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News Release

State Board Of Education Approves 47 BEST Grant Award Recommendations

At their monthly meeting, the Colorado State Board of Education yesterday unanimously approved the 2010-2011 Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) grant award recommendations.

The Capital Construction Assistance Board reviewed the grants last month and approved 35 BEST Cash Grant projects for a total of \$11.3 million and matching funds of \$8.5 million. Another 11 projects will be funded with BEST Lease-Purchase Funding for a total of \$165.5 million and matching funds of \$66.8 million. One additional project was approved as a back-up BEST Lease-Purchase project, which will take the place of an awarded BEST Lease-Purchase project in the event a grantee cannot secure their matching funds. The BEST Cash Grant projects, which currently have their match in place, may start their projects immediately. The BEST Lease-Purchase grant projects cannot start until the state secures financing for these projects, which is tentatively slated for late December. Originally, a total of 102 applications were submitted to the board for review.

The awards will lead to a broad array of school improvements including new fire sprinklers, gyms and gym floors, pools, heating and air conditioning, roofs, accessibility upgrades, waste water improvements, boilers, security renovations, asbestos abatement, exterior doors and new school buildings in districts across the state.

Prior to this week's vote, BEST had awarded \$311.4 million among 69 projects in 57 different school districts. Local districts have provided \$98.6 million in matching funds.

The BEST legislation increases the level of financial assistance provided to school districts, charter schools and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) for capital construction projects, particularly in those school districts that cannot afford these necessary improvements without financial assistance. The function of the Public School Capital Construction Assistance Board is to protect the health and safety of persons using public school facilities and to maximize student achievement by ensuring public school facilities provide a safe and un-crowded environment that is conducive to student learning.

The source of revenue for the Assistance Fund is revenues from the State Land Trust, lottery proceeds, matching grant funds, interest on money in the assistance fund and remaining dollars from the prior grant program.

Other Action

In other action, the state board of education:

- Unanimously approved a motion regarding the proposed Prospect Ridge Academy charter school in Adams 12 Five Star Schools. The motion stated that “the decision of the local board of education to unilaterally impose the conditions at issue in this second appeal was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district, or community.” Issues in the dispute involved the school district’s requirement that a certain percentage of its prospective students, above and beyond the minimum percentage required by statute, be residents of the district by March 1, 2011; a requirement that Prospect Ridge Academy demonstrate that 80 percent of its prospective students for each grade level have enrolled by March 1, 2011; a requirement that Prospect Ridge Academy’s audit be performed by an independent auditor with at least two years experience in auditing charter schools and approved by the school district’s chief financial officer; and a requirement that Prospect Ridge Academy obtain and pay for additional audits above and beyond the audits required by statute.
- Approved designation of Colorado Springs School District 11 as a District of Innovation in regard to Wasson High School.
- Approved 66 requests for designations of Alternative Education campuses.
- Took action on disciplinary proceedings concerning a license, charge 2010EC06.

- Took action on disciplinary proceedings concerning an application for a license, charge 2010EC10.
- Took action on disciplinary proceedings concerning a license, charge 2010EC17.
- Approved one renewal emergency authorizations.
- Approved four initial emergency authorizations.
- Approved the new Special Education Teacher Preparation Program at the University of Phoenix.
- Approved the new Reading Teacher Program for Regis University.
- Approved the new Reading Specialist Teacher Preparation Program at Regis University.
- Approved the Teacher/Special Services Provider Induction Program Submitted by Independence Academy Charter School.
- Ratified appointments to Alternative School Finance Models Advisory Committee.
- Ratified appointments to the Average Daily Membership (ADM) Advisory Committee.
- Certified State Share Payments for June 2010 Under the Public School Finance Act of 1994 (as amended).
- Certified State Share Payments for July 2010 through November 2010 Under the Public School Finance Act of 1994 (as amended).
- Approved distribution of State Gifted Education Funds to Administrative Units.
- Approved appointments of Members to the Special Education Fiscal Advisory Committee.
- Approved appointments of recommended candidates to the State Advisory Council on Parent Involvement in Education.
- Approved appointment of EDAC (Educational Data Review Committee) replacements for terms ending, as well as a resignation.

- Approved the recommended appointments to the State Advisory Committee for Gifted Student Education.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes submitted by Cheyenne Mountain District 12 on behalf of Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy.
- Approved a waiver requests from certain statutes submitted by St. Vrain Valley School District RE-1J on behalf of Flagstaff Academy and Imagine Charter School at Firestone.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes submitted by Steamboat Springs RE-2 on behalf of North Routt Community Charter School.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes by Adams County School District 50 on behalf of Crown Pointe Academy of Westminster.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes submitted by Jefferson County School District R-1 on behalf of Two Roads High School.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes submitted by Boulder Valley School District RE2 on behalf of Horizons K-8 School.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes submitted by Moffat Consolidated 2 on behalf of Crestone Charter School.
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes submitted by the Charter School Institute on behalf of Colorado Calvert Academy State Charter School.
- Agreed to hold a discussion on a proposed resolution concerning ballot initiatives at the September meeting.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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