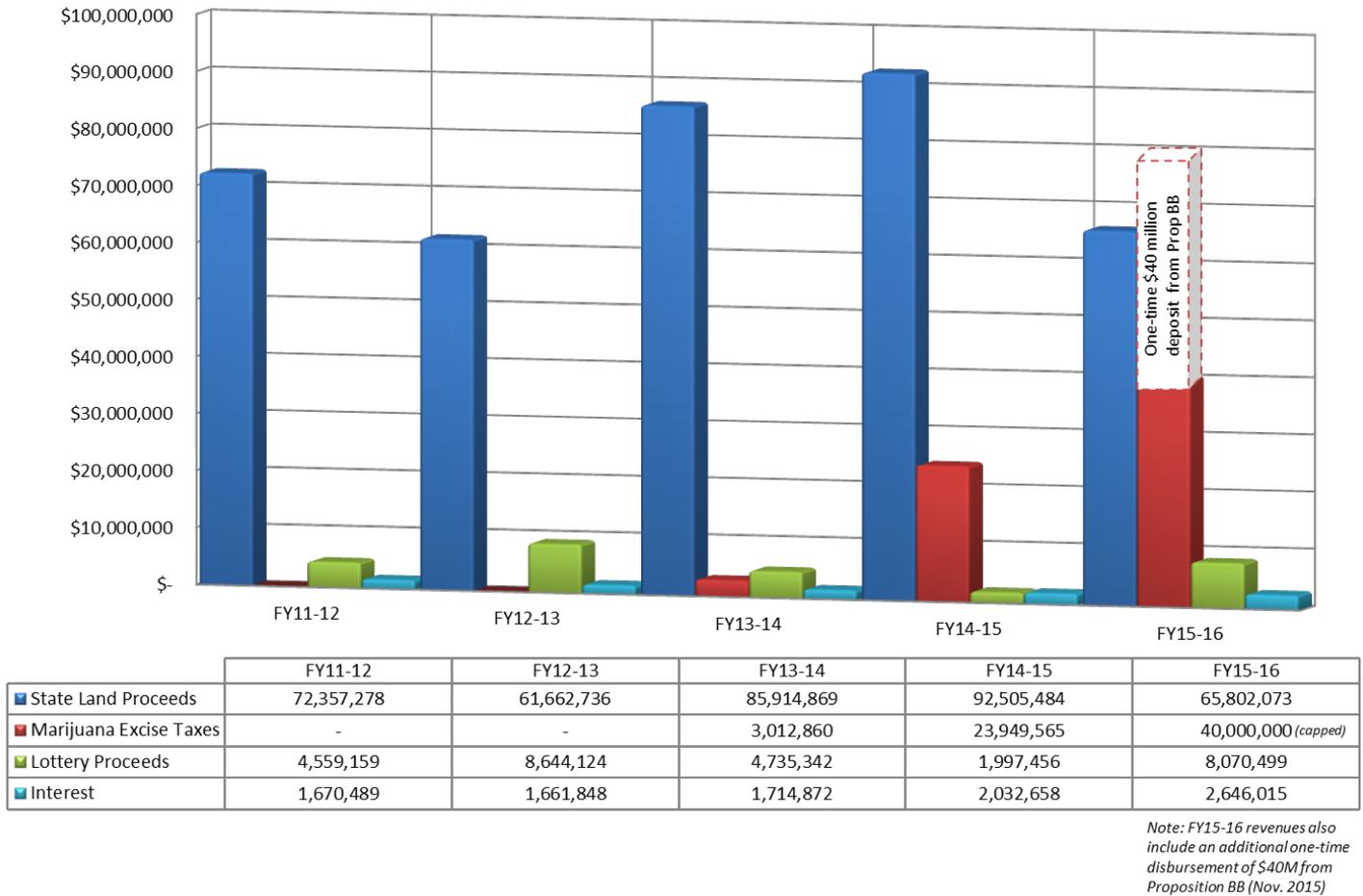


Fig.1. Revenues received by BEST by fiscal year and funding source for the past five years (through June 2016)

## Grants

There are three types of grants available from the BEST program:

- **BEST Cash Grants** are typically used to fund smaller projects, such as roofs, boiler replacements and fire alarms.
- **BEST Lease-Purchase Grants** are typically used to fund larger projects, such as new schools, major renovations and additions. These grants are financed and financing is repaid with future assistance fund revenues.
- **BEST Emergency Grants** are used for an unanticipated event that threatens the health or safety of a building’s occupants or renders all or a significant portion of a building unusable for educational purposes.

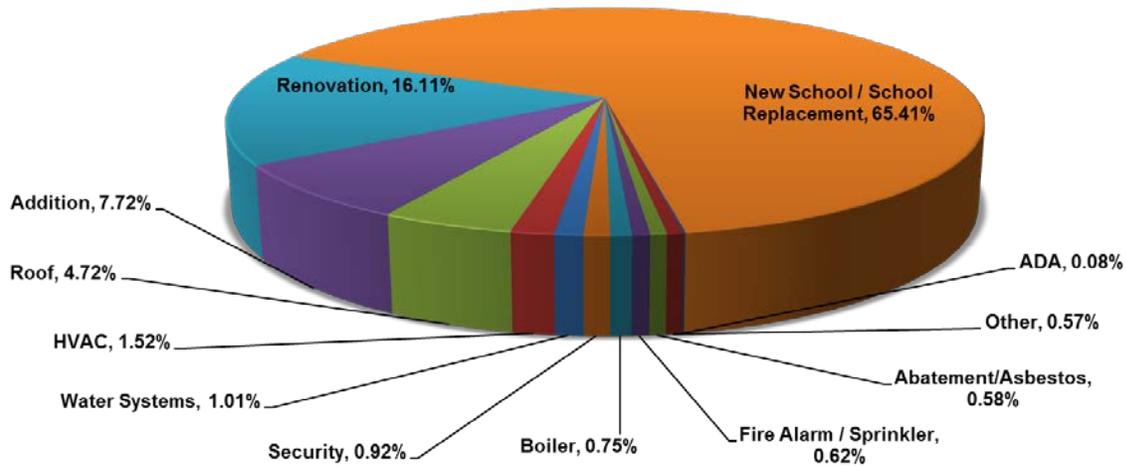


Fig.2. BEST has funded \$1,407,230,209 in needy public school capital construction projects from \$3.09 billion in requests

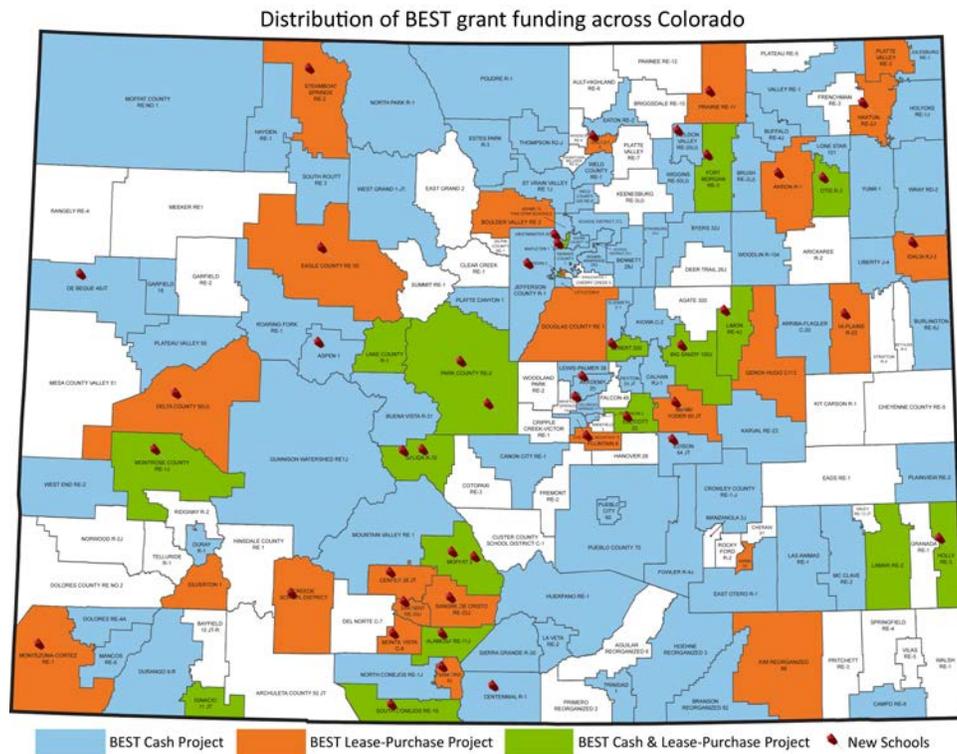


Fig.3. Distribution of BEST grant funding across Colorado

### Where can I learn more?

- Capital Construction Assistance page: [www.cde.state.co.us/cca](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cca)
- Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program page: [www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/capconstbest](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/capconstbest)
- Capital Construction Assistance Resource page: [www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/capconsttechnical](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/capconsttechnical)
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: [www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs)